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Learning, Thinking, and Making the City Together: Graduate Student Educational Encounters with Interdisciplinarity and the City in the New Humanities

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Learning, Thinking, and Making the City Together: Graduate Student Educational Encounters

with Interdisciplinarity and the City in the New Humanities

Los Angeles ←→ Shanghai, Mexico City, Tokyo

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Jonathan Young Banfill

2020

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Learning, Thinking, and Making the City Together: Graduate Student Educational Encounters

with Interdisciplinarity and the City in the New Humanities

Los Angeles ⟵⟶ Shanghai, Mexico City, Tokyo

by

Jonathan Young Banfill

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Richard Desjardins, Chair

This dissertation is a qualitative, ethnographic study of a graduate student interdisciplinary program at a major west coast research university. It focuses on educational encounters that occur between the student members of the program. The program is part of current trends to reinvigorate the humanities through engagement with other professional disciplines. These new areas have been organized around the banner of the *new humanities*, which often address large-scale, global problems through the creation of new knowledge frameworks and experimental methodologies. The program that was studied combines the humanities with spatial disciplines to understand contemporary cities in Asia Pacific, notably Los Angeles, Tokyo, Mexico City, and Shanghai. This

dissertation examines the program from an educational standpoint, focusing on the pedagogical processes at work within and the long-term effects that it had on students, including trajectories of research and professional practice, as well as their understanding of contemporary cities. It argues that through a variety of encounters that are structured within the educational space, new interdisciplinary academic identities are created, which last longer than the program itself, spreading into lives and future work. It proposes a pedagogical theory where this happens through a process of collective and collaborative learning, thinking, and making. Empirically, it draws on participant observation from across five program years and follow-up interviews with a wide range of students.

The dissertation of Jonathan Young Banfill is approved.

Douglas M. Kellner

Edith Mukudi Omwami

Maria Teresa de Zubiaurre

Sharon Jean Traweek

Richard Desjardins, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

DEDICATION PAGE

This dissertation is dedicated to Future Urban Humanists

&

To Yellow Bean, for being the dreamer who dreamed the dream

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With love and gratitude to all.

| 2004 | Bachelor of Arts, Comparative History of Ideas |
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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Banfill, Jonathan. (2019). "Encounters with Belief in the Global City: Urban Humanities Filmmaking Pedagogy from Los Angeles to Shanghai." In *Higher Education and Belief Systems in the Asia Pacific Region: Knowledge, Spirituality, Religion, and Structures of Faith*, edited by Christopher S. Collins and Alexander Jun. Springer Press.

Banfill, Jonathan. "Introduction." (2018). *Cities in Common: Los Angeles, Tijuana, Mexico City*. Los Angeles: Urban Humanities Initiative.

Banfill, Jonathan, Todd Presner, & Maite Zubiaurre. (2016). Urban Humanities Pedagogy: The Classroom, Education, and New Humanities. *BOOM: A Journal of California*, *6* (3), 120–128.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

2019 Paper Presentation: "A LAyer Deeper: A Counter-Tour of Hidden Spaces, Unseen Realities, Missed Connections, and Forgotten Histories." HASTAC 2019. Vancouver.

2019 Roundtable Presentation: "Interdisciplinary Afterlives: Trajectories of Scholarship and Practice After Participating in a Global Urban Studies Graduate Certificate Program." Comparative & International Education Society (CIES) 2019. San Francisco.

2018 Paper Presentation: "Learning from the City: Case study from A LAyer Deeper." Association of Interdisciplinary Studies Conference. Wayne State University.

2018   <u>Keynote Speech</u>: "Thoughts from the Couch: On Five Years of Practicing Urban Humanities." Salon 01 Urban Humanities Alumni Symposium, UCLA.

2018   <u>Paper Presentation</u>: "Becoming Urban Humanists: Interdisciplinary Graduate Education between Global Cities; Los Angeles, Tokyo, Shanghai, Mexico City." Comparative International Education Society (CIES). Mexico City.

2017   <u>Keynote Speech</u>: "Co-Constructing a Trans-Pacific Rim Urban Humanities." UCLA-Waseda Shibaura House Symposium: Exposing Latent Impacts of Urban Mega-Events. Shibaura House, Tokyo.

2017   <u>Paper Presentation</u>: "Community Engaged Scholarship in the Urban Humanities: Lessons from Los Angeles and Mexico City" Research and Inquiry Conference 2017. UCLA Graduate School of Education. UCLA. *Winner Best Conference Paper

2016   <u>Paper Presentation</u>: "1933, The Shanghai Projector: Interdisciplinary Filmmaking in the Urban Humanities." Third Annual Interdisciplinary Humanities Graduate Student Conference. University of California, Merced.

2016   <u>Paper Presentation</u>: "Urban Humanities: Pedagogical Methods for Producing Knowledge on the 21st Century Megacity." East West Center 15th Annual International Graduate Student Conference 2016. University of Hawaii, Manoa.

Preface: An Urban Humanities Overture of the City
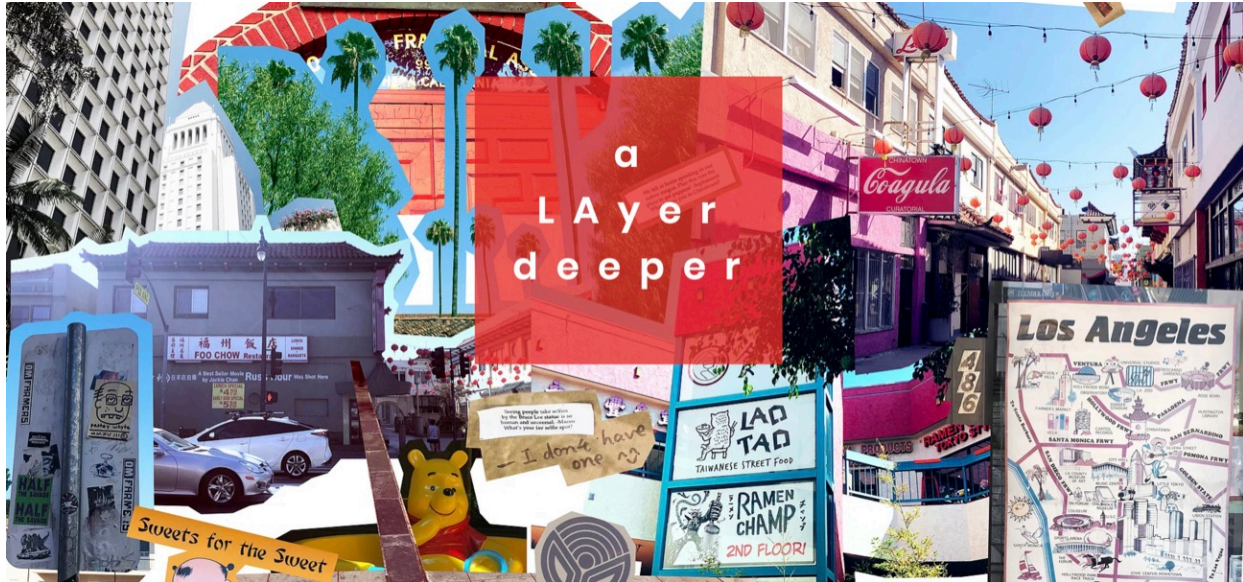
Image: *A LAyer Deeper website front page (Credit:* Yang w/Banfill *2018)*

This opening "overture" is assembled from ethnographic material that I encountered during the fieldwork for this study, including contents from the UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative's (UHI) educational program. It gives an account of observation from the particular pedagogical event described in the narrative and acts as a kind of imagined and stitched together (that is, *made, a kind of making*, apropos the title) opening that presents the central educational case within this dissertation project in motion, as a lived and embodied interdisciplinary educational experience. All the following references are drawn from the Urban Humanities curriculum in some way or were uncovered over the course of fieldwork. They constitute part of the record and story of the program: a story that the dissertation is trying to tell, at least in part. As an orienting work, it should

be read in tandem with the "social scientific" introduction that follows directly after it—which, if you are more inclined to that register, by all means skip ahead.

More specifically, this opening preface draws directly from a pedagogical practice in the program, "city writing," where students collaboratively write scenes of Los Angeles drawing on literary techniques for representing the city, from authors and their cities, for example: Charles Dickens and Virginia Woolf's London, James Joyce's Dublin, Alfred Döblin's Berlin, Zhang Ailing's Shanghai, Italo Calvino's imagined city versions of Venice, Haruki Murakami's Tokyo, Roberto Bolaño's Mexico City, or Raymond Chandler, Charles Bukowski, Joan Didion, James Ellroy, Michael Connelly, Paul Beatty, or Karen Tei Yamashita's Los Angeles.

This is one of the initial pedagogical exercises from the summer bootcamp that annually kicks off the Urban Humanities educational program, orientating student for ways and methodological approaches to think about and represent the city through a variety of media forms, as well as setting a foundation for "thinking" between and across cities. City fictions present the city in ways that are imaginative, multi-perspectival, and most importantly, from an embodied perspective of people alive in the city, including their sensory experience. I absorb and mirror these writing exercises in the ethnographic prose below.

To present an initial pedagogical claim, I argue that the Urban Humanities course teaches students, among other practices, ways of "reading" and "writing" the city—similar to Paulo Freire's (1983) concept of reading and writing the "world" and "word," an important educational-philosophical text that illustrates an important relationship between learning and practice (praxis). In the case of UHI, for instance, it teaches students how to read the urban via spatial means, such as through the creation of "mental maps" where students draw how they understand Los Angeles spatially and sharing their map with other students (Lynch, 1960). Comparison of views opens up

different understandings of how the city is experienced—by the student who has lived in Los Angeles all their life, the student who has been there one week, and so on. The course also engages with visual media for representing the city, including—that medium most association with Los Angeles—film. Here inspiration is drawn from modernist "city films," such as Walter Rutmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* (1927) and Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) that each include orienting overtures to their respective portraits of early 20th century Berlin and Moscow. As well as more recent Los Angeles based city films, notably those produced by the non-profit Echo Park Film Center (EPFC), at one time a UHI collaborator. These filmic influences also influence the narrative in some way, via an awareness of framing, perspective, texture, and visual movement.

More than any teaching of individual disciplinary knowledge or practice, the Urban Humanities program teaches something important about knowledge itself, giving a sensibility to see the way that disciplinary knowledge—the organizing regime of knowledge production in the contemporary western and global university—is structured and created, while at the same time putting that disciplinary knowledge in conversation with other disciplinary knowledges. This is what is meant by an interdisciplinarity educational space: it is not just about the end product of a perfectly synthesized interdisciplinary work, but rather the ongoing and unfolding process of understanding, thinking through, negotiating, and finally coming to terms with different approaches to knowledge. It is a meta-disciplinary space of encounters between ways and practices of knowing. This particular interdisciplinary space, circles around questions such as: How do we know a city? How do we read it? Learn it? Engage with it? Live in it? How does it bring us together? How does it push us apart? How do we collectively imagine it and reimagine it? That is how do we think it together? How do we make it anew? What does it mean when the urban (building,

plans, infrastructure) is put in conversation with the human (culture, art, experience)? What is produced by their dialogic resonance with each other?

These are some of the central questions that structure UHI, and its signature pedagogies, as an educational endeavor.

Los Angeles: on a late summer afternoon in September 2018

It is hot and the sun reflects off the buildings of downtown Los Angeles. Above, the sky is a clear unbroken blue. There is only the slightest breeze blowing in distantly from the ocean. People move through the pre-rush hour doldrums, avoiding the direct sunlight and stored heat coming off from the concrete. There is the usual mix inhabiting the city: businesspeople, city government workers, tourists, those experiencing homelessness. The afternoon unfolds at its own pace. It is a typical afternoon in Los Angeles, California.

Now, imagine yourself moving at street level, among all the people, here in the heart of the city. Imagine from the embodied perspective of the human body, sweating and slightly dehydrated. As you walk, your feet are hurting, sore from a day of urban exploration, or *flâneuring*[1], or being on a Situationist *Dérive*[2]. To more specifically orient ourselves within the city's own spatial narrative, let's say you are standing on 1st Street between Spring and Main in the vicinity of Los Angeles City Hall, underneath that Art Deco edifice of city power that marks itself on the city

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[1] Bijan Stephen (1983) writes: "The figure of the flaneur—the stroller, the passionate wanderer emblematic of nineteenth-century French literary culture—has always been essentially timeless; he removes himself from the world while he stands astride its heart . . . For Benjamin. . . the flaneur heralded an incisive analysis of modernity, perhaps because of his connotations." And: "The flaneur was a figure of the modern artist-poet, a figure keenly aware of the bustle of modern life, an amateur detective an investigator of the city, but also a sign of the alienation of the city and of capitalism."

[2] 1960s French radical group method of random, psycho-geographic recontextualizations of the city (see Guy DeBord "Theory of the Derive," 1956)

skyline. Stopping in a small wooded park, which is rests at the south side of the building, you enter searching for some shade and sit down at a small bench, able to take a moment to reflect on the city that surrounds you.

You, the imagined traveler or reader, close your eyes and listen to the sounds. That slight breeze moving through the trees. The now somewhat distant sound of cars and honking horns. And other ambient soundscapes of the city, echoes of voices, of music, of machinery. The point is to change perspective and sense the city around you in all its registers. This includes the sensory (the sights, sounds, & smells) and the material (buildings and infrastructure), not to mention the cultural and historical, and perhaps registers beyond that, such as the affective, the artistic or literary, and the speculative.

In this moment of reflection, all of these linger and mix together, forming a complex impression of the city around you.

Overview of the City from 10,000 Feet

Vacillating between this embodied view of the city, it is possible to imagine outwards to a wider perspective. For instance, if you went higher up, above this central point of the city, to say 10,000 feet (to a kind of "God's eye view," now made common by technology like Google Earth), you can see the whole of greater Los Angeles county stretching in all directions, from the mountains to the sea (boulevards and freeways crisscrossing, reflections from cars). This mega-region of urban and suburban areas is composed of over 20 million people, encompassing 88 different cities. It is connected to the rest of the world, and you can see the planes taking off and landing at LAX, and the container ships docking at Long Beach the largest global port on the West Coast (Yen, 2019). And if you looked even further, at the horizon edge, the rest of the world opens

up geographically. To the North and East, is the rest of America, but perhaps, from L.A.'s current view, these directions are no longer the future.[3] More importantly, to the South, is the border with Mexico, now deeply contested, and beyond that the rest of Mexico and Latin America. And to the west, across the vast Pacific, is Asia with its rapidly growing megacities and their growing power and global influence.

For these reasons, some have called Los Angeles the second capital of the world (Suarez-Orozco, 2018), or the capital of the twenty-first century (or the late twentieth, these periodization's have ideological purposes), or of postmodernism (Baudrillard, 1981 Jameson, 1989). This is due to its position, seen clearly from this vantage, of being a global megacity that is facing both the civilizations of the Pacific and of Latin America.[4] It faces them, but also collects them (people, culture), creating something else in the mixture of interconnections (or hybrids, or bricolages, and leading for some to call the city "postmodern"). These interconnections, transnational, visible and invisible, capital and cultural, come together here, creating meeting points—both hybridizing and contested at the same time—between East and West, North and South, Local and Global. This is the Los Angeles that has been theorized by generations of urban and cultural scholars who have tried to make sense of it, including names like Mike Davis, Edward Soja, and Norman Klein, who building on previous generations of Los Angeles theorists like Carey McWilliams. Or, more poetically, as the late food and music critic Jonathan Gold stated, and which is now immortalized on a golden plaque that sits on the outside wall of the Grand Central Market: "The huge number

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[3] According to Eve Babitz, chronicler of Los Angeles's cultural milieu, directions should always be capitalized.
[4] Los Angeles is after all, at least according the Red Hot Chili Peppers, "the edge of Western Civilization," from the song *Californication* (1999).

of multiple cultures that live in this city . . . and the fault lines between them are where you find the most beautiful things."

Continuing the comparison to the "Google Earth View," we can zoom down from the macro-perspective to denser gradients of the city, moving out from the God-eye to more layered micro-complexities. As we zoom in, different features appear in added detail, adding depth and thickness. For instance, holding for a second what would be the classic map orientation, such as the 1932 aerial map, of Los Angeles in view—roughly the area stretching from Santa Monica to Downtown with Hollywood front and center, or as Randy Newman (1983) sings in *I Love L.A.*, "From the South Bay to the Valley/from the West Side to the East Side"—specifics of the city begin to take form. From this perspective, one can see the grid of the city spread out, shifting from the old Spanish orientation to the Anglo-grid at Hoover Street, with classic street names crossing the length of the city (Santa Monica Blvd, Wilshire, Western, Pico, Sepulveda, La Brea). One can also pick out any number of landmarks, Dodger Stadium, the Griffith Observatory, the Hollywood Sign, the UCLA Campus, the Santa Monica Pier, and so on, landmarks that are intimately connected with the imaginary of the city.

One can also glimpse LA's four "ecologies," as named by the British architectural theorist in his book *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971), and include (1) the beaches, (2) the freeways, (3) the hills, and (4) the vast flatlands of single family homes (or, as Banham called them, "The Plains of Id"). Picking out one of these ecologies for closer examination, the freeway, one can also begin to read other important things about the city. The freeways are what connects this whole vast area together, part of urban modernization processes that allowed the city to expand and spread out, becoming a city of cars and speed.

Of course, this was also part and parcel of a process of deepening racial division and separation, where freeways were built in part to divide and dispossess communities of color allowing for the growth of white suburbs that were facilitated via automotive culture (Chesney, forthcoming 2021), making infrastructural barriers between areas of the city. Though Banham's architecturally focused urban typologies of Los Angeles are somewhat simplistic, lacking a human-level perspective, and are thus outdated from our view in the present—and of course there are other 'ecologies' that LA scholars in the time since have developed and theorized that give more room to diversity, immigration, and non-dominant, hybridized perspectives of the city (Leclerc et al., 1999)—it offers a way to start thinking about and reading the city spatially. If you looked more closely, zoomed down to street level in different parts of the vastness of Los Angeles, its own complex world of contrasting spaces and places, tensions and dynamics, would emerge.

As the quick reading of the freeways shows, there are deep spatial divisions at work in Los Angeles, rooted in architecture, planning, and infrastructure, and which create situations where spatial justice is needed. Spatial (in)justice, derives from the work of Henri Lefebvre (1968) and his idea of "The Right to the City," which at its basic form is the "right to no exclusion of urban society from the qualities and benefits of urban life" (Isensee, 2016). It has been further theorized by scholars like David Harvey (1973) and Edward Soja (2009), who defines it as "to an intentional and focused emphasis on the spatial or geographical aspects of justice and injustice [and involves] the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them" (p. 2).

In a more recent essay, Harvey (2008) writes:

The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights (p. 23).

Such rights are constantly being contested within the space of a city like Los Angeles, both within the real material, built environment and the super structural imaginaries that we perceive it from.

From our mid-level scale vantage of the city, some of these are apparent, but it takes the meeting of multiple scales, including the macro-global scale and the micro-embodied human scale, to fully begin unpacking the complexities of spatial justice in a city like Los Angeles. Take, for instance, Vermont Avenue, which cuts a 23-mile North-South line, passing through many of the spatial contradictions of the city itself, as a kind of microcosm: rich and poor, global immigration, histories of urban unrest. Though L.A. has always suffered from deep spatial injustices, for instance the reverberations of Redlining practices from the 1930s, and their spatial reverberations to the present, can still be felt today (Rothstein 2017; Gibbons 2018), the beginning decades of the twenty-first century have seen large increases in issues such as housing insecurity, income inequality, homelessness, and gentrification, not to mention growing environmental precarity with issues of climate, lack of water, and the resulting devasting annual fires. As Lana del Rey (2019) recently said in song, "L.A.s in flames/It's getting hot," echoing Davis (2018). These problems are not unique to Los Angeles, in fact they are problems faced by cities all over the world, but L.A. offers them at an extreme and complex scale. In this way, some have called Los Angeles a

"collective laboratory" for understanding the city (mission statement of UCLA cityLAB) and charting out possibly more progressive urban futures (Weiss, 2020).

The above terrain has been covered by many, notably in Marxist urban historian, and key member of the 'Los Angeles School' of urbanism Mike Davis in his two books on the city: *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future of Los Angeles* (1990) and *The Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (1998). It represents a common imaginary of L.A. that vacillates between the two poles that Davis labels "sunshine or noir?" (1990, p. 14). The dialectic between these two contrasting views, the sunshine of the beach and palm trees and the noir and corruption that lies just underneath, inform all imaginaries of the city, and account for continuing tensions in cultural production. For instance, in film, the medium that is most associated with the city, these ideas can be seen in classic films such as *Chinatown* (1974), *Blade Runner* (1982), *Mulholland Drive* (2001), or recently *Once Upon a Time. . . In Hollywood* (2019). At a more meta-level, experimental documentary films like Thom Anderson's *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (2003) exist, which is a film that theorizes such media-imaginaries of the city entirely through clips of the movies that have been filmed here.

Rob Sullivan (2014) in his more recent book on Los Angeles, *Street-Level: Los Angeles in the Twenty First Century*, extends this theorizing, arguing that it vacillates between the "real, virtual, [and] in-between," in ways that are both "polymorphous and polymer" (p. 2). Part of Sullivan's argument is that Los Angeles, as well as any complex city, cannot be represented in its totality via writing or any medium, and instead, his book examines, and interrogates, different critical-theoretical takes on the city, of which each he argues is not enough. These include key theoretical representations that "read" Los Angeles as "carceral," "postmodern," and "a non-city," which he then attempts to contrast with a "real" take on the city in its provisional, and ever

changing, complexity. Or perhaps, just take the view of Los Angeles street poet laureate Mike Sonksen (2019), who writes (in poem): "throngs of people mix and match creating/the patchwork mosaic of multicultural souls coming together to call LA home/The community is a poem/in progress called Los Angeles. The angels in a city singing synchronicity from Central to Century City" (p. 8).

This "song to the city" echoes through your head as you descend back to street level, holding the immense, immeasurable, contradictory, and complex views of the city in mind, and return back to the starting point at the bench near City Hall.

Back to Downtown

We are now returned to the micro-scale, having descended back into downtown Los Angeles, now at street level. Downtown is important as the location to situate these opening pages, and the example to come, for a number of reasons. First, it is the origin point of the city, where Los Angeles was founded in 1781 by Spanish colonists just a few hundred feet north of City Hall. Of course, the human habitation of this area goes back far longer, over 500 years or more, to the indigenous Tongva-Gabrieliño people who had a settlement called *iyáangà* near what is now the Los Angeles river.[5] Second, it is an area of the city that has changed greatly during the past decade. Long considered a city without a center, as important cultural and economic institutions moved westward or to other regional hubs after WWII, downtown was seen as only a place of office

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[5] See the project *Mapping Indigenous LA: Place Making through Digital Storytelling*: https://mila.ss.ucla.edu/

buildings that was a no-go zone after dark. Of course, this was a primarily ideological narrative, produced by the white power structures of the city, and which elided many of the actual inhabitants.

The 2010s has seen the 'return' of downtown Los Angeles, as it has rapidly become a site of investment, both financial and cultural, which have changed the view of the area (Collins & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2016; Marino, 2019; Chiland & Barragan, 2020). It is now a destination, rapidly filled with new residential and commercial spaces, which are tweeted and Instagrammed around the world. But this change does not come without tensions, for instance, new loft apartments and boutique bars sit just blocks away from Skid Row, and other sites that have historical and cultural significance have been lost, replaced, or erased under the barrage of construction and new high rises.

Or similarly, gentrification forces have spilled into the ethnic enclave neighborhoods, for instance Chinatown or Boyle Heights, just across the L.A. river from downtown, causing both displacement as well as strong neighborhood activism. These are tensions that are also playing out across the city as a whole, where change is an everyday occurrence, but in downtown Los Angeles they feel particularly palpable. As Los Angeles moves into the next decade, with ensuing megaevents such as the 2028 Olympics, dynamics of urban development and displacement will only continue. These have been pushed back against by activist groups, such as No Olympics LA, both in LA. and abroad drawing solidarity between cities like Tokyo (Friedman, 2019).

This is the context that you find yourself in on our afternoon in September 2018.

A LAyer Deeper

Sitting on the bench, opening your eyes back to the day, you notice a small crowd beginning to form around the monument in front of you. What is this? You wonder. The people are young.

Students? Some sort of training in city planning? Artists? It does look like a class. There are a few that seem like instructors, a few others that seem like guests. Together, they form a loose semi-circle around the monument, casually talking and organizing, but definitely on the verge of something happening—some sort of event.

A voice jumps out over the fray, calling to the group to order. You listen:

"Welcome to *A LAyer Deeper*"

This is a "counter-tour" of downtown Los Angeles presented by the UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative, 2018-2019 cohort. This tour comes from the three-week intensive summer 'boot camp' that we are just finishing, focusing on conceptual approaches for researching and engaging with the city.

We come from architecture, urban planning, and the humanities. Urban Humanities itself is a graduate certificate program that combines humanistic inquiry with design processes to learn from, think about, engage with, speculate on, and perhaps, re-make and re-imagine the city of the twenty-first century, starting here in Los Angeles but also extending across the world. As you can imagine, not just one discipline or approach to knowledge can explain the city, as the city in all its complexity, is bigger than any disciplinary frame.

Our program tries to, through interdisciplinary learning and research—and a project-based curriculum that draws on new media methods that include mapping, film, digital platforms, object making, and art installation and exhibition—to provide a rich intellectual space that can combine all our collective combined knowledge and skills and think about this city that connects us all, Los Angeles, and later in this academic year, Shanghai, which is connected to L.A. through any number of transpacific flows of money, people, and culture. Think of it as the best dinner party you have ever attended, with interesting guests, all talking about the city!

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The summer course, called *Beyond the Façade*, investigates "beyond" the surface level of what we experience in the city. This could be at the literal, material, level of thinking about the built environment, and what lies beyond the doors of buildings, but it can also take on a more conceptual and social levels, understanding how different registers—the historical, the cultural, the political and economic, the artistic and representation—also play out within the space of the city.

Over the past three weeks we have researched and created two projects based on fieldwork in downtown Los Angeles, in the area stretching from where we stand at City Hall, north through Chinatown. Each team of four students completed fieldwork on a different zone within this area, visiting multiple times, talking to people in the community, collecting different types of data, from the visual to the spatial to the affective, and then put it together back in our studio at UCLA, through a multi-step human-centered design process.

Inspired, through a historical collaborative mapping exercise about the 1871 Chinatown Massacre, the largest mass lynching in United States history that occurred on the very ground that you will walk on in the early days of the city, the first project focused on mapping unseen or erased histories within the areas, and drew from a mapping process called "thick mapping," which views mapping as a process of layering different types of qualitative, quantitative, and humanistic data to make an open-ended argument about a particle space or place (Presner, Kawano, Shepard, 2015). Our class created six of these thick maps that explored issues such as language and immigration in Chinatown, a temporal history of the block that is now Union Station over the past 500 years (to the indigenous history of the land), and the current political activism against the ICE detention center.

The second project focused on film, using film to "sense" and explore the city. These projects extended from the mapping project, covering many of the same themes but translating them to a different media form. For this project, we worked with a documentary filmmaker who gave us a workshop on filmmaking theory and practice, particularly focusing on communicating our argument through the unique "texture" image and sound moving through time.

These projects come together in the event you are about to experience: *A LAyer Deeper: A Counter-Tour of Hidden Spaces, Unseen Realities, Missed Connections, and Forgotten Histories in Los Angeles*. Over the past week, the class has collectively curated and organized this tour, which will take you all to the sites that our projects occurred. At each site we have created small, 3D-printed representational objects of each of the mapping and film projects. These are embedded with a laser cut QR code that you can, using your mobile phones, scan to read the maps and watch the films in the locations they represent.

Counter tours of Los Angeles have a lineage that stretches from Norman Klein's (1997) "anti-tour" of downtown Los Angeles to *Esotouric's* many curated tours of the Southland,[6] to the definition that we use in-house, which comes from scholars Laura Pulido, Laura Barraclough, and Wendy Cheng's (2012) *A People's Guide to Los Angeles* that asks, "What would happen if we refocused our attention on those people and places that are systematically left off the map?" (p. 22). Following this, our projects all have the goal to better understand social and spatial injustice in the city. We recognize our privilege in the academy and our intention is to practice engaged and conscious scholarship that reciprocates, rather than just extracts, knowledge from the city.

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[6] https://www.instagram.com/esotouric/?hl=en

Please take a printed map of our tour route. Everyone is welcome to join, both invited, and those who we are encountering here out in the world. Make sure to have your phone ready and a pair of headphones. There will be two groups, on slightly delayed schedules, so please organize with your tour leaders. The tour will take approximately an hour and a half, and will cover a distance of about two miles, moving from this part of downtown, through Union Station and Olvera Street, and north to Chinatown. We will end at 5pm at the Highland Park Brewery, for wrap up and drinks.

We would like to thank our instructors, our guests, and all the people in this part of Los Angeles we have met and interacted with during the past three weeks.

Thank you all for joining!"

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"Interesting," you think, taking this speech in. What a fascinating idea for a class, leaving the confines of the university and engaging with the city around it. It also, not surprisingly, reflects many of the observations and reveries that have appeared as you have had navigating the city. What an opportunity!

You join in with the crowd and move with them into deeper layers of Los Angeles.

Counter-Tour

The tour moves through the city, in and out of sunshine and shade, and stops at a bus stop at the west end of City Hall. The 3D printed object is a model of the building that looms above it, attached to the metal siding of the bus station cover. There a student is waiting and introduces the project. Everyone in the tour steps up and scans the QR code and a video showing the history of civil protests outside the government building plays. A man waiting for the bus asks what is going

on and pulls out his phone and begins to watch. In this way, the work leaves the classroom and meets the public.

Image: *3D Object and QR Code, Downton Los Angeles* (Photo: UHI)

At each stop, there is an introduction by a student, another film or map, the participants finding a bench, or the ground, to take in the work and engage with it at two levels: the actuality of the real place as it mixes with the virtual of the created representation. The juxtaposition between these two registers is powerful, both drawing on and opening up the specificity of the place and the understood imagination of it. Untold histories and memories bubble up from beneath the surface, seeding the imagination, and giving a different sense of understanding of the place you are

As the tour continues, stopping at a strange technicolor statue that is a remnant artifact from the 70s, crossing the freeway in the shadow of the ICE detention center and a newly made by the city temporary housing, and then stopping in a small courtyard outside Union Station to hear the wind gently move through the trees there, before passing through El Pueblo de Los

Angeles, the origin point of the city, and site 1871 massacre, and past the street vendors, who have been recently legalized after years of political organization and activism (Hidalgo, 2012/2020), and Mexican shops that line Olvera street and the small shack that is last building left from the 1932 Olympics above a mural by Mexican artist and Marxist David Siqueiros (*America Tropical*, 1932) that shows an image of American colonialism and oppression only to be whitewashed shortly after painting and then appearing like a ghost in the 1960s as the white paint peeled off becoming a key inspirational work for the ongoing Chicano Art Movement.

We then cross the invisible/visible border between cultural enclaves that is Cesar Chavez Avenue. Chinatown itself is an area in-flux and under attack from forces of gentrification and displacement, where art galleries, boxy new developments for young professionals, and other changes wrought by the areas proximity to Downtown are threatening elderly residents subsisting below the poverty line (Lin, 2008; Li & K, 2019). This is a story that is occurring in Chinatowns around the US and Canada (Zhou, 2020). In LA, there has also been a change of immigration patterns of wealthier generations from Mainland China who are settling in the San Gabriel Valley, changing the center of Chinese life in the city (Lin, 2009; Bertrand, 2015), though this area is also still the site of precarious immigration (Wang, 2020).We move into Chinatown with stops at a clothing market run by Chinese-Vietnamese immigrants and the Thien Hau Temple dedicated to the goddess Mazu, deity of sailors and immigrants (of oceans bringing histories). We pass by the Far East Plaza, a shopping mall from the early 1980s that is now home to hipster foodie culture, for instance the hours long wait for Howlin' Rays Nashville Fried Chicken, itself an appropriation of foodways from the American South (Kim, 2016; Huynh, 2018). Finally, we settle into Chinatown Central Plaza with its Hollywood fantasias of Chinese buildings and statues of Bruce Lee and Sun Yat-Sen, to sit in a quiet courtyard and rest for a bit in the shade.

A Coda

Image: *The City Skyline* (Photo: Author)

In *After/Image: Los Angeles Outside the Frame* (2018), the journalist and native Angeleno chronicler of the city, Lynell George, writes, "The most evocative features of Los Angeles can't always be put into words. Sense of place is a connection that takes root. It flourishes deep inside. That *spirit of place* may come in a quick glimpse or along a periphery. Maybe it's a mood. A hidden vista. The scale of a street. The bend of a skyscraping fan palm" (p. 161). And it is exactly this spirit that the *LAyer Deeper* projects capture and catalyze, a different view of the city, a different, and deeper, understanding.

At the end, a picture is taken of all participants, and the group as a whole move to debrief at the brewery, outside of the frame of view from this account. Does our traveler follow them? Or head back the other way, to wander into some other encounter of the city? And perhaps this is where we leave them, venturing through the city, on the way from one place to the next.

The city comes into focus.

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Chapter 1 An Introduction to the Project

1.1 Project Overview

This dissertation is an educational study of the Urban Humanities Initiative (UHI). Housed at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), UHI is an interdisciplinary one-year-long graduate program that focuses on global megacities in Asia Pacific.[1] It sets as its mission to teach and train graduate students to examine comparative urban relations between Los Angeles and three other cities in a broad and transnationally interconnected Pacific Rim region: Mexico City, Tokyo, and Shanghai, for a kind of experience-driven comparative urbanism. This occurs through linked interdisciplinary seminar and studio courses, which create collaborative projects built of urban research and fieldwork, and travel to one of the international cities each year.

UHI represents a hybrid form of pedagogy, shifting between different combinations of disciplinary practices, methods, and pedagogical strategies, which is place-based and project-based. Students complete these courses along with their coursework from their home doctoral and professional programs and receive a graduate certificate at the end.[2] Overall, the program is invested heavily in contemporary interdisciplinary trends of the university, specifically an

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[1] Because of the specificity of the program that is the central case study and the importance of the cities of focus, as well as my own intimacy with the program as a researcher, I have opted not to anonymize the institutional details. The specificity is important to the context and story being told. Later, when specific experiences of students in the empirical work are presented care will be taken to anonymize identities.

[2] A graduate certificate is a program or other short-term form of training that is done alongside and in addition to graduate educational program work in a student's main program of study. Ranging from purely technical skills to more conceptual sets of knowledge, it is growing trend that is used to signal additional expertise as a way to, at its most instrumental, differentiate a student on the job market.

umbrella of interdisciplinary fields that have been labeled the *new humanities* (Williams, 2019). These fields attempt to practice a more engaged, applied, and practical humanities. In this way, UHI represents an important approach for pushing forward an interdisciplinary study of the urban that can effectively meet scales of the human and the city in a way that can holistically do justice to both. For clarity in the text, generally I will use *urban humanities* to refer to the wider field and *UHI* to refer to the specific program at UCLA.

UHI is one of the 17 Urban Humanities programs worldwide that are funded by a multi-million dollar-grant focused on *Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities* from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation since 2013.[3] These Urban Humanities programs have three primary goals: The first is to engage with urbanism through a humanistic lens, creating interdisciplinary exchanges between design and urban studies with the humanities. This is done to accomplish the second goal, where the Mellon has made a long-term investment to "strengthen, promote, and defend the centrality of the humanities" during an era where the position of the humanities within the university is precarious (Mellon Website; Parry, 2013). The third goal, existing more in the background and across multiple grant programs, is the preparing of future scholars for changing epistemic environments in the global knowledge economy, where skills such as collaboration, intercultural communication, and familiarity with many different types of disciplinary knowledge are becoming more valued (Cason, 2016; Collins Judd, 2016).

The Mellon programs constitute a significant force in the growing field of *urban humanities*—and the grant represents a major attempt to institutionalize this field. There is some

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[3] These seventeen programs include fourteen universities and three non-university institutions. Since 2013, in total there have been thirty grants—some institutions have multiple grants, and this includes grant renewals—with a sum total of $35,077,605 in funding. The UCLA program has had two rounds, three-years each, for a total of $3,600,000 (Mellon Website).

overlap between urban studies and global studies here, but with an added emphasis on the humanities as an equal partner in knowledge. Along these lines, the goal of the Mellon programs is not just to produce research and knowledge that will provide new ways to understand the contemporary global city, but also to produce the types of scholars and professionals who will practice from this urban-humanistic perspective.

At UCLA, over the six years of the UHI's existence covered by this study, approximately 140 participating graduate students have come from 28 distinct disciplinary fields that include both scholarly and professional degrees. Multiple faculty members from across the university have taught courses and workshops, as well as practitioners, activists, and community and arts organizations from outside the university. Each year, 24 students form a cohort that participates in nine months of linked courses that includes an intensive summer introduction, content seminars, and design studios.[4] The blended learning space allows UHI to act as a meeting or exchange zone, within the university, for bringing together students, faculty, and members of the community at large, for critically engaging with the city, creating a distinct set of practices.

Because of the cohort model that is outside—in addition and an alternative to—the "normal" cohort that one typically learns from within graduate school, UHI has also become an important site of across-the-university sociability, as an intellectual space for the organic exchange of ideas between disciplines and as a broader social-network that has social and affective dimensions that reaches beyond the year of participation, creating a learning community that is outside a student's in-discipline identity and in-department cohort. And it offers an alternative location within the university for collective intellectual endeavor and sociability. The dissertation is interested in

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[4] These cover an academic year. UCLA is on a quarter system running from September to June.

better understanding this space and what it produces in the students involved. The preceding ethnographic orientating preface, focusing on the *A LAyer Deeper* project, provides a portrait of some of these practices in motion.

However, UHI is also a site of *education*, where via its interdisciplinary structure many different elements—ranging from ideas to methods to individual people—are brought together in complex ways creating knowledge and learning through their encounter with each other. These *educational encounters* (Ford, 2013; Darling et al., 2016; Lorenzi & White, 2019) occur at many different levels and registers, often at the same time, and as I will argue, produce a different type of learning from the status quo of traditional graduate education, as well as a different type of learning about the contemporary global city of the 21st century.

Therefore through understanding how these types of learning intertwine, the fundamental goal of this project is to trace out what these types of learning are, how they operate, how they are experienced by the students who participated, and then, how individual students have made meaning from these experiences, integrating them into their lives and work after participation.

1.2 Research Framing

This dissertation project analytically engages with UHI, its approach for learning the city, and how this produces education in the form of its influence on students and their futures. It is set within an analysis of the interdisciplinary *new humanities* and the wider political, economic, and epistemic contexts of higher education out of which they emerge. As an educational study of UHI, the dissertation places the program inside a wider set of contextual trends in higher education and interdisciplinary knowledge production, theorizing how it emerges from these contexts. In this

way, the program becomes an analytical object for interrogating these contexts and understanding how they are worked out through via actual educational practices.

In particular, it situates the program within a growing set of fields that attempt to re-orient and re-vitalize humanistic scholarship for the 21st century through engagement with ideas and practices from other disciplines that are becoming organized around the title *new humanities* during the past decade. As well as a meeting and attempted synthesis between different modes, logics, goals and temporalities of education: seminar and studio, scholarly and professional, criticism (deconstruction) and making (construction), process and product, aesthetics and politics, to name a few. These all exist as tendencies on a continuum, which meet within the educational structure and space of UHI, sometimes resolving through synthesis and sometimes existing in open tension. In this way, UHI stands as a potential site to work out forms of both *praxis*—the application of theory through practice—and *poesis*—transforming something through making—that can address key issues that emerge in our contemporary moment.

At the moment, these *new humanities* fields are generative, marked by an attitude of experimentation and possibility, where critical ideas from the humanities can be brought to bear on large and complex areas of knowledge, or emerging phenomena, which cannot be engaged with solely via one disciplinary area. They emerge within various interstices of the contemporary university in the form of research centers, new curricula (majors and minors), certificate programs, individual courses, conference themes, and special journal issues, to name a few. In this way, they are inherently interdisciplinary, but I argue that they represent a new form, or stage, of interdisciplinary organization, where the "big" theme—e.g. the city, or the digital, or the environmental—acts as a *point de capiton* that stitches together ways of knowing from multiple

disciplines, particularly during a time of uncertainty within higher education and disciplinary areas themselves (the humanities).[5]

For this reason, there is a bit of a utopian impulse and sheen to the rhetoric that has built up around these fields, where arguments rest on the ability for these new formations to create something, for lack of a better word, *new*: a *new* way to organize knowledge, a *new* way to practice the humanities, a *new* way to teach, a *new* way for the university to exist. The push for newness, or novelty, is its own rhetoric, often containing ideological underpinnings, and because these fields are still unstable and unfolding—where both top-down and bottom-up forces come together to shape them—the way that they are practiced can sometimes be contradictory.

They are top-down via their attractiveness to administrators and outside funding bodies, such as the Andrew Mellon Foundation that funds UHI, which value them for their trendiness, elements of creative disruption and potential consolidation of outdated disciplines, as well as their potential value at adding humanistic soft skills to areas in STEM that are perceived as being more rigorous. There is a cynical intimation, at least within the less critical takes on the topic, that this is the only way forward for a humanities that are under crisis. This is the version that only focuses on the surface level, instrumental skills, for instance business-focused ideas collaboration, creativity, innovation, or other "21st Century Skills" (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Piirto, 2011; Catone, 2017; Martin, 2018) that are produced within the neoliberal university, rather than a deeper allegiance to knowledge and thinking itself that believes in the risky possibility that uncontrolled

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[5] In Lacanian psychoanalysis the *point de capiton*, "quilting point" or "anchoring point," are points where the signifier and signified are knotted together, "producing the necessary illusion of a fixed meaning" (nosubject.com). There is an element of psychoanalytic desire at work here, where the big theme acts as a point of anchor for different elements (disciplines, knowledges, individual actors) that attempt to find a coherence within trendy new university formations.

changes in one's subjectivity or world-view can occur from encountering new ideas, people, or places (Biesta, 2013).

Yet, at the same time, these fields are also being built from the bottom-up, filled with well-intentioned faculty, researchers, and students, who are utilizing them to explore critical questions and intersections of knowledge. They want to find better ways to engage with the world at large through their research and educational practices. Often times these actors do not easily fit within the more disciplinary structured areas of the university, so fields in the *new humanities* offer an important meeting space within the university for exchanging and creating knowledge, and are sites for developing unexpected learning communities because they collect people who are thinking similarly but who may have never met within a university that is siloed disciplinarily and administratively. When effectively curated, these programs can offer a powerful alternative site of interdisciplinary communication, knowledge, sociability, and meaning making, within the contemporary university, as well as reclaiming practices of collaboration and togetherness from instrumental ends.

1.3 Research Goals

The overall purpose of the dissertation, then, will be to read "education" out of the production of students in the program: understanding how their experience and learning within is embodied in their later work and lives. Through this reading, the hope is to provide insight into the challenges and possibilities of the emerging fields and institutional trends of the *new humanities*, within larger ongoing transformations of the contemporary university.

Along these lines, the first major research goal is to better understand the phenomenon of these *new humanities* programs and what is going on educationally inside them, with the eye towards setting educational practices and policy for similar programs in the future. Here, I develop tools from the field of *Critical University Studies* that place these programs within political, economic, epistemological, and ideological changes that have been occurring within the university, particularly post-2008. This is done to place UHI within a wider set of contexts in order to more effectively analyze it.

The second major research goal is to examine the pedagogical value of putting the urban at a central thematic for learning and collaborative scholarly investigation, where the city— including both the local city and its relations to other cities globally—act not only as a mediating object for many different ways of thinking and knowing (e.g. disciplines, methodological lenses) but also as a site for many different types of encounters that create educational experiences. How do we learn *from* the city? How do we learn *with* others in the city? And how does an understanding of the city change how education is practiced within it? This connects UHI to a whole emerging area of educational scholarship that focuses on learning in, from, and for, cities, through place-based and experiential pedagogies (McFarlane, 2010; Collins & Ho, 2014; Sacre & De Visscher, 2017; Morrison et al., 2019).[6] These pedagogies that center the city and learning within it will be further developed and theorized throughout what follows.

However, at its heart, this project is a study of the students. It focuses on those who participated and who encountered something within the educational space of UHI, learned from that encounter, created new ways of sociability, and then applied that learning in some way to their

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[6] This also connects to the literature that engages with UNESCO Learning Cities, for instance by Bosch (2008), Potjer & Hajer (2017), the mad scholar of UBC, Roger Boshier (2018), and Facer & Buchczyk (2019).

lives after.[7] Therefore, the dissertation's third major research goal, and the one that makes up the primary focus of empirical inquiry, is to give a portrait of UHI's educational practices in motion, focusing on how they were experienced by students as they negotiated the educational space of UHI.

It focuses on students coming from their respective disciplinary training as they encounter new assemblages of knowledge that are not bound to a specific analysis and viewpoint for understanding and engaging with the city, and the interpersonal and interdisciplinary encounters, that in return, made the shared learning space educational. And in turn, understanding how the students, as subjects whose embodiment of disciplinary knowledge is never fully disciplined (and instead is open to being changed, augmented, or hybridized with something new) have subsequently made meaning of such an educational encounter, bringing it into their own futures. From this, I will argue, that the UHI program produces a type of generative subjectivity within students, where through the process of participation students become *urban humanists*.

I argue that this subjectivity happens through a pedagogical process that unfolds within the educational spaces and specific practices brought together and cultivated within UHI, where the city is engaged over the course of the curricular year, first through courses that bring together different disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches (*learning*), then through a critical thinking about the contemporary city (*thinking*), and finally the process of making projects that synthesize and creatively put into a different form (*making*). At all points this is done with

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[7] The term "new ways of sociability" comes from an interview with environmental humanities scholar Stephanie LeMenager, "Stories in Common" (Chaisson, 2019), who says: "We need sociability, and conversation, and teaching, and learning, and music, and song, and poetry, and story, and beauty, and prayer—in whatever forms make sense to us—now more than ever" (p. 8).

others (*together*), in both Los Angeles and in another city, which become the sites that catalyze the process and provide an element of relational comparison.

Combined, I call this process *learning-thinking-making* the city *(together)*, which serves as both the title for this dissertation and the central pedagogical theorization that rests at its conceptual center.

1.4 Guiding Research Questions

With this initial context and research goals in place, this dissertation asks four primary guiding research questions. The questions are as follows:

- How can we understand the contemporary interdisciplinary trends that have emerged under the title *the new humanities*? And how does the sub-field of *urban humanities*, and specifically UHI as a single instantiation of the field, embody these interdisciplinary trends in its funding, structure, and (imagined) outcomes?

- What importance does UHI's research focus on the city have in structuring the education that is produced through it? How does this focus on the city, or the urban, as an interdisciplinary object for analysis within UHI, create an experiential, placed-based and project-based pedagogical processes for learning from the city through a comparative process that can be brought back and integrated into other educational spaces and practices?

- How is UHI educational? Meaning how can it be approached, understood, and analyzed through an educational lens? More specifically, how does UHI in the way that it is structured organize a distinct educational space that can enact a variety of educational encounters that in turn produce different types of learning the city, through the process of *learning-thinking-making (together)*, as well as a different relationship to knowledge and practice for those who experience that education?

- Finally, how have the participating graduate students made sense and meaning from their experiences in UHI? And how have they integrated those experiences back into their own academic and professional identities, research orientations, and practices after their program experience? That is: How do we understand what UHI has produced educationally through the *afterlives* of its students?

Engagement with these questions will be threaded throughout the dissertation. For instance, the review of literature is structurally designed to provide and fill in background context, theorization, and conceptualization for the first two questions, while the conceptual and pedagogical framework sets up the third question Both the third and fourth questions become central to the empirical chapters and set up much of the questions that were asked during data collection. They will be addressed in respective chapters within the empirical half. All four questions will return in the conclusion and be specifically addressed as part of the findings. However, it is important to view them not as wholly prescriptive but instead a set of guideposts for inquiry that were taken into the field and shaken out, elaborated on, and complicated through the narratives of each chapter.

1.5 Scales of Analysis

The dissertation sets up its educational analysis within three scales, or layers that act in critical conversations with each other, as they exist within university institutional contexts of interdisciplinarity within higher education. These are scaled (macro, meso, micro), but also relationally interact—where the larger scale structures and nests within it the smaller, which in turn are moving from generalized phenomena at the macro level to individual subjects and experiences at the micro.

The chart contained in **Figure 1** reflects the institutional contexts of the project and develops a framing of these relationships:

Scale	Category	Description	Example
Macro *Institutional contexts of UHI*	**Institutional Interdisciplinarity**	Wider discourse of ID knowledge production, existing since beginning of university and divided knowledge; manifests in each time period in different ways and trends; can be an administrative logic; exists across research, teaching;	Long term trends within higher education to create interdisciplinary knowledge
Meso *UHI program as an educational space*	**The New Humanities**	Broad set of newly emerging fields that put humanities with other areas of studies to make synthetic and hybrid combinations; exist as research centers, and educational programs in the university; formed around solving "wicked problem" areas	Includes Digital, Environmental, Medical, and Urban Humanities.
	(Global) Urban Humanities: the field	A particular area in the New Humanities that combines humanistic scholarship on the urban with projective design practices; largest grant in this area funded by Mellon Foundation; city through the lens of the humanities.	Approximately 17 Mellon funded programs around the world, which take on various forms from educational program to research center
Micro *The lives and afterlives of student experience and learning*	**UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative**	A specific manifestation of Urban Humanities housed at UCLA that studies megacities in Asia Pacific and has brought together different ideas, methods, research approaches, people, etc.	Graduate certificate program existing at UCLA from 2013-Present; focus of the case study; alternative educational space for a variety of educational encounters within the university
	Individual Students	The students in UHI, as a group, but also their individual subjective experience of education in the program during and after	Individual participants who become *urban humanists* through participation in the program

Figure 1: *Scales of Analysis*: University-Institutional-Interdisciplinary Context

They constitute the research field of the project, where I argue that educational meaning emerges from the interplay of how the different layers interact, creating pedagogical situations that are structured by the complex interactions of these scales that operate both inside the context of the university and through an engagement with the research object of the city.

1.6 Conceptual Map for the Project

Building from the above set of scales, the following diagram (**Figure 2**) illustrates how the institutional context (***left side*** *of diagram*) interact comes together and interacts with the context of the urban research object of UHI (***right side*** *of the diagram*) to create the educational space of UHI. Each of these contexts contains their own macro-micro scalar relationship, with the university side being a simplified version of **Figure 2** and the urban side representing the conceptual imagining of urban-scales, reaching from the phenomena of global or planetary urbanism at the macro-end to the micro-perspective of the human within the city, which exist within UHI.
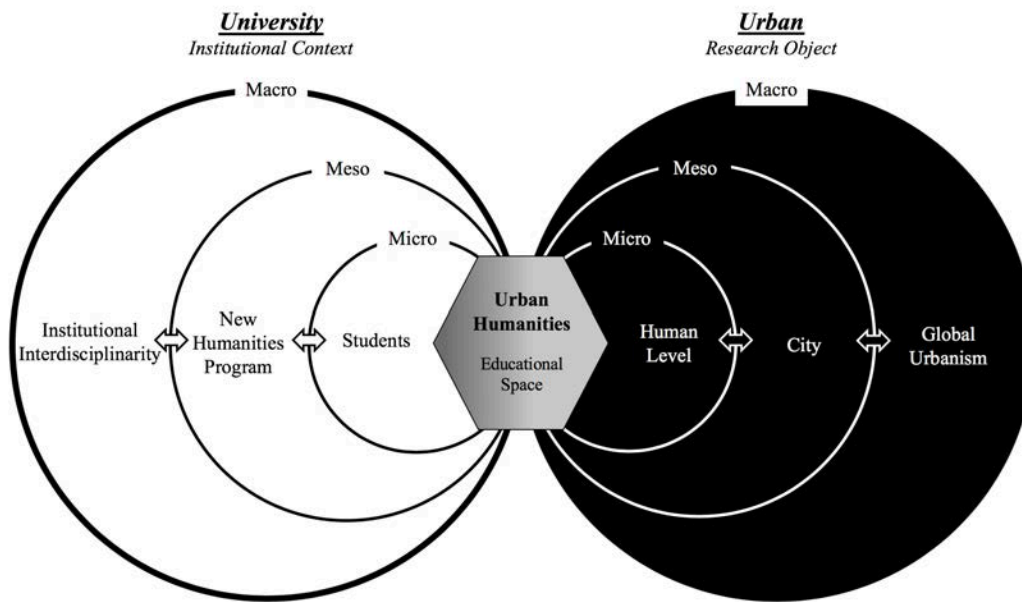
Figure 2: *Conceptual Map of Project*

The two scales come together within the grey hexagon in the center. This I label as the educational space of UHI and it is the site of where the majority of the empirical work of the project is located. I conceive of it as generative space where various educational encounters are structured through the meeting of the university and urban contexts.

1.7 Analytical Approach

The project draws from multiple scholarly fields to lay out a critical view of the knowledge politics and practice of academic interdisciplinarity and programs like UHI (the structure), as seen through the micro-scale experiences of those students who are involved within such programs

(individuals with agency contained within). In order to effectively frame the different scales and processes involved, the project is built from a wide and non-disciplinary specific body of academic literature and other outside sources. I have tried to be plural and creative in the sources and inputs that I use—in other words: an interdisciplinary object of inquiry requires an interdisciplinary approach to engage with it.

Generally, the literature used includes in the theorization of interdisciplinarity within the realms of research, education, and practical application. Literature adopted from the different disciplines that are present within UHI was also engaged with and how each of these disciplines manifests questions of knowledge and interdisciplinarity inside them, as well as literatures from critical educational sources, such as critical university studies that engage with these new structures. Finally, a variety of theorizations about pedagogy, graduate school, the state of the humanities, to name a few areas, are built into the knowledge architecture of the project. Some of these will be introduced, worked through, and then catalyzed into analytical tools within the literature review and conceptual framing chapters to come.

The hope with this approach is that I am able to build unique analysis, yet at the same time the risk is that it becomes a work that, because it does not hold closely to any one disciplinary tradition, is unable to be read by them. This in turn, is a central risk and tension that appears within UHI—where the more interdisciplinary you become, the less at home you are in the disciplines and disciplinary structures themselves—and the tension between how individuals negotiate being disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or a position somewhere in-between, is a constant theme. Still, the overarching goal is that what is analyzed and learned via this project can be taken back to the field of education broadly, with the potential to open up new areas within that already plural field. With

this being said, these meta-tensions within interdisciplinary knowledge and practice encountered via the research are essential critical elements of the project.

In order to effectively engage with a multi-leveled and multi-directional project, I take a research approach that builds from the anthropology of education that analyzes the "research practices, knowledge, and legitimacy claims" of interdisciplinary programs and scholarship (Antonijevic, 2015, p. 2). In the present work, these concerns manifest empirically as an ethnography of UHI's activities, but which uses the experiences recorded within those design and activities, to engage with the larger set of questions surrounding interdisciplinarity. In particular, it acknowledges that there is something always unstable and incomplete, always being worked out, in the discourse between disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity, which is a central attribute of their existence (and a central attribute of how they exist within the university).

On this note, I argue that this instability and incompleteness is not a bad thing, and therefore should not be "managed" out of the equation, but rather is inherently what gives interdisciplinarity power because it opens up the possibility of contingency and to finding something new. It is in these cracks that what is most interesting and vital occurs. In the literature on interdisciplinarity, such "messy" accounts of disruption are often neglected, as they do not fit the easy research goals of projects—especially those that are funded from outside and have to prove research accomplishments (Facer and Pahl, 2017). My critical approach to mapping and interpreting UHI focuses on examining various pedagogical issues and moments that illuminate the significant relevance between the micro "surprises" in the time-spaces of studying and the macro-level stakes of building a worldly and practiced interdisciplinary orientation.

Following from this, I take some inspiration from conjunctural research approaches found in urban and city studies (in Leitner et al., p 37-42) and further develop this perspective within the

methodology chapter.[8] However, in brief, conjunctural approaches to the urban try to move beyond just vertical or horizontal analysis of cities, two primary analytical modes, and instead try to "situate social action, social practices, and social processes within what are invariably complex, leaky, and 'open' social systems" (p. 38). In other words, it is an "intermediate" position that does not just theorize from on-high, nor is fully embedded within the description of a single case, instead trying to "think *through* and *out from* particular social formations" (p. 39). In turn, the goal is to extend out from the single case back to larger urban problematics, with the ultimate goal to create forms of "thick theorization" that can cross scales and cases.[9] I hope to do this more modestly, applying something like a conjunctural education analysis to my case: where an analysis of the social practices and processes of students at a particular site at the micro-level can scale up to understand something of the large educational social system they are contextualized within.

To conclude, I ground my analysis in an conjunctural education-centered meta-analysis that attempts to re-wire the existing ways that programs like UHI have been evaluated, flipping the focus from one that is simply evaluative to one that centers the complexities of student learning experienced through participation rather than the specific research aims of the interdisciplinary program. For instance, this is not a study of cities or the urban, or the exact research produced, that is the expected products of UHI, though these products will be analyzed as artifacts of pedagogy.

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[8] Conjunctural approaches are introduced as part of a chapter on the methodological terrain of urban studies and include other methodological approaches to the city that are important to UHI and specific parts of my analysis of it. For instance, other approaches include "close encounters," which align with educational encounter frameworks, comparative approaches to urbanism, and relational approaches.

[9] The descriptor "thick" is a keyword within UHI, deriving from anthropologist Clifford Geertz' (1973) concept of "thick description" that focuses on "the webs of meaning" in ethnography rather than reductive observations. *Thickness* in UHI is theorized in Presner, et al. (2014) and refers to the use of different sources including data, archival sources, ethnographic interviews, spatial analysis, visual observation and artistic engagement for understanding the city, as well as the layering of different temporalities, positionalities, narratives, and contingencies. Bendix et al. (2017) discuss thickness in terms of interdisciplinarity, using it to refer to interdisciplinarity that emerges from below and in the subjective experience of participants. All three of these definitions are important for my use of the term throughout.

It is also not wholly a study of the surface-level institutional outcomes, or metrics of the program, for instance the aggregate number of students who received the graduate certificate, though this will also be presented.

What I mean by this is that it the end goal of this is not evaluation *per se*—I am not so interested in whether the program was a success in the way that the funding body, or university, or faculty who were involved may evaluate it, or present it to the public—but instead something deeper, richer, and messier, which is tied to the indelible imprint that is left from the particularity of the educational experience. This comes from the moments of the unexpected, and why the term encounter is so important as it holds within it that generative possibility of such contingency. Therefore, the study is intimately interested in the unexpected paths and products that emerged and took root in the lives of students—their *afterlives*—as they encountered UHI, navigated the ideas and practices within, the cities involved, and each other, and then made some sort of meaning from that, however complicated, uneasy, provisional, conflicted, that meaning might be.

1.8 Methodology and Positionality

The dissertation takes a qualitative and ethnographic approach to the study of UHI. It follows members of five cohorts of students who participated in the program between the years 2014-2019.[10] Through my position as a participant observer who was embedded within the program in a number of different roles—from first being a student to then filling a role as a teaching

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[10] The program has continued into the 2019-2020 academic year, but I chose to distance myself from it when my fieldwork was completed. My participant observation work finished in June 2019, but I have still kept track of students and their outcomes, for instance graduation or employment, since that date.

assistant, research associate, and finally a more central teaching role—this study covers a wide array of activities ranging from classroom time, student collaborative project work, international travel and fieldwork, and final project reviews.[11] The project also provides some window into the behind-the-scene practices such as curriculum design, travel logistics, and other administrative tensions that appeared within the program, though these are a secondary empirical concern.

Throughout my time entangled with the program I took countless notes, field memos, and other reflective writing to document in-the-moment happenings, getting a sense of how all these processes unfolded. I also took photographs and video visually documenting different activities. Combined, these constitute an experiential archive of the program that I draw from and weave into the ethnographic sections, in particular utilizing to give a specific sense of place of the classroom and of the different cities. Augmenting this is an archive of student produced projects that I have collected and that showcase the different types of media objects that the program explored— including films, maps, writings, built objects, and engaged scholarship collaborations. These different media objects will become important case examples within the empirical chapters, as they represent the end product of learning.

For direct data on student experience, I elicited formal survey data from the five cohorts of students that I spent time with and, in addition, engaged in semi-structured interviews with a select number of students from all years of the program. I also staged a number of events in collaboration with other graduates, where qualitative data was gathered. These included sessions of an alumni salon where graduates workshopped papers and projects, two alumni exhibitions that showcased

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[11] As I was first a student in the program before researching it, my formal observational fieldwork was primarily focused on four cohorts of the program between 2016 and 2019. However, from 2014-2019 I was present at almost every formal moment of UHI, including all international travel trips.

student-created urban humanities projects to the public and included different talks and performances, and finally, three conference panels that I organized in partnership students and alumni talking about their experiences and the ways they have utilized. Details on these will be described within the fieldwork and methods chapter.

There are also years of informal conversations with participants in a range of settings—from the classroom to walking through the city to various social gatherings in the time after—where the meta-themes of "What is UHI?" "What it meant? And "What it continues to mean after it was finished?" were worked out. In many ways, these conversations have been essential, as they allowed me to be part of a long-term collective theorizing, as well as being an observer who could trace out the nuances and particularities between cohort years and how the program changed and evolved—as well as met unexpected challenges—over time. Reactions and reflections from these conversations were recorded in field memos and then analytically processed through additional note drafts, becoming another archive and site of theory generation. I was able to hold this position, which I theorize as being a *horizontal* position, or an in-between position, due to the fact that I was a fellow graduate student who had a long-term view of the program through both my experience and role as a researcher.[12]

Because I was not a faculty member, I could act more freely as a trusted confidant, seen as someone who was invested in their experience and learning (as it paralleled my own investment and learning). In this way, I became intertwined with my fellow urban humanists, their lives,

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[12] My role as a researcher has also allowed me to step back and analyze via more vertical positioning, and the combination of the ethnographic and experiential horizontality with the verticality of how I have attempted to theorize the larger phenomena influencing UHI, constitutes in part, the conjunctural analytical approach. Suffice to say, my overall role and position has been complicated, and sorting out all the elements of it, has been an important process of "returning from the field," as well as another important source of data.

research projects, critical commitments, and ways of understanding the city. As well as the sociality that we produced together. They have influenced my thinking and much of my critical perspective on the program, it is with them that I have solidarity (and who this work is primarily for). More of my positioning and how it influenced my methodological approach will be theorized in the methods chapter, but to close, the anthropologist Tim Ingold (2018) writes about education as an "attending" to the lives of others in the world, a studying *with* others for the purpose of leading life (p. viii-ix), and if nothing else, this project comes from an active practice of learning thinking, and making *with* the many who have made up the collective body of UHI.

Potential Audiences

Following the above section, there are no doubt multiple audiences for what follows. Generally, on the surface level, I envision the narrative to be of interest to those who are creating policy or setting up similar types of programs. The project's contribution is to give some understanding of how the students experience these new types of programs, finding them useful, or not, meaningful, or not. These could be administrators, people from humanities or other disciplines, or those creating new curriculums with an interdisciplinary foundation. There is also much to contribute to Urban Studies and Architectural practice, for instance how to better integrate humanist ideas, as well as practical concerns such as how to build better and more reflexive fieldwork practices.

More importantly, I do want this to be situated within a kind of Educational Studies, one that is really thinking about pedagogy-as-a-process and new areas and formations within educational systems as having the possibility to create both new interdisciplinary knowledge and subjectivity in individuals and groups who are learning together. Therefore, educators and

educational researchers who are interested in practices in place-based, experiential learning, making and new media practices, and other forms of education that utilizes multiple disciplinary areas. On a perhaps wider educational policy lens, there is a lot that this project can contribute to "Learning City" policy, a growing trend that is primarily a top-down policy oriented area, and which holds specific ideological biases, through the providing of a ground-up humanities method for engaging with and learning from the city. A few sections address this directly, attempting to open-up possible connections for future research.

Finally, it also contributes to the more specific educational sub-field that I am nominally a member of: Comparative and International Education. There are issues of both comparison and international exchange and study involved. With the former, I hope that it presents a more relational perspective on comparison that draws critical resources from the humanities, anthropology, and a variety of postcolonial global and urban studies. With the latter, it describes an attempt to create multi-directional exchanges that are built on a reciprocal thinking together that is project-based, and attempts to, though it did not always exceed, balance institutional power asymmetries.

1.9 Potential Limitations and Complications

A few important limitations for this research are worth pointing out. Foremost, they have to do with my position as a graduate student researcher who was also part of the educational program being studied. As I will elaborate in the fieldwork section, I am the quintessential insider: interested in "studying" the program because it was educationally interesting and meaningful to me, but that also means that I came into the project with already limited objectivity. In this way, I

am bridging multiple epistemological audiences. I was a booster, advocating for the educational power of the program to many different audiences. I still do this to a point, but through the process of researching, I have tried to build objective and critical distance, particularly during the writing process, and I hope that comes through as a benefit of being less positionally objective. I am aware that I have a unique position that can at times limit my view, and this has led me to develop a distinct meta-awareness about the project itself. Hopefully the understanding that has come from that ground-level entanglement—i.e. contamination—has allowed me to ask better questions and make better observations, to go somewhere else that a traditional researchers "objectivity" would not let them see, as there is some slippage between self-experience and research-experience. This is not auto-ethnography *per se*, but the educational knowledge embedded from my own experience has an important dialectical quality for producing a knowledge that can speak to multiple positions and epistemes.

I have tried to build something that is separate, its own thing. That looks at UHI from a different vantage—from the ground level, less high-academia, more through the eyes of a student and not those of a professor, perhaps smaller and less grand, more full of messiness and holes and asymmetries, less totally put together in word or image—and I think this comes out in the empirical contribution that goes beyond the scope of the above UHI book, through an empirical account of student experience that is lacking within that work. This is the terrain that what follows exists in, marked by limitations, but moving past it with some awareness, at the *speed of life* (Bowie, 1977).

1.10 Chapter Outline

The dissertation consists of the following substantial parts and chapters:

Part I consists of three chapters of literature and theoretical review. Following a critical set-up and outline, Chapter 2 sets up contextual literature about interdisciplinarity, providing tools for understanding interdisciplinary efforts in the university and how interdisciplinarity manifest within UHI. Chapter 3 reviews key institutional contexts (the university, the new humanities, graduate education) that the project is set within. Chapter 4 then lays out literature on the city and ways that education has engaged with the urban, expanding upon on what I call pedagogies for learning the city.

Part II consists of a chapter of pedagogical theorization, via a conceptual framework that draws on theories of educational encounters, processes of becoming, and sets up the *Learning-Thinking-Making (Together)* framework the undergirds the project (Chapter 5). Following this, Chapter 6 focuses on my fieldwork and formally sets up research methods. It explains the data collection activities and elaborates on my approaches to the field, giving insight into a variety of meta-complications that emerged from fieldwork.

Part III focuses on two clusters of chapters that present my empirical data; a Side A and a Side B. Side A focuses on presenting UHI in action, using descriptive data gathered and putting to work my participant observation. Chapter 7 gives a data overview of the program, presenting research into issues such as program structure, student demographics, and other pedagogical practices. Chapter 8 provides a compendium of different research and project making methods that UHI uses. This chapter is followed by an interlude that gives an account of two UHI projects that I was closely involved in. Chapter 9 presents an ethnographic narrative account of a single curricular year.

Side B takes on the theme of "afterlives" and traces different ways that students have made sense of their experience within UHI and how they have integrated the experience into their own

work and lives. Chapter 10 is made primarily of semi-structured interviews and qualitative survey data, while Chapter 11 builds from observational fieldwork at events such as alumni gatherings and conferences, and the interviews I conducted with students.

To end, the conclusion returns to the central research questions, provides discussion, consideration, and reflection of the material that precedes, with the hope of drawing out further reflection for research, policy, and most of all, teaching.

1.11 Long Term Significance and Conclusion

"If a scholar stays only in one place, then he'll know no more than one tune, his mind poor and pathetic. He ought to travel widely, observe how people live and how things work, understand customs and cultures across regions, learn of mountains, waters and meteorology, in order to extend his knowhow. This is how scholars are benefited from their experiences."

-Hu Yuan

The above quote comes from the Northern Song dynasty educator Hu Yuan (993-1059). Hu was a Neo-Confucian teacher who ran an academy that trained scholars and officials in what is now Zhejiang province, where, together with the adjacent Jiangsu province, his educational legacy has continued to thrive into the presence. This academy, as reported by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) in *The Elementary Learning* (1187) was novel for being the first school in China to combine

classical learning and practical knowledge in the curriculum, deviating from the long tradition of only teaching the canonical philosophical, historical, and poetic texts that made up the education of those elites who were trying to pass the Imperial Examinations. Hu's academy is discussed by the contemporary scholar of Chinese philosophy and education, Wm. Theodore De Bary, in an essay from his book *The Great Civilized Conversation* (2013) where he draws inspiration from it to propose a kind of 21st century transpacific liberal studies that draws equally from Chinese and Western thought. The school is important for this project as it is was the first school to have "a division of studies between humanities and technical subjects of social relevance" that included practices such as statecraft, engineering, and civil planning (p.182), as well as physical and martial arts.

The relevance of such a school historically should be obvious to the contours of this project and is therefore worth a quick consideration, particularly as it is an early historical example of interdisciplinary education in practice. One can tell that Hu was proto-interdisciplinarian—not that knowledge was even divided in such a way within Song Dynasty China—but his education view was innovative for its time for taking a hybrid path, and one that valued practical experience as much as traditional knowledge. In this case, classical Chinese knowledge, or the Chinese humanities, was the out of touch status quo that needed to be shaken up through an exposure to the practical, as well as the experiential, embodied through a travel that occurred not just physically but across forms of knowledge. Only in this way could proper scholarship and statecraft be practiced. In some ways, we can consider Hu something like a proto-Deweyan educator in his attempt to find institutional forms that could combine theory and practice through pedagogy, which would contribute to the better social and governmental practices.

I am interested in Hu and his school for a number of reasons. First, an engagement with non-western accounts of key foundational ideas like what a school is and how to construct different forms of holistic knowledge, is an important source of critical and dialectical insight. There are a few sections below where pieces of Chinese philosophical perspective work their way into the narrative, not the least because Shanghai is a key location, and therefore the knowledge traditions of places should be in a relational conversation, if "travel to" and "study of" of other places will be anything other than, at its worst, extractive, and at its best, entirely missing the point. Second, is the fact that I am a distant relative of Hu's, a 34th generation descendent and therefore there is a sense of serendipity of encountering a mind from so long ago that was thinking about similar things, as well as a sense of destiny and legacy. More importantly, it offers a historical precedent for the type of education that I am trying to theorize through this study, one that experiments with forms different from the status quo, is disciplinarily agile, fuses different practices together, and is engaged with the world.

Later generations of my family have continued to be educators and school-builders, notably during the Republican era (1912-1949) with the creation of 大同大学 (Utopia University) in Shanghai. Utopia University was founded by Hu Dunfu (1886-1978), my great-grand uncle, in 1912 as a comprehensive university serving the Chinese upper middle class. It was one of the top private educational institutions in the city during this time, which was known for experimenting with different forms of pedagogy, partially drawn from the founder's experience as international students in the United States during the early 1900s, as well as trying to create an appropriate and hybridized (between China and the West) education for young Chinese (this was also the era that John Dewey himself visited China and influenced educational reforms similar to the Hu family, and in fact Dewey and Hu Dunfu shared a student in the renowned Chinese literary scholar Hu Shi,

no relation). This was during a time of political, economic, and social instability unfolding under the backdrop of a semi-colonial city. *DaTong* (大同) is commonly translated as utopia, but a better translation, deriving from a saying from the *Liji* (The Record of Rights), might be as "The Great Commons," or "The Great Community," where "all under heaven are common (or public)" in order to compassionately structure a community for the collaborative survival of mankind. This is perhaps the best and most appropriate definition of what a school can do and be, in the way that it can bring knowledge and people together under common cause. And the conceptual line that is drawn here between "schools" in Shanghai and Los Angeles (and beyond), across space and time, is an important one.

I see UHI as another site for discovering types of education like this, one that breaks with the status quo, sets out on its own course, existing in the "fragile junction between knowledge-making and the world" (Tsing, 2015, p. 503), and if there is another way to consider the long-term significance of this project, it is to contribute to the experimentation with, and discovery of, new forms of education that do something similar. It dreams of a school, an *education*, that is more intertwined with the city, in whatever form the city may take in the future. Within UHI, and through my study of it, I saw the glimmer of such a thing, of an education that could be something more, and was a way forward in creating a blended knowledge, that had a sense of the global and local spanning the civilizations of the Pacific, fused critical approaches with applied practices, and brought together people and places in a compelling way, and on and on, to create something different: a potential generative vision of education for a 21st century that is becoming more and more complicated as days go by.

This is the way, or *dao* (道), that the project follows.

Part I

Literature Review and Theoretical Framing

Structure of Part I

Goals and Outline for the Literature Review and Conceptual Framing

The following three chapters examine conceptual literature that provides key context and theorization for the project. Their goal is to provide a contextual foundation, elaborating on concepts and arguments that were first presented in the introduction, and generating theory from these that will undergird the later empirical work. Overall, the concepts that follow have been, to use a key UHI signifier, "thickened" through a long-term process of trying to understand and critically complicate the underlying phenomena going into this project—meaning what I first thought was perhaps a simpler explanation, has gathered conceptual weight and complexity as I have moved through the process of research, fieldwork, and analysis. In this way, the following has been re-written and re-organized multiple times, both pre- and post- fieldwork, and represent part of a reflexive process for building and revising theory, and for the understanding of a context that can be understood from multi-leveled and multi-disciplinary viewpoints.

Chapter 2 provides an initial context of interdisciplinarity within universities, as a kind of contextual force that is working through both sides of the diagram, as well as the middle

Chapter 3 focuses on giving an account of these institutional forces and trends (*left side of the figure*) that structure the formation of UHI and the people within it. It captures and illustrates a series of phenomena that intersect within the case of UHI, or which surround it and give it form—things that will help frame discussions that will come later. These include, on the institutional end, the university, interdisciplinarity, issues in the humanities, the creation of *new humanities* programs, and tensions in graduate education. *Figure 2* in the introduction provides a conceptual map for how these two areas are

scaled and how they come together to produce the educational space of the program itself. This is the theorizing of different factors that set up the study.

Chapter 4 provides background on the urban (*right side of the figure*), while also examining different pedagogical attempts that engage with the city in order to provide a conceptual lineage and understanding of what UHI is trying to do. It looks at educational engagements with the city, or the urban, which also represents the research object that organizes Urban Humanities. It builds the concept of pedagogies for learning the city, where urbanism and education dialogically speak to each other, which I argue is the signature pedagogical contribute of UHI. This is the theorizing about the pedagogy that structures what UHI does, thinking through what the pedagogy it teaches is trying to do.

Chapter 2 Framing Interdisciplinarity in Academia and UHI

<u>Interdisciplinary</u>: Literally, that which lies "between" disciplines. Hence, in principle, a domain not policed by them. In practice, such spaces have lately been used as marginal zones wherein labor propaedeutic to discipline formation may occur. However, in the context of mounting institutional and/or economic pressure on the humanities, such spaces may increasingly serve in the manner of refugee camps for scholars, teachers, and students no longer sheltered by disciplinary structures, or seeking escape from the same" (p.45).

-A Community of Inquiry, *Keywords; for Further Consideration and Particularly Relevant to Academic Life, Especially as it Concerns Disciplines, Inter-Disciplinary Endeavor, and Modes of Resistance to the Same* (2018)

Introduction

If there is a framing keyword for UHI that must be addressed and given some theorization, then it is "interdisciplinary," as it dominates the descriptive and conceptual expressions of this project. Whenever someone talks about UHI—faculty introducing or writing about it, students explaining what it is, and so on—the term interdisciplinary is used. Interdisciplinary gives the program power and cache, it signifies it as an alternative space, different from elsewhere in the university. It signifies that you are leaving your department and, maybe, going somewhere better,

or more creative, or at least different. It often has a whiff of magic embedded within it. In talking about interdisciplinarity, as just an element of academic speech, there is already a deep discourse of values embedded within it, as well. The above epigraph can be used as a kind of situating thought, to be read in tandem with what follows, and it will be returned to in the final discussion.

This, then, begs the question, of what interdisciplinary, and its different variants ranging from *cross* to *multi* to *trans* actually mean?[1] On the surface, the answer might appear to be simple, with a common definition, more prominent than the one above, reading something like this: *interdisciplinary means any attempt to combine different forms of knowledge to make something new*. However, when one investigates and thinks about it more, as it exists in practice within the university, the definition becomes more complicated and slippery. The following section provides some overview, surveying and analytical discussion on these terms, before building a more reflective (and useful) discussion at the end.

The chapter examines:

- How do interdisciplinary efforts exist within the contemporary university?
- What sort of critical approaches can be developed for understanding interdisciplinary as a powerful force within academic institutions?
- And how does interdisciplinary manifest within UHI?

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[1] These different modes are generally conceived as a continuum denoting different levels of integration. These will be unraveled below.

2.1 Institutional Contexts

As the project is situated in an institutional context where interdisciplinary work has been encouraged over the past years by forces within the university, it is worthwhile to think about these origins and their respective logics. These efforts have been undertaken with the general belief that, as Myra Strober (2012) articulates, interdisciplinary promotes, "cognitive diversity [which] *can* enhance creativity and develop new solutions to complex problems" (p. 166). In a world filled with "wicked problems" (Rittel & Webber, 1973), finding ways to bridge the specialized knowledge of the disciplines becomes a form of common sense that then manifests in a variety of ways. [2] It is a powerful strategy for producing "new" research and developing researcher's skills (Nissani, 1997; Repko, 2012; Menken & Keestra, 2016). It is also a key area for developing new experimental research methodologies and practices (Lury, 2018), as well as an important area for communication (Holbrook, 2013). In these ways, interdisciplinarity acts as a kind of always present force existing in the background atmosphere of the academy, ready to be utilized as a signifier for some kind of change.

Still, the debates on the value of interdisciplinary research and collaboration are intense, where there is no consensus, simply a continuum of opinions. Interdisciplinary boosters, like Julie Thompson Klein (1990, 1996) and critics like Jerry Jacobs (2013) exist on either side, each providing arguments for and against, serving to shift the discourse around the subject, the result

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[2] The following is the main definition of *wicked problem*, from Rittel (1973), quoted in Brown et al. (2010): "A wicked problem is a complex issue that defies complete definition, for which there can be no final solution, since any resolution generates further and where no solutions are true or false or good or bad, but the best that can be done at any time. Such problems are not morally wicked, but diabolical in that they resist all the usual attempts to resolve them." Interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches to solve wicked problems like climate change or global pandemics are an important logic and area of research (Hirsch Hadron, et al., 2010; Boradkar; 2017; Tromp, 2018).

being that there have been a range of new practical approaches for interdisciplinary work which have not been fully studied (see also the volume edited by Christie & Maton, 2011).

As Alan Liu (1989) wrote, and which still maybe applies today, interdisciplinarity is "the most seriously underthought critical, pedagogical, and institutional concept of the modern academy" (p. 743). One can briefly and broadly historicize the mixing of the disciplines into several clear eras: pre-1970 with the rise of disciplines and first form of interdisciplinary research over the past century. These can be illustrated by focus areas that are now disciplines, for instance education, which brought together several different disciplinary and methodological approaches, and which now constitute stable fields. A second era, might be the post-1970 period where there was a reaction to strict disciplines and their modernist and positivist origins, through post-modern and post-structural approaches that broke apart the grand narratives of disciplinary knowledge and that opened up attempts to transgress these limits and created new fields like cultural studies, which were then institutionalized. Finally, a post-millennial era (where we are currently) where the logic of the mixing of disciplines has gotten stronger, but at the same time more critical critiques and problematizations have emerged (See Graff, 2015 for a longer version of this history), as well as new forms, or at least a new packaging, like the *new humanities* (to be examined more closely in the following chapter).

2.2 Interdisciplinarity in Education

Interdisciplinarity is becoming a powerful educational force, with an important subfield of interdisciplinary research being attempts to design pedagogy that teaches students at all levels to be interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinary thinking is seen as an important 21st Century Skill, along

with critical thinking and other social aspects of learning like collaboration, as it helps student's ability to deal with complexity. On this note, Interdisciplinary Studies have become an important area of general education within liberal arts colleges (Newell, 2001; Sternberg, 2008; Tight, 2010; Repko et al., 2017), or for STEM in particular (Lansiquot, 2016), or as a model for student mentorship (Grovitz et al., 2019). Handbooks for creating interdisciplinary curriculum have also become more common (see Buis et al, 2016; de Greef et al., 2017), as well as arguments to develop curriculums that instead of producing "disciplined" single area thinkers, instead produce thinkers who can bridge multiple areas.

There is also a growing literature on how to develop education to produce practitioners ('wicked students') who are disciplinary flexible and widely collaborative to address them (see Hanstedt, 2018). Interdisciplinary educational initiatives have built curriculum with similar framing at both the undergraduate, for instance Champlain College's Core Curriculum,[3] and graduate level, the University of Minnesota's Masters of Developmental Practice.[4]

2.3 Working Definitions and Taxonomies

Myra Strober defines a discipline as a conceptual structure, a community, a cultural system, a place of a person's identity, and it can be measured by how many departments it has existing across universities and its ability to produce new versions of itself through doctorates. Thus, it has something to do with replication that is produced through training and socialization, in the form

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[3] https://www.champlain.edu/academics/undergraduate-academics/core-curriculum
[4] https://www.hhh.umn.edu/masters-degrees/master-development-practice

of academic guilds that one becomes a part of via doctoral training, and this replication has embedded ideas about power and knowledge (p. 12). Others have called it an almost religion, for the power that a discipline has on identity that is worked out through ritual and practice.

In contrast, one definition of interdisciplinarity that is useful, comes from Boix Mansilla (2006) who writes, "A form of inquiry that integrates knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines. . . or established fields of study. . . to produce a cognitive or practical advancement (e.g. explain a phenomenon, create a product, develop a method, find a solution, raise a question) that would have been unlikely through single disciplinary means." This definition is open to several types of knowledge produced, yet there are an entire range of definitions with many texts seemingly concerned with categorizing the interdisciplinary continuum.

Most sources present some version of the interdisciplinary continuum, moving from disciplinary to transdisciplinary, and creating different taxonomies of terms. These taxonomies are attempting to "map a terrain that continues to shift," and it generally looks something like this, adapted from Rodgers and Bremmer (2013) because of clarity of presentation:

Term	Definition	Less
Disciplinary	Grounded in one set of conceptions and one methodological approach; only able to ask questions and contribute in this area	**Integrated**
Multidisciplinary	Understanding of disciplinary difference and can learn from other disciplines	
Crossdisciplinary	Understanding of disciplinary difference but can begin to solve problems in another discipline	
Interdisciplinary	Gaining competency in at least two disciplinary areas, but where one has primacy	
Transdisciplinary	Competency in two areas where neither is primary.	**More** **Integrated**

Continuum of Disciplinary-Interdisciplinary Integration

These cannot be read as totally bounded terms, but rather terms that individuals move through depending on their orientation. We are all disciplined in some way and we all engage with diverse types of knowledge in our day-to-day activity, yet there is something here about the way that we approach it that defines what interdisciplinary label is being used.

For instance, participants in UHI, I would argue, vacillate between different points on this continuum, sometimes at the same time. In this way, there is something about interdisciplinarity that depends on one's position, both to knowledge and to others who are also positioned within their own disciplinary-interdisciplinary continuum and is therefore changing and reflexive, almost three-dimensional.

Following how this is experienced by individuals, the multiple points on the continuum also take on different forms depending on different practices and pedagogical activities. One project might cycle through multiple levels of integration, as it moves through the process of developing. For example, a lecture might be more multidisciplinary whereas a final project might be more transdisciplinary, with its knowledge fully integrated in a seamless fashion. When evaluating different areas of UHI, it will be important to complicate such taxonomic terms, showing how they are happening at the same time and within individuals. One way to do this would be to signify a sense of awareness of interdisciplinary meta-processes, where students gain an understanding of the relationality of knowledge, where knowledge is not purely static. I attribute this kind of multi-dimensional appearance to why it is rather difficult to pin-down easy definitions that are not too prescriptive or didactic. Perhaps, "it depends" is a better way to qualify interdisciplinarity, that is it depends on the relationship, who or what ideas are present, what the end goal is, what the context is, and on and on.

If the above taxonomy represents how these terms have traditionally been talked about and organized, Rodgers and Bremmer, who come from art and design fields, also propose a set of additional disciplinary terms in the same article, which are more recently developed and help define some of the levels of self-reflexivity that are missing from the above. These add additional terminologies that are important for understanding other situations that appear within the curriculum, as well as providing insight into the wider thinking processes that engagement with multiple ways of structuring knowledge uncovers. These updated terms are:

New Term	Definition
Metadisciplinary	Meta-awareness and understanding of how disciplines interact; development of new methods to "construct overarching frameworks to connect practices and their histories to new problems"
Interdisciplinarity	An understanding that shows "an ability to make connections that generate new methods to identify "other" dimensions of" activity and thought
Undisciplinarity	"An understanding is demonstrated that purposely blurs distinctions and has shifted from being "discipline-based" to "issue-or project-based;" an ability to mash together jumbled ideas and theories from a number of different, distinct disciplinary practices that can brought together to create new unexpected ways of working and new projects" (p. 12)

New Terminologies of (Inter) Disciplinarity Thinking

In many ways, these terms come closer to how I understand disciplines coming together in Urban Humanities and the interdisciplinary space that the pedagogy is trying to construct. For instance, what is important is the emphasis on meta-awareness and experimentation and the orientation around issues and projects that fits the project-based approaches to learning and making.

In turn, these terms represent a shift in approach to conceptualizing interdisciplinarity that values less the knowledge itself coming together in a final perfected product, a common refrain in

the literature, and instead the process behind what can be thought anew through that coming together. That is it moves beyond debates on purity of one disciplinary knowledge or the other, a stance that gets too wrapped up in the power politics of knowledge values and the epistemological and ontological truths behind them, but instead is about gaining a nuanced sensibility for understanding how knowledge comes together through various processes and what the end efficacy of that process of coming together (a project, an approach) has on one's practice.

The philosopher Jacques Rancière (2006) calls this space "in-disciplinarity," where a "textual and signifying space [is created] in which this relation of myth to myth [disciplines, which are bounded territories of what is thinkable] is visible." This in-disciplinary space is without "boundaries" that serve the purpose of creating a new "space of equality" around a new "poetics of knowledge" (p. 9-12). Combined, these other definitions are a more workable and flexible approach to interdisciplinarity practice, which I think also has increased pedagogical value because one is learning the process and practice of knowledge making while at the same time producing that knowledge.

2.4 Critical Takes

The following section develops a more critical take on the above, trying to think through some of the limitations of the term. To start, interdisciplinary is a term is overused to the point of perhaps being meaningless. [5] For instance, how many times have we heard a scholar say that they

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[5] Interdisciplinarity within this project is specifically contextualized within academia and research institutions and I acknowledge it exists as a term in other parts of society as well, for instance in the world of art and have a different set of meanings there. However, because UHI also draws on art and art practice, interdisciplinary meanings from the art-world also slip in.

take an interdisciplinary approach, or a research center branding itself as being innovatively interdisciplinarity, without really explaining what that means, or how it has actually been practiced. It is overdetermined, a verbal placeholder that has infected the way we talk about knowledge in the academy.

In this way, interdisciplinarity is often used as a shorthand way of saying something is *more*: more complicated, more knowing, more relevant (and therefore better). A buzzy veneer that is more style than substance, a MacGuffin term used to suggest innovation.[6] No wonder more conservative or traditional disciplinarians are so critical of it! They may have a point about the sometimes meaninglessness of its rhetoric, but perhaps not in the rarer where something that approaches the ideal function of interdisciplinarity is sometimes stumbled upon.

All this meta-analysis of the term is not to be dismissive of such usage, but instead to open-up a better understanding of the way the discourse of interdisciplinary it constructed and emerges of the epistemological organization of the western university. This is to develop a critical position towards thinking about it and discussing it (a critical view that will be pointed at UHI itself). This is because interdisciplinarity, and the whole host of institutional forces that occur under its name (Holley, 2009; Klein, 2010; Graff, 2015), is an essential element of the knowledge politics of the university, and it is embedded in the language and rhetoric of how we talk within the academy. In this way, it is a *discourse*, more than an object or a definable practice that can be measurably achieved (Choi & Richards, 2017). In the introduction diagram, I label these trends *institutional interdisciplinarity* and this includes the long history of attempts to create interdisciplinary knowledge that goes back to the formation of disciplines as a part of organized knowledge

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[6] From fiction and film, a MacGuffin is a plot device or object that triggers the forward movement of the plot.

production and highlights the fact that disciplines and interdisciplines are relationally linked together (Chettiparamb, 2007; Frodeman, et al., 2012).

For instance, Andrew Barry and Georgina Born (2013) call interdisciplinarity a powerful administrative logic that is used as a "solution for current problems" and a way to "foster innovation in the knowledge economy" (p. 1), while Karoly Veress (2014) labels it a "trendy term in academic language and assessment of research results" (p. 5). According to Helga Nowotny (2016), the concept of interdisciplinary marks "a popular consensus across a wide-range of different funding agencies, university administrators, policy makers, politicians, and the media" (p. 1). Nowotny further describes a situation where we want interdisciplinary to be the answer to our messy problems: We want it to work, and for this reason, it says something about our own desire. In this reading, interdisciplinarity serves as a "placeholder of an ideal," again a MacGuffin, within a relationship between science/knowledge production and society, and in the end, is a "proxy object [that is] unattainable and elusive" (p. 2).

2.5 Interdisciplinarity as a Top-Down Policy Force

This creates a situation where the logic of interdisciplinarity permeates policies both inside and outside the academy as the most effective way to problem solve: bringing different people and ideas together around some nice rhetoric is a powerful logic, which has created its own political economy of funding and institutionalization of ID that has in turn created a variety of research programs and centers. This is top-down version of where the political, economic, and social values existing behind it need to be problematized.

According to Frickel, et al., interdisciplinarity logic rests on three main assumptions that emerge out of these issues. The assumptions are:

- Interdisciplinary knowledge is better than disciplinary knowledge;

- Disciplines are silos that constrain the free development of ID knowledge, only acting as vestigial barriers of an outdated epistemic system;

- ID interactions are not unconstrained by the status hierarchies and power asymmetries that operate within disciplines, meaning that the feeling of escaping from disciplines creates a loss of critical self-reflection. (Summarized from *Introduction*)

An example they give of how this logic is permeating is by citing a statistic of finding over 1,800 books, chapters, or articles on interdisciplinary research written over the last decade. These benefits are taken for granted in policy circles and become a part of the politics of knowledge, serving as a force that motivates the justifications, if not the results themselves, of many grants and initiatives. Graff adds to this in his longer intellectual history of ID, where he makes some similar points on how disciplines and interdisciplines are both historic constructs that are formed in relation to each other and contain ideology from both the left and the right.

One consequence is that each has an exaggerated view of the other discipline, where it holds what your position is lacking, in a relational way, and what are missing are "case studies and comparative studies of interdisciplines that explore intellectual dimensions, internal and external elements, and patterns of similarity and difference: variability, complexity, comparison, context, and history" (Graff, p. 11). A more critical view of interdisciplinary knowledge production is aware of the way that "disciplines and interdisciplines are both dynamic knowledge forms whose boundaries and practices are continuously in flux." That they are constantly being constructed in real time and relationally. To sum up, one must understand that they are not "two closed epistemic

spaces, but rather interconnected territories that scientists crisscross for various purposes" (Frickel et al., p. 5-12). And knowing how to navigate this logic would be an important task for any scholar.

2.6 Human Dimensions to Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinary does not just occur in the abstract world of ideas, which unfortunately is how it is often described in semi-idealist terms, removed from the material and emotional realities of people. Therefore, an important part of understanding interdisciplinarity, and in particular interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork, is to focus on the human factors where it is actually produced. This account is ground-up, signifying that interdisciplinarity has to work at the level of the individual or through collaboration with others.

Two of the most comprehensive human-focused studies on interdisciplinary work are by Lisa Lattuca (2001) and the above-mentioned study by Myra Strober. Each of these combines theoretical considerations that are grounded in fieldwork that examines the way that interdisciplinary engagement has interacted with the personal and professional identities of those who engage with it. Coming earlier, Lattuca's book represents a key shift in the researching of interdisciplinary, thinking about it in terms of both research and teaching, as well as in the academic identity of those who practice it. The book is important for introducing terms such as "becoming," "process," and "identity," when describing an individual's relationship with interdisciplinary inquiry.

Lattuca expands upon in her concluding chapter where she traces the ways that ID participation has influenced individuals. Here she looks at the relationship between intellectual interest and the tangible outcomes that come from that interest. For instance, an intellectual

outcome from ID could be the gaining of new knowledge, or the ability to talk to others, or simply to know where to find distinct types of data. Tangible benefits would be in terms of publishing, hiring, and teaching, noting that within few of her subjects did "radical epistemological" occur, but in those that did there was a process of "accumulation and internalizations," where the individual's universe was expanded, and this expansion created shifts in identity (this is true for graduate students experiencing interdisciplinary spaces as well, perhaps even *more* so because they are not as fully disciplined into one epistemological lens) . The subject's disciplinary identity then shifted to somewhere else, somewhere in-between (p. 210). This point is seconded in a recent article by Michael A. Lange (2019), who philosophically reflects on the identity practices of scholars, where identities are not solely fixed, but are instead an "amalgamation of many inputs and interpretations of signals sent out and received, filtered through multiple epistemological lenses and influenced by multiple habituses" (p. 2).

Myra Strober's book is a more recent qualitative study that focuses on changes of "habits of mind" of faculty who participate in seminars with other scholars. It focuses on the way that cognitive habits change and the rewards and challenges that emerge from these changes and is framed around the idea of "conversations" between separate ways of thinking that are not always easy or positive. Some rewards include finding a space for intellectual play as well as the affective aspects of community, for instance meeting new colleagues from across the university or gaining intellectual self-esteem. Strober sees ID as a complement for, and not a substitute of, one's normal academic practices, but this comes with its own set of distinct barriers, including significant risk for the individual who venturing out of their departmental comfort zone. These include difficulty to find funding for and the additional difficulty of being evaluated in terms of professional work,

as one's work, research, or methods drift away from the mainstream of disciplinary knowledge practices.

Interdisciplinary work between people is also difficult. A person's own disciplinary *affect* has a lot to do with one's own habits, relationship to own discipline, and personality. There is some discussion and reflection about whether disciplines align to existing personalities, or whether disciplines shape specific personality types (as well as the conclusion that economists were the most disciplinary rigid and unable to interact with other disciplines!). More importantly, Strober draws a line between two epistemological orientations, that of *doubting* and *believing*. with the "believing game," which she likens to a position similar to that of an improvisor working on stage, where one enters a situation with an orientation to believe. This, she argues, is the only tenable position for collaborative work, and those without this attitude failed to integrate in the interdisciplinary space. This is not to say that conflict does not happen, and she provides two types of conflict—affective and cognitive—that are always in play. Cognitive conflict is productive, as it fuels group thinking and creativity, existing at the realm of ideas, whereas affective conflict is at the level of emotions and takes people away from their task. On this note, Marjorie Garber (2001) talks about a phenomena called "disciplinary envy," which is how people practicing disciplines perceive, imagine, or desire each other (and their disciplines), for instance being more or less rigorous, or having something that one's own practice is lacking. This adds a key psychological dimension to interdisciplinarity, where much of what is communicated, negotiated, perceived between disciplinarity practitioners in interdisciplinary spaces has to do with desire.

2.7 From Top-Down and Managed to Something Else?

As these studies suggest, interdisciplinary is more than just a buzzword, because it entangles itself within individual's intellectual identities, knowledge, and practices having long-term effects. And is a key force that shapes the forward movement of knowledge, in both rhetorical and discursive terms and in actual work produced. Because it is a powerful social form it can actually produce something new when carefully managed at the human-scale through a more organic and bottom-up approach (Bendix et al., 2017). In the book *Sustaining Interdisciplinary Collaboration: A Guide for the Academy*, the above, top-down version of interdisciplinarity is labeled *managed interdisciplinarity* and the author's search for a better, more sustainable way to practice it. For instance, it can be used to "rescue" struggling disciplines through the combination with a hot, technical discipline (e.g. Digital Humanities in the next section), but at the same time this can be a way to downsize via the rhetoric of innovative, creative disruption. They also provide some language for understanding the type of space that ID happens in, using such terms as "trading zone," "contact zone," "tourist-border zone," and "cohabitation zone," which are a useful other conceptual perspective for some of the taxonomies above (p. 12-20).

As an antidote for managed interdisciplinarity they propose a counter-form of "anarchist" ID, which gives an "ongoing reflexive attention to process within the project," touching many different layers that intersect within an individual researcher or practitioner. These include the interpersonal, the intellectual, the professional, and the institutional (p. 9-10). This leads to the authors developing a terminology of *thin* versus *thick* ID, which I think is particularly useful. Whereas *thin* ID is built the above, by outsider funders who are managing it for a political or institutional end, *thick* ID is built from below, out of the experiences of participants who are

negotiating a range of layers, spaces, and modes of engagement (thickness itself is a key conceptual term in UHI, so there is a nice parallel here). These include the social world that is being investigation, the joint representations that are constructed through participants, and the lived-in world of the university (e.g. the spaces where people meet, like an example they give of a coffee machine being a connecting spot) that they interact within, all of which creates points of shared existential bonds.

Along these lines, Kate Pahl and Keri Facer (2017) have developed a lexicon for understanding interdisciplinary research and collaboration that focuses more on the messy processes and practices than any particular end evaluation, providing a "vocabulary that can be used to articulate the realities of this sort of work, which can evolve and develop over time" (p. 218). Through an analysis of collaborative interdisciplinary projects, their findings stress that:

> Understanding interdisciplinary collaborative research requires a different kind of attention to particular practices. Rather than focusing on outcomes and the search for linear lines of cause and effect, this kind of work might produce a highly diverse range of differing legacies—embodied, material, relational. It may not produce outcomes in the form of simple solutions, rather, it might produce "hard answers" that require further questions [and this can be difficult for policy makers] (p. 227-228).

Pulling some concepts from this quote and applying them to the interdisciplinary education, the keywords of *embodied*, *material*, and *relational* are all conceptually important, representing better measures for "success" in an interdisciplinary venture.

Within UHI each has particular purchase and will be utilized below when analyzing student experience. The interdisciplinary activities in UHI are embodied because they happen in real space and time and are tied to specific places in the city. They are material because they involve practices of making, through the materialization of ideas through media. And they are relational, because (1) they create relations (comparative, dissensual, synthetic) between disciplines, areas of knowledge and people and (2) places in the world.

2.8 The Undisciplined Intellectual

At an early conference hosted by UHI (*Design Knowledge*, November 2014), where many of the meta-questions about the program and interdisciplinarity in general, were put on the table, critical literary theorist Eric Cazdyn in a panel discussion theorized something pertinent about the tensions in the university about knowledge and practice. In conversation, responding to a question about how he saw the (inter) disciplinary orientation of urban humanities practitioners—Cazdyn was a visiting scholar during the first year of the program—and how they might fit within the university. He verbally sketched out a diagram of oppositions, something inspired by a semiotic square that is used to give structural analysis of relationships.

Focusing on the opposition, or continuum, between being disciplined or undisciplined (interdisciplinary) on one axis, and that between being a professional or an intellectual within academia in the other axis. The disciplined/undisciplined axis is clear, but the professional-intellectual opposition perhaps needs more explanation, as it is judgmental, and dismissive of certain types of people in the university—hose that engage with knowledge production only professionally, rather than with deeper motivations for some sort of intellectual truth. This has

obvious moral judgement, but I interpret it as dealing with the larger structural shift to managed professional excellence in the university, where the goal is to become a professional who produces knowledge rather than engages with deeper truth.

The following is a recreation of the diagram:

Disciplined   **Undisciplined**

S1 ～～～～～～～～～ Contrary ～～～～～～～ **S2**

"Normal" academia | Implication | Contradictory | Contradictory | Implication | **UHI**

~S1 ～～～～～ Contrary ～～～～～ **~S2**

Professional   **Intellectual**
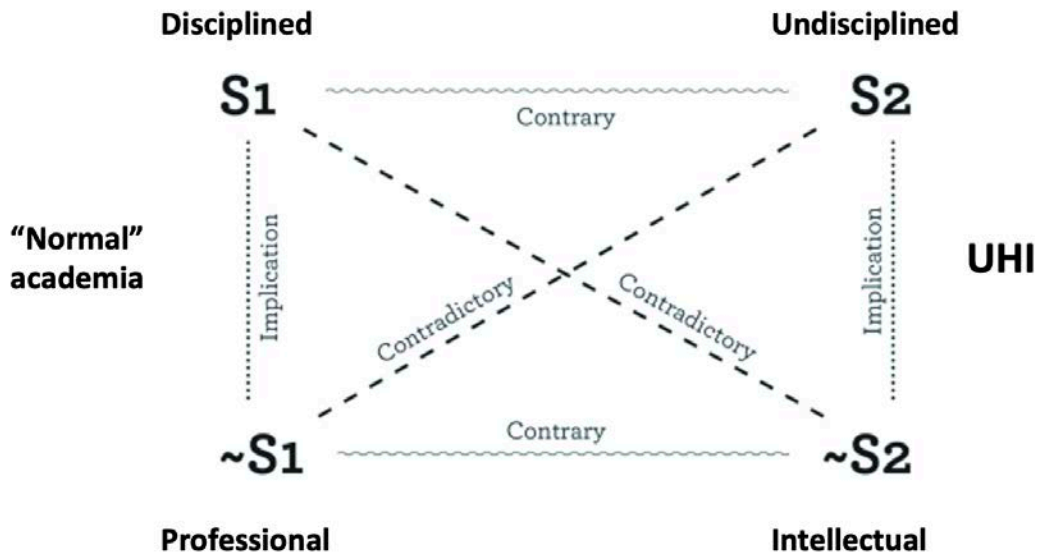
Cazdyn's Diagram of Oppositions

From this set of oppositions, Cazdyn theorized categories of figures within the academia, depending on the orientation to the two oppositional continuums. These are the four categories that emerge:

Category	Definition
Disciplined Professional	The archetypical knowledge worker of the knowledge economy, practice production of "empty" knowledge over thinking; participants (or prisoners?) in Lacan's discourse of the bureaucratized university (Lacan, 1991): otherwise the contemporary status quo of the university
Undisciplined Professional	Administrators, charlatans, faculty at Praeger U; the least valuable of the four categories, in Cazdyn's view (and mine)
Disciplined Intellectual	The perhaps great and creative thinkers to write groundbreaking work in fields; public intellectuals and so on; yet still invested in disciplinary structures and the maintenance of them; engage in interdisciplinarity after achieving tenure-security
Undisciplined Intellectual	Those not constrained to any particular disciplining structure, but who explore territory beyond the university from it; members of the *Undercommons, Third University,* or the parasitic university (see next chapter); possible alternatives for structuring knowledge and knowledge institutions can emerge from here

Cazdyn's Typology

UHI and other similar proto-fields exist, or help create, in Cazdyn's view, the undisciplined intellectual, who avoids the trappings of the bureaucratized regimes of knowledge (or at least tries to, one cannot fully avoid them), setting sail for different knowledge and other forms of sociability within, and outside, existing university structures.

At the same conference, one of the students from the first year of UHI spoke. Her talk was about the student experience of interdisciplinarity in UHI and many of the above issues. Overall, her talk was about how confusing the space of UHI was as she felt the expectations to how the students should orient themselves to knowledge was unclear. Should they be "disciplined," representing fully what it means to be a historian or an architect, or should they strive to be "undisciplined" encompassing all, but being a kind of amateur, always at risk of not-knowing. This is a tenuous position to be in within the university, which rewards "expert" knowledge, even if that knowledge is shallow or performative—and to note, scholars that identify as interdisciplinary can

also be the worst version of this, performing their know-it-all-ness in all things and subjects. Therefore, there is always a fine line being walked between being disciplined and being undisciplined, knowing with certainty and trying to know something else that is beyond certainty.

Graduate students feel this perhaps even more strongly, as subjects of the university who are being formed by disciplines and professions, and who are fighting to be recognized by their knowledge (and suffer greatly from imposter syndrome). To actually practice interdisciplinarity in its generative, rather than discursive or performative register, means to always be on a kind of unstable ground, embracing uncertainty in knowledge, recognition, and so on. This can be anxiety inducing, and the more negative aspects of the UHI classroom space sometimes reinforced these anxieties: where disciplinary identities became stand-ins for individual student's identities (in fact reifying disciplinarity while at the same time dehumanizing the complex educational biographies and creative agency of individual people), rather than an equality of knowledge placed around the communal table for collective learning, as well as dialogic (dissensual) arguing. Listening to this talk, and reflecting on it some years later, I can see this tension clearly, as well as see the need for careful scaffolding and training in any interdisciplinary endeavor, that is a pedagogy for an undisciplined practice of thinking within the university.

Conclusion: Towards a Different Thinking About Interdisciplinary Practice

This chapter has summarized some of the key tensions inherent within interdisciplinary efforts in academia, showing how interdisciplinary is a key force within the university that permeates many areas, yet at the same time is not always clearly understood in how it is functioning across macro (top-down administrative efforts), meso (within and between disciplines), and micro

scales (within the psychology and identity of individual scholars). It is complicated because it gets to close the heart of knowledge itself and the politics of what we know and how we know it. It offers both an escape from seemingly rigid areas, as well as the promise of creating something new.

Though the above has been a somewhat a prescriptive walkthrough of dominant ideas, a framework of concepts that I hope get transformed somewhat, or at least made deeper through explicating how interdisciplinary practices were actually attempted within particular site (of UHI). If this section raised some issues, gave some framing, then the empirical work itself will be a response. The topic of interdisciplinarity remains vast but will continue to be worked on throughout the rest of the document. As one can perhaps sense, my own take on interdisciplinarity has become looser, more meta-aware, and generative, and I favor accounts that dwell in the messy in-between of knowledge, where learning and insight comes out of the process of trying to practice it anarchically, through engaging with the multiplicity of possibilities whether from western disciplinary traditions, interdisciplinary experiments, or knowledge that comes from somewhere outside of the expected bounds.

That is why I appreciate the opening epigraphic definition by *A Community of Inquiry*—themselves a group of graduate students from the humanities who wrote a both serious and parodic chapbook of definitions that are generated from their conflicted experiences within the academy—because it stresses the in-between as a site of refuge and escape. A place to hide out from the larger pressures of the university—not to avoid them but have somewhere else to be for a bit where those pressures bear down less. This is the more practiced experience of interdisciplinarity within UHI, how it was lived in the everyday—as a MacGuffin to bring different people together rather than producer any real new knowledge (though of course knowledge is also produced).

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Following this, the argument position that is developed centers on the way that the bulk value of interdisciplinary programs is. It is not entirely in the direct research, that is the expected product that is produced, but rather in the way that it unexpectedly structures and leads to an embodied and self-reflexive understanding of knowledge itself (as well, on the flipside, of practice). In turn, what is valuable is the way that it provokes a better understanding of how knowledge or practices are constructed, that is disciplined, within university spaces, and following that, the need to create spaces and encounters that can stage necessary collaborative work that occurs between those knowledges and practices, in order to further the "collaborative survival" (Tsing, 2015) to which scholarship in the 21st century, now more than ever under the dark star of risk, uncertainty, and crisis, should emphatically address.

This entails stepping outside to develop a macro-level consideration of the political-economic predicaments in which departments, programs like UHI, and the university system as a whole are embedded, which will be done in the following chapter. Therefore, as part of the phenomena of *new humanities*, urban humanities can be read as both an empirical pedagogical practice within what embeds it, and a conceptual practice that can critically reflect on the systemic relationships it emerges from. At least that is my take, and the reading to which this literature prepared concepts, materials, and tools for.

In a recent interview, Tim Ingold further elaborates on similar points, responding to a question about cultivating the "tangled mesh of ongoing pathways or lines of interest" that would create a more open-ended notion of study:

"So far, I see very little space for this kind of thing within the universities. People who are doing it are forced to the margins, or outside altogether. Of course, everyone is banging on

about 'interdisciplinarity'. There's money and space for that. But all interdisciplinarity does is to reinforce the notion of the discipline as a bounded territory of knowledge. The important thing, as you say, is to think again about the real meaning of study. The issue of interdisciplinarity arises precisely because conventional ways of thinking about study are defective. They suppose that study is about the acquisition of knowledge content rather than about the cultivation of skills for attending to the world and to what is going on there. However, even in the increasingly micro-managed university of today, it is possible – under the radar, so to speak – to do things differently. It is worth taking the risk. If enough of us do, we have a chance to turn things around" (in Campbell, 2018)

In other work, Ingold (2017) calls something like this anti-disciplinary or post-disciplinary, attempting to separate knowledge from the whole discourse of interdisciplinary structured knowledge. A series of projects called *Knowing from the Inside*: *Anthropology, Art, Architecture* at the University of Aberdeen practice this method of study. Perhaps, this is a different interdisciplinarity that I have been theorizing above, one that is separated out solely from the discourses of creating research and new knowledge. Not as obsessed with purity and results. This is an interdisciplinarity that is "soft," as one of my interview participants described it, built from knowledge being worked out creatively through affective relationships, and in the end is more social, rhizomatic, and risky. It is a slower form of interdisciplinary thinking (Goode, 2020), one where, in the words of the philosopher Michel Serres (1997), an individual becomes a "troubadour" of knowledge, or in the words of Anna Tsing (2015), the interdisciplinary encounter produces a "contamination," which can change "world-making projects, mutual worlds—and new directions—may emerge" (p. 43)

Chapter 3 The University, the New Humanities, and Graduate Education: Framing the Institutional Terrain of UHI

Introduction

This chapter introduces and analyzes issues related to the institutional contexts that frame UHI. Primarily, it expands on the previous chapter, dealing with the first major research question of this study, which tries to understand the formation of the interdisciplinary trends called the *new humanities*. It tells a story that moves through three key areas of inquiry that combine to shape and structure this institutional context. These areas are: (I) the contemporary university, (II) the ongoing state of 'crisis' within the humanities and the related emergence of *new humanities* fields, and (III) issues about graduate education, as graduate students are the people who are educated within UHI. They work within the larger contexts, trends, and ecologies of interdisciplinarity.

Overall, the chapter develops an argument concerning the relationship between institutional issues at the macro-level of universities and higher education on the one hand, particularly in the United States with even more specificity given to public research universities like UCLA, as this is the institution that UHI exists within, and, on the other, the micro-level of how graduate students—as the subject group within UHI—experience these structural issues as they participate in emerging fields (the *new humanities*) and programs (UHI). By examining and analyzing literature in these three areas, the chapter sets out to build a foundation that the later empirical chapters can be situated in, focusing different issues and concerns that will come back later in more specific detail within the project narrative.

Conceptual Map of the Chapter

To give a working conceptual map of how I see the three areas interacting, the following diagram outlines a working structure-agency relationship between parts I & II, encompassing a context of institutional changing at the macro-level university and the meso-level of specific programs, and III, the students whose academic lives and identities are structured through participating in these programs. UHI is the mid-ground location where larger structures and agency of individual educational actors meet and interact (the black arrows signify this interaction). This diagram can be read as a version of the left-side diagram from that presented in the Introduction, where each upper layer (more generalized) influences the lower layers (more specific).

Relationship Between Levels of Analysis in the Chapter

3.1 Situating UHI in the Contemporary University

Framing the University that UHI Exists Within

Programs like UHI are situated within the contemporary university, they are not outside it. They are a product of larger structural trends, crises, and experiments occurring in higher education. As Bryan Alexander (2020) recently wrote, "American higher education now faces a stark choice commit to experimental adaptation and institutional transformation, often at serious human and financial costs, or face a painful decline into the coming century" (np). This happened in particular within public universities, with Newfield (2016) providing a detailed analysis of the crisis' effect on the University of California system: the system that UHI is part of through UCLA (and therefore its local context in both institution and city). Though the program was founded five years after the 2008 economic crisis that destabilized funding within the UC system, causing the "dream" of a fully public university for the people to fully die (Marginson, 2016), the process of public universities precarity had begun long before (Giroux, 2007; Aronowitz, 2008). The post-2008 funding environment has severely affected vulnerable fields such as the humanities and other parts of the university.

For this reason, it is important to think about the university—that both real and imagined institutional location that binds all actors within the academic field: disciplines, programs, professors, and students—because it is the macro-stage that this story is told on. The university "is an enormous, intergenerational, international network of concentrations of educated people. There is nothing else like it," and this gives its meaning and social power (Grebowicz, 2020). But the university's unification of knowledge has become fractured in the contemporary moment. Multiple forces have broken down the unifying primacy of such institutions, ranging from increased

corporatization, the shift of dominant knowledge production to industry via the knowledge society outside the university (from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge), or poststructural critiques of the university's Eurocentric origins.[1] Regardless of the origin of these decentralizing forces, many commentators both within and outside the university have undertaken a narrative of the university's crisis and decline.[2]

This section draws together literature to map out two intertwined impulses of interpreting the university's outlook from the vantage point of its fragmentation in the current neoliberal political-economic regime: a critical despair and generative hope. Both impulses represent a critical engagement in thinking of the configuration of the university and how it is exercised, therefore the two prospects are not contradictory or mutually exclusive. The first diagnoses the problems, while the second tries to generate both realistic and imaginative alternatives. Both desire the creation of a new type of university that is beyond the University that currently exists.

It draws heavily from the emerging field of Critical University Studies that rests on the belief that another university is possible, or that another way to form, structure and create higher education might be built, like mushrooms sprouting from the ruins (Tsing, 2015). The hope envisions universities that will be: 1). Less broken and ruinous; 2). More equitable and justly

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[1] Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994) refers to the shift from disciplined boundaries in the university to multi-disciplinary teams working on research that also engages with the world outside the university. It is more commonly used in European literature on the knowledge economy and interdisciplinarity. See Engwall et al. (2020) for more discussion on universities and Mode 2.

[2] To clarify more, the following is primarily situated in elite American research universities, including both private and public, which hold the full scope of disciplinary programs across the sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, and different professional degree programs (e.g. business) or programs that are split between scholarly research and the professions (see education, architecture, etc.). More specifically, this is considered primarily within the context of the American university (or a particular American imaginary of the university), rather than the European or other global variant, though these are of course connected (and thought about from within Comparative and International Education). Finally, it is situated within a position thinking about these issues of the university from the perspective of the humanities, humanistic social sciences.

reflecting society, particularly in terms of funding and privatization, and built around the common good (Biesecker, 2019); 3). More able to adapt to contemporary issues with global knowledge and global problems, while at the same time breaking from Eurocentric and Western dominated knowledge to incorporate more variety of perspectives from postcolonial, Global South, or other plural positions; 4). Taking on different structural forms that more adequately and flexibly address knowledge conditions or educational needs; 5). transformative to students; and 6). More "placed" in the actual physical location (Brennan et al., 2018).

UHI, rather than finalizing either the optimistic or the pessimistic vision, is an experimental model of pedagogy that both originated from within the current structure of University—inhabiting in and internalizing all the limitations of it—and at the same, within some of the practices that occurred, realized and attempted, explorative flight from some of that definitive structure.

Critical Despair: A University in Ruins?

Within recent critical literature about the university there is a sense that the university is fundamentally broken, with its mission for knowledge and truth, corrupted and compromised by the market, entrepreneurism, the quest for prestige in metrics such as table rankings, and the resulting isomorphism, and general obsolescence outside of STEM, and other functional, instrumental training that leads only to jobs (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2010; Barrow, 2017). A key battleground where these tensions are being played out is at the level of the "idea" of the university, that is how it is imagined by those both within and outside it. Barnett and Peters (2018a) attribute the university's decline in part to the end of a modernist grand narratives of the university's

purpose, aligning with larger social and cultural trends of postmodernism and poststructuralism (Lyotard, 1984) that had helped the mission cohere around "pure" knowledge production or missions of national unity. These have been subsumed by fragmentation that allowed for many different elements to enter, both good and bad.

To borrow a term from the late Bill Readings' (1996) prescient and melancholic book that opened up critical consideration of many of these trends, "the university is in ruins," where ruins refers to the possibility for true thinking being evacuated within a fragmented institution via a new administrative emphasis on Excellence. Readings calls for those within the university to learn to "dwell" within the ruins, finding ways to create spaces for dissensual "thinking together" that can appear at times within the fractured and amorphous university to create new knowledge and a more localized social impact (p. 192-3).

The so-called neoliberal university with its focus on administration, metrics, measurement, excellence, and most of all, the market, is the contemporary political-economic-ideological regime of the university, at least from critically oriented perspectives, and has been theorized by many including Harvey (1998), Giroux (2014), Brown (2015), and Busch (2017). Giroux writes that the university is a "disciplinary apparatus that views [itself] not as a place to think but as a place to prepare students to be competitive on the global marketplace" (p. 17). Other symptoms include the hollowing out of public support and investment (Newfield, 2008; Bosquet, 2008; Collini, 2017), a constant state of crisis (Martin & Aguado, 2017), rising tuition and student debt (Akers & Chingos, 2016; Goldrick-Rab, 2017), pushes for austerity, the adjunctifiction of labor (Alvarez, 2017; Childress, 2019; Kezar, et al., 2019; Carey, 2020), lack of true racial or inclusive diversity and full of toxicity (Smyth, 2017).

This has created a situation where the mission and future of the university is under question from many forces, including right-wing arguments for its abolition (Caplan, 2018; Brennan & Magness, 2019) and Silicon Valley disrupters who wish to transform it for profit (Scott & Krist, 2017; Walsh, 2020). There have also been critiques how universities reproduce singular and US-dominated imaginaries of the global in other countries (Kamola, 2019). Alexander (2020) examines the long-term ramifications of many of these trends into the next decades. To sum up this point with a recent evaluation, Kevin Gannon in *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto* (2020) writes, "It has never been more difficult to teach in higher education than in our current moment of [neoliberal strangulation. . . and has also] never been more difficult to learn in higher education in our current moment" (Kindle location 262).

Many of these critiques have coalesced over the past 20 plus years within what is known as Critical University Studies (Williams, 2016), which focuses its analysis on the explication of the contemporary problems of the neoliberal, or administrative, university, through theoretical or empirical studies, as well as within more informal media, such as the blogposts on Christopher Newfield and Michael Meranze's *Remaking the University*, and the accompanying scholarly network that exists within the parallel Facebook group.[3] Within these platforms, considerations appear almost daily debating ongoing trends at all levels, from the macro and structural level, through the impacts of new technology, organized activism around faculty and graduate student labor, and possibilities for different pedagogy. But these critical platforms and dialogues are not aiming at the university's destruction; instead, many of them look toward alternatives and transformations from within the ruins.

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[3] http://utotherescue.blogspot.com/

Generative Hope: University Alternatives for the 21st Century

The imaginary of another university is grounded in critical engagement with what is happening at the moment, in the 21st century. These forward-looking attempts reconceptualize the university, creating different orientations for institutional form, modes knowledge production, and the variety of products produced by the university, from knowledge products to students. Barnett and Peters (2018b) turn from an institutional history of the past towards the contemporary university's possibilities in the world, or a "new poetics for the university" (p. 26). They advocate for advancing a positive and feasible new project for the university, built around ideas of openness, public engagement, and global ecological impact that would re-center "what collective learning might look like at its best . . .. [and that would] seek spaces that would widen the university's self-understanding in the world" (p. 11-12). This would be done through cultivating imaginative programs and policies that were distinct to each university. Secondarily, universities would practice an ethical character that is more directly concerned with well-being in the world and able to serve as an institution that can communicate between different scales and audiences.

This prospect aligns with other proposals that imagine universities constructed around global citizenship (Torres, 2015), a more progressive global vision (Patomäki, 2019), or that try to restore liberal education as a central tenant (Roth, 2014). Jason Owen-Smith (2018) makes an argument for the renewed importance of research universities being key hubs within society, including within cities, which would act as "physical anchors" for developing solutions via their ability to collect people and resources in single physical locations that can interchange with the wider area in economic, technological, and social ways (p. 168-170). Cathy Davidson's (2017)

work has long traced out the tensions between trying to make something new that avoids the empty rhetoric of innovation and trying to come up with ideas for reformulating comprehensive learning that engages with technology and humanism. Chris Newfield gives a practical proposal for restoring the public university, which has been echoed even higher post-2020 pandemic (Newfield, 2016; Robin, 2020). All of these accounts believe in the efficacy of the university as a site that can continue to build collective thinking and collaboration in ways that are more than instrumental.

In speculating about future forms, which the university may take, Staley (2019) attempts to practically envision alternatives through using principals from speculative design processes, where a plurality of different formations—rather than a single dominant isomorphic model—could more effectively serve needs at different scales. It argues that all universities are trying to copy institutions at the top (e.g. Harvard) and end up all trying to do everything (and therefore do nothing well). Instead, he proposes a plurality of different speculative forms for education institutions, using principles from speculative design, that can focus on different scales, modes, and manifestations of knowledge, as well as different disciplinary and interdisciplinary structures and physical organization. *Speculative design*, as defined by Dunne and Raby (2013), is a practice of imagining alternative futures using design principals, where one speculates to imagine "how things could be" but do this through "unsettling the present" rather than a purely sci-fi vision of the future (p. 88).

For instance, the *Humanities Think Tank* would be "action oriented" and translating critical humanistic ideas to make meaning and influence policy (p. 59-60). A second form, he *Microcollege* distributes the university through the world via a looser network of embedded place-based research "labs." These labs would be organized around a research topic or research theme. And a third, the *Polymath University*, students are trained in three disciplinary lineages at once: a

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science, a humanities or social science, and an art based creative practice, to educate students to "develop a breadth of knowledge unattainable in a typical general education program, for instance, "thinking simultaneously as an architect, as a sociologist, and a poet." Students are drawn to this university to become "interdisciplinary thinkers," a mission that is cultivated by the institution structure, which creates possibility for "serendipity, surprise . . .[and] a culture of intellectual promiscuity" (p. 177-179).

Yet, they are also hardly feasible at this current moment isomorphic conservatism and consist of more mental exercises than actual policy. All the ideas are somewhat technocratic and sterile and, despite being diverse in ideas of forms, lack a diversity of ideas coming from non-western knowledge sources, inevitably reproducing dominant imaginary of the western university. For instance, I argue that there is no *University of Social Engagement*, no *University of the Postcolony*, or *University of the Global South*. Building on similar critiques, from a global South position, Raewyn Connell (2019) combines many of these ideas in her proposal for a "good" university that would also be aware of its public mission and restore democratic impulses that still lurk within the ruins, as well as Eurocentrcism, and would be built around "whole ecologies" of communal production of knowledge, in order to push practices of sociability, collaboration, and exchange.

Connell ends the book by imagining versions of the university 10, 50, and 200 years out, where it has taken on completely new forms and relationships to knowledge, for instance a university that is completely oriented around climate change (the climate archeology institute). Others propose entirely different models of organization around ideas of "study" and student solidarity (Arsenjuk & Koerner, 2009), the creation of "anti-colleges" (Worthen, 2019) that would be situated in non-campus places and locales, more diverse, plural, or planetary/worlding

frameworks (Ingold, 2017; Escobar, 2018; Nørgård & Bengsten, 2018) that are globally autonomous (Edu-Factory Collective, 2009), engage directly with climate change (Fry, 2015), or are tied to larger projects of decoloniality and Southern theory (Santos, 2018; Bhambra et al, 2018). One issue is that many of these proposals are not particularly practical, which is not a critique *per se,* as their existence are important for opening-up a new imaginary of what the university can be in a changing world. The constraints in funding, space, and personnel make the total reconstruction of a re-imagined university extremely difficult, if not impossible. Yet that does not mean changes cannot happen in a more pragmatic way. In fact, explorations of changes do happen from within the university—attempts that I call "alternative spaces."

Building Alternative Spaces Within the University

The term *alternative educational space* denotes any space that is constructed differently from the mainstream of the institution. This could include, for instance, interdisciplinary spaces (Harris & Holey, 2008) and these spaces can occur in the physical space of the university classroom (Temple, 2019), or the conceptual space of the discourses that circulate within the university and people inside (Charteris, et al., 2016), as well as a combination of both. These spaces can also act as important 'third spaces' within the university, for exchange of knowledge and as sites of resistance (Iosefo, 2016), which can bring together students in new ways.

As argued in the previous chapter, interdisciplinarity can act as a force within educational institutions as new spaces in the university for thinking together. Practically, what this means is because disciplinary space is often opened up through top-down administration, but that these can

be claimed for something else by those who are involved. For instance, Bill Readings ends *The University in Ruins* with the idea that interdisciplinary programs created by top-down administrations can be in a way sabotaged by faculty and students to create small generative hubs of dissensus. These would be short-term collaborations, like flowers growing out of cracks in the pavement (emerging from the beach beneath), that create unique and localized interdisciplinary nodes where new thinking can emerge within the ruins. However, Readings cautions, that these should not be allowed to be pulled into the long-term bureaucratic structure of the university, meaning that their power is in their provisional in-between-ness, standing outside of the formal disciplinary structure of the universe. They are generative because they represent a different place within the university that is temporally conditioned for the short-term investigation of ideas or problems, rather than the ever-forward maintenance of its future, which is part of the process of knowledge becoming disciplined or professionalized, that is *becoming part of the system*.

It is the *idea* of other universities within the university, small locations where something else can emerge and take form, where a different kind of education can happen for a time, which I am interested in. There is a longer history of types of spaces like this, including different experimental colleges that emerged within and adjacent to universities in the 1960s, for instance the Tussman Experimental College at Berkeley (Trow, 1998). There are also models further back of experimental colleges of art and design, such as the Bauhaus (Cross, 1983) or Black Mountain College (Diaz, 2015). More recently there have been "Pop-Up Universities," for radical scholars to gather in places like Lisbon to teach activists about Racial Capitalism and generate solidarity through critical pedagogy (Card, 2020). Different versions of what such a space might look like, have been articulated above. This is the idea that will be carried into later parts of the dissertation to more than just trying to understand UHI, but the other way around: to use UHI as an

interrogative model to better understand such alternative interdisciplinary spaces for learning, thinking, and within the university social solidarity. This serves a long-term goal to turn this work into a foundational case for future research or educational design.

3.2 The New Humanities

Situating the New Humanities

The following section provides conceptual and critical background on the *new humanities*, setting it within the wider stage of the university and trends of interdisciplinarity from the above section. Its goal is to provide a background framing for (1) issues related to the range of disciplines that are collected under the overarching term of the humanities in the academy, including the discourse of crisis that permeates these contemporary discussions, and (2) showing how the fields of the *new humanities* have been formed out of some of these tensions. Overall it provides necessary context for a critical understanding of these fields, as well as giving a sense of how they manifest as academic research centers and education programs.

The humanities are the disciplines and subdisciplines that study human society and culture and have developed over the last two hundred years from the Renaissance *studia humanitatis*, which emerged from the Roman word *trivium*, into formal disciplinary areas within the university. These include languages and literature, linguistics, philosophy, politics, history, classics, religion,

and anthropology, though some of these have also become considered social sciences due to changes in classification within the university and internal debates related to levels of empiricism. For instance, political science, anthropology, and history have moved in this direction depending on the institution and are classified as social sciences at UCLA, which explains the UHI demographic chart's heavy proportion in social sciences rather than the humanities (see fig. X in Chapter Y). This shows that the dividing line between humanities and social sciences is at times nebulous. Various newer academic subject areas, often classified as interdisciplinary such as ethic studies, cultural studies, and media studies, exist both across and in-between these larger subject orientations. UHI includes students from the "traditional" humanities, as well as from the humanities oriented social sciences. Generally, these disciplines are focused on critical interpretation, comparison, and finding truth and meaning through studying the products of human society and culture. A recent definition for the humanities that I find valuable, and that covers the range of thought, comes from Fitzpatrick (2019) who writes: "the humanities are interested in the ways that representations work, in the relationship between representations and social structures, and in all the ways that human ideas and their expressions shape and are shaped by human culture" (p. 20).

Interdisciplinary theorist Julie Thompson Klein (2005) provides a history of how the humanities were formed into a distinct set of disciplines within American universities and were professionalized at the end of the 19th century. She describes two variants of interdisciplinary thinking and organization in the humanities, one that is tied to more classical position, where humanities represents a general education canon of classic books and other texts from western civilization, and a second that is tied to "engaging the present study of historically situated problems of society" (p. 31). She traces this second tendency through the rise of cultural studies

and interdisciplinary studies programs that arose during the late 20th and early 21st centuries, ending with a note of transformation where she senses, in 2005, that American academy is changing to something she can only label presciently as "new."

William Condee (2016) also senses this trend, providing a conceptual history of the humanities "interdisciplinary turn" over the past 40 or 50 years, aligning in part with postmodernism and other movements that fragment knowledge grand narratives. This alignment shows how the increasing of interdisciplinarity programs has often been the "answer" to larger instabilities from an administrative standpoint, as a way to make new ground that might alleviate this insecurity. Condee does see this as a potential "Faustian bargain," where something of the original soul of the humanities is lost through the process of "transgressing [boundaries] to critique existing paradigms, transcending disciplines to discover new worlds, and employing digital technology for humanistic inquiry" (p. 26-27). In other words, the humanities become something totally different through the process of trying to change to meet the times. Commentators are worried that what is vital and distinct about the humanities will be lost when it is subsumed to another discipline, method, or practice, transforming into something unrecognizable in the process. This brings up the sticky point of how enacting change is always a complicated balance act between past, present, and future, where something is always lost when something else is gained, as well as influenced by the positionality and generational outlook of the commentator. Debates about the humanities vacillate between these poles and caught up in distinct ideal visions of what the humanities is and how it can engage with the world. The further lesson here is to keep this in mind when evaluating how different figures (faculty, students, funding bodies) imagine a field and its future.

The *A Community of Inquiry* from above, representing a younger generational perspective, have a somewhat acerbic take on this point, and the general contemporary state of the humanities, raising some important issues. First, they point out the false dichotomy that has arisen between humanities and sciences, sometimes called the two cultures debate (Snow, 1959), which has risen in the present as the university has become increasingly scientized as a way to mark value in its corporate form. Second, they point out a long-standing tension that arises from how the proto-humanities fields of the 17th and 18th centuries, as they emerged out of the enlightenment, were secular stand-ins for religion, which gave meaning to the human. Yet, the 20th century saw the breakdown of the human, or the western conception of the human, as a grand figure of meaning and agent history. Humanities is different than humanity or humanisim. Critical anti-humanisms (e.g. Foucauldian, Deleuzian) destabilized the central role of the human, and with it the role of the humanities as speaking for the human, at least from the position of university knowledge. This instability of the humanities' ability to speak for the human is a "woozily delusional aspect of the humanities," and raises metaphysical questions about its continued role as a legible area of knowledge (Community of Inquiry, p. 40-42).

This has contributed to its shaky ground in the 21st century, at least in the view of "classical humanists" who want to "return" to modernist and earlier canons (e.g. great books liberal arts humanities curriculums). This has created emerging rich areas of critical scholarship that tackle these questions via proposing alternative visions of the humanities that engage with the Eurocentric and colonial history of knowledge within the western academy, and the Orientalizing way it views Other places, as well as proposing different concepts of the "Human" that can foster a different a different humanities. A recent article by Lisa Lowe and Kris Manjapra (2019) theorizes a direction beyond these debates developing a concept of a "comparative global humanities after Man," in

order to build a humanities upon "other" concepts of "the human" from the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific (countering a Eurocentric, colonial conception of what 'Man' is). This aligns with additional scholarship that attempts to re-imagine the humanities through a productive destabilization of the liberal humanism that undergirds humanities in the western university, including Kandice Chuh's theorization of an "illiberal humanism" that will "bear a sense of the in-finite that comes from recognizing humanity beyond the constraints of liberalism" (p.124).

These articles articulate central tensions within the humanities, and the university at large. Such tensions came up heavily within UHI, particularly in the later years of my fieldwork where the collective assumptions of how the university engaged with the world became destabilized by the complications of reality, and through self-reflecting on the ethics of travel to other, non-western places (as well as the inability for some to travel).

The "Crisis" in the Humanities

Collective effort to innovate and boost the vitality of the humanities must be read in the context of the humanities' general decline over the past few decades. The decline, also labeled as a 'crisis,' is a complicated result of a number of mutually constituting processes that include less federal and governmental funding, the corporatization and capitalization of university education, and the emphasis on STEM being tied to a more profitable career (Sturtevant, 2015), to name a few. While the humanities programs in liberal arts colleges and private universities may be less affected, the publicness of the humanities is at risk inside public universities, particularly ones in urban settings that actively engage with the city around them. The threat to the humanities is

particularly acute and widespread in public universities whose struggles for a sustainable future are partially inscribed into the livelihood of their humanities programs.

The term "crisis," when applied to the humanities, goes back at least 50 years, with a volume by Plumb with the title appearing in 1964. The term appears within literature at various points from then until now and is increasingly common in the post-2008 era, though it was building up in the previous decade (see Campion, 2018 for some of this history). More recently Meyerhoff (2019) points out the way that this "crisis talk" embeds specific political opinions, from both the left and right, and there is no doubt that the last decades culture wars have combined with the sense of austerity in the university to make the position of the humanities insecure. Hutner and Mohamed (2016) reject the term as they label it "self-defeating" and "debasing," a cover for more nefarious corporate style restructurings (p. 4).

Discussions of this current era of crisis talk are wide, filling the content of many books and articles, often written by humanists reflecting upon their discipline, as well as education policy commentators and popular press reporters (e.g. along series in *The Atlantic* on higher ed and academia). These include books or articles by Berube & Ruth (2015), Touya de Marenne (2016), Patel (2017), Pennington, et al (2017), Schmidt (2018), Stover (2018), Hayot (2019), and Petitt (2020, and include right-wing apocalypticism, such as by Douthat (2020) who raises old arguments of the 1980s culture wars, by people like Allan Bloom and other great books of western civilization arguments, for a new era. Others, such as Corrigan (2018) tie the future directly to economic concerns, jobs and work, and the trend of justifying the humanities, and liberal arts education more broadly, as contributing directly to employment is another key argument for the future that is presented by many (Aubry, 2017; Steiner & Bauerlin, 2019).

Building on this employment logic, institutional funding partnerships with powerful private foundations, such as the Mellon, are becoming more common as a way to "save" the humanities from crisis, while making them more valuable.[4] A central concern is that the overall trend has had a lack of theorization, where research and scholarship on the long-term effects of these relationships, and the programs that emerge from them, are only starting to emerge. Tensions abound about how they are changing institutional structures and there are worries of whether outside funding carries with it added ideological agendas that may run counter to the critical agency of a humanities education that is not driven by the market or outside money (Newfield, 2009). The worry is that these outside forces will fundamentally change a broad field that prides itself on open-ended critical inquiry, making it more instrumental in its focus, for instance, tying humanities directly to soft skill development for job preparation. However, as we know from above, the imagined purity of the university as a site of unadulterated knowledge production, has already been eroded, and therefore finding ways to navigate multiple forces, pressures, and influences becomes a necessity.

More generative takes on the humanities are phrased as an interrogative question that opens up wider conversations about the efficacy of the humanities, in an attempt to regenerate their role within society. These include works by for instance Nussbaum (2010) who gives a defense via the humanities connection to fostering democracy. Habibi (2016) sees the humanities as

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[4] The Mellon foundation has long been a force influencing education, with a "reputation for moving in mysterious ways," particularly in the humanities, where they have funded a variety of long-term initiatives that challenge the humanities to innovate and experiment with the times. However, there has been criticism about the organization, where the majority of the money has been given to elite private universities, rather than public, and a lack, at times, of transparency. Though this has been changing recently with new leadership, a greater commitment to diversity, and changes in location of where funding money goes (Howard, 2014).

"indispensable" and "necessary for the survival of humankind" (p. 1-2). Sturgess (2019) who argues that the humanities collectively present a form of "obstinate thought" that can, through "slowness" and "plodding along and meandering," critically and productively counter group think and damaging common senses that develop within any society and era (p. 164).[5] In this way the humanities are integral to thinking, a register that is different than just knowing, because it "moves us outside the world of appearances into the aporia of questioning" (p. 165). This is a take that is furthered by Martin & Aguado (2017) who point to the ability of the humanities to "glimpse truth and morality" within times of crisis, disaster, and historical disappointment (p. 12).

Both of these views align with what might be considered the teaching power of the humanities, where it teaches ways of thinking about the world that are critical. Taranto & Detmer (2015), a student and their former teacher, discuss the humanities ability to make issues in the world that seem simple more complicated, while at the same time giving tools that allow students to deal with that complexity in ways that are legible, generative, and not overwhelming. Newman (2019) connects the humanities to the public good, in particular examining the way that humanities education can in part help combat loneliness, alienation, and social dislocation in a time period resplendent with wider actual crises, e.g. climate change, pandemics, social stratification and inequality, neo-authoritarian politics, and so on.

Along these lines, Fitzpatrick (2019) advocates for the humanities ability to cultivate "generous thinking," which is a "thinking *with*, rather than *against*" other ideas, objects, or people (p. 34). Her critique comes from an investigation into how the humanities have become too

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[5] This is similar to a point that educational philosopher Gert Biesta (2019) makes about the power that certain types of education has to make our thought obstinate, tied to critical thinking, in order to better create democracy and public life.

critically antagonistic in its approach (an obsession with criticism as the end point of academic work, that passes down to the education that is provided within the field), spurred on by critical intellectual movements such as deconstructionism. These are important in themselves, as they advocate against hierarchical power, but have lost their way in how they are practiced within the academy, as a kind of hermeneutical detachment where it is more about the rhetorical argument and attack. Fitzpatrick argues that such criticism is only half the response and that the humanities have gotten stuck in just deconstruction without the proper generation on the other end. This has created the situation where the humanities seem out of touch and easily subsumed into culture war bating. Some of this has to do with training, as well as the competitive structure of the academy, and Fitzpatrick, through advocating for generative capacities to be cultivated in the humanities and humanities education (in this way, it aligns with the *believing game* of interdisciplinary work), provides a roadmap for a different emphasis, one that is more easily fluid. Some of this move towards a generative spirit can be found in the *new humanities*, to which we now turn more directly.

Defining the New Humanities

Overall the *urban humanities* emerge in part from this contemporary state of the humanities and are part of a larger ecosystem of emerging interdisciplinary and hybrid fields that put the humanities in conversation with other disciplines, now beginning to be called the *new humanities*. This emerges out of generative attempts to find "compelling models of reorganizing humanistic learning to meet the needs of twenty-first-century publics" (Hutner & Mohamed, 2016, p. 5). The term *new humanities* come from a recent op-ed for *The Chronicle Review* where Jeffrey Williams

(2019) codifies a variety these attempts from the past decade under the umbrella of "a new kind of humanities" (p. 2). Because this is a popular press article in a key educational news journal with a wide audience in academia beyond the humanities the formal codification by Williams was an important classification step. Going out more broadly in higher education in general, the *new humanities* can be situated with other wide-scale trends in education that are looking for what *HASTAC* and *The Future Initiative's* Cathy Davidson (2017) calls "new models of higher education. . . for a world in flux" (p. 13) or what Bryan Alexander (2020) has labeled "new forms of learning . . in an uncertain and chaotic period for colleges and universities" over the next decade (Kindle Edition, Introduction). [6]

Situating them more specifically, the *new humanities* emerge from some of the tensions, or insecurities, in the state of the humanities, as felt inside the broader disciplinary area, that were highlighted above, as well as the larger political-economic crisis above. In particular, they come from the humanities attempting to experiment, or create spaces for experimental interdisciplinary conversation, with other fields and ways of producing knowledge (Dimock, 2016, who calls them the *experimental humanities*). These are not other disciplines *per se*, how interdisciplinarity might have worked in a previous era where there was an easy synthesis or conversations between discipline A and discipline B.

Instead, the *new humanities* are built from conversations that put the humanities within the space of other ways of producing knowledge, for instance the digital, or the *digital humanities* (Burdick et al., 2012) or that are trying to solve contemporary *wicked problems* like climate change

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[6] *HASTAC* (The Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) and *The Futures Initiative* are linked organizations that advocate for "greater equity and innovation in higher education at every level of the university" and serves as a network for scholars practicing in hybrid fields.

(e.g. *environmental humanities*) (Heise, 2017) or global health pandemics (e.g. *medical humanities*) (McGowan, 2016), among others.

Areas	Description	Select Key Texts
Digital	Humanities interaction with digital technology, infrastructures, and knowledge production	Burdick et al., 2012
Environmental	Examines environmental questions through a humanities lens; focusing on climate change and life in the anthropocene	Opperman & Iovino, 2016; Emmet & Nye 2017; Heise, et. al., 2017; Kitch, 2018; Schaberg, 2019
Medical	Focus on narratives of health and illness	Bleakley, 2015; Marini, 2016; Cole et al., 2017
Energy	Focus on energy infrastructures, such as petrochemicals	LeMenager, 2014; Szeman & Boyer 2017
Global	Examines and interrogates diverse ideas of the human, and humanities that come from that, from across the globe	Lowe & Manjapra, 2019; Chuh, 2019
Food	Focus on food	Vale, 2016
Legal	Humanistic frameworks and context of the law	Law, Culture, and the Humanities Journal
Public	Explores public facing value of humanities scholarship in the world, developing humanities projects that intersect with communities	Brooks & Jewett, 2014; Cooper, 2014; Smulyan 2020; Humanities for the Public Good, University of Iowa
Geo-Spatial	Focus on humanities questions through examination of space and tools such as GIS mapping	Dear et al., 2011; Presner et al. 2014; Murrieta-Flores & Martins, 2019
Urban Humanities	Bring together humanities scholarship and urban design and building practices to understand the contemporary city	Cuff et al., 2020

Areas of the *New Humanities*, Adapted from Williams (2019)

There are possibilities for further expansion of these fields, with different combinations of humanities plus some other term (e.g. the maritime) appearing in conferences and CFPs, showing that academics are always creative in pushing into new areas. They have also been called the *plus* humanities for their additive nature of putting two terms together.

These hybrid fields bring together interdisciplinary knowledge around such emerging "zones of inquiry," and represent a possible shift in the way that scholarship in-between disciplines, broadly collected under the name 'interdisciplinary,' is practiced. The logic is that hybridity will allow for new questions to be asked and innovative approaches to be taken, and this is a powerful

logic that has seeped into the common sense of academia, among funders, administrators, faculty, and students. As these emerging fields are not disciplines in themselves, these "zones" confront "urgent problems and bring faculty [and students] together who wouldn't normally collaborate" (Woodward, 2015, p. 63).

If we look more closely at Digital Humanities (DH), the most robust of these areas with the longest history and most institutional program instantiations, we can see some important conceptual tensions that are at the heart of these emerging fields. Gold (2012) writes about the early 2010s emergence and legitimation of DH, which occurred as universities sensed the growing dominance of digital technologies in everyday life, and granting agencies began providing multi-million-dollar project grants to develop research and curriculum projects. This accounted for a "newfound cache" within the university, but also created a moment of self-reflexivity where tensions between the knowledge ecologies of the university and the society at large came up. These include questions of scholarship, authorship, relations to media and data, as well as how these are all communicated publicly. There are also instances where scholarly blind spots or unexpected issues arise when standing on new ground. For instance, there was the worry that the digital focus would "shift the nature of humanities scholarship" in ways that would elide issues of race, class, and gender, in the quest to be more like Silicon Valley (p. x-xi). This is because erasure of these categories has been heavily present in the tech world, which has been critically called out as resting on epistemologies of whiteness (McPherson, 2012). To this, Kirschenbaum (2012) shows that DH is both a methodological and social undertaking, where areas must be interrogated, in order to see how "scholarship and pedagogy are bound up with infrastructure in ways that are deeper and more explicit than we are generally accustomed to" (p. 9).

Continuing his definition and analysis of the *new humanities*, Williams emphasizes the "commerce between other disciplines, particularly STEM or professional fields, and humanistic perspectives," and in the past years "institutional infrastructure has materialized to support them, yielding new programs, journals, book series, conferences, courses, degrees, and (most importantly) jobs" (p. 2). He argues that the trend shows the "vitality" of the humanities that make a "distinctive and essential contribution to knowledge production" (p. 6) and that this trend will "augur the shape of the university to come" changing institutional structures as "rather than a confederation of sizable semi-autonomous departments, they suggest a looser organization structure of small, mobile teams formed on demand for particularly funded projects" (pgs. 6-9). Some of this is economic, whether for profit of self-survival, seeing the new approach as better able to utilize entrepreneurial resources from the university and the world-at-large to bring more money into fields that are underfunded, through potential collaborations with for instance tech companies, and to make graduates of humanities programs (at both the undergraduate and graduate level) more marketable to, for instance, the business world (Stross, 2017). This highlights one of the ways that *new humanities*, in part, aligns, or at least is a strategy for survival in a market-oriented university where disciplines compete for resources.

Yet, at the same time, the goal is to produce a form of hybridization, where a two-way conversation occurs between the area of inquiry and the humanities. It is meant to be a mutual exchange, or contamination, where the two areas rub off on each other. They hybridize but this is not always smooth, and is supposed to be somewhat dissensual, where the humanities critical abilities are brought to bear on the more practice-oriented knowledge of a more applied professional discipline or area. In the reverse, humanities work can signal itself as being more practical, or take on different media forms drawn from these different areas, such as computation

and design thinking. There are different visions for how this might play out. These include the *new humanities* acting as a kind of hub within the university for a wide-range of different collective and collaborative projects, while at the same time expanding the global scope of the university to non-Western areas in a "multi-polar world," in order to be effective "custodians of several millennia of world humanistic knowledge" (Hutner & Mohamed, p. 12). Something like this is underway institutionally, for instance at UCLA where programs like UHI and the Digital Humanities will be potentially housed under a larger reorganization of the humanities under an experimental umbrella.[7]

New Humanities Futures

The majority of writings on the *new humanities* that exist currently, though they are interdisciplinary in nature, come primarily from those already ensconced within a particular position inside the university. That is, most of the accounts are written by faculty or administrators who exist in a top-down position in relation to these program—they created or run the programs and they are observing and writing about the results. What is produced is then analyzed as a kind of justification. These accounts are fine and needed, and I am not criticizing this type of writing entirely, as it is an important record. But there is a sense that the accounts have trouble moving beyond a kind of praise and valorization of the new and innovativeness of the program, and in

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[7] The following conference from 2020 is a first step towards this: https://humanities.ucla.edu/event/ucla-experimental-humanities-workshop-on-humane-infrastructures/

some ways cross the line into propaganda (something I have also been guilty of doing as well), or conversely, they read and interpret the programs through still existing in-disciplinary biases.

By this I mean that they are often written, or understood in the case of participants, from a meso-level position of the writer or participants discipline, framing how the outcome of the interdisciplinary program benefits that discipline or field. That is, it is held within the particular discourse horizon that one is positioned in, and not from an outside analytical meta-view. For instance, a humanities scholar understands how the program augments the humanities; while similarly, an architect reads the program through what it brings to that discipline or profession. It just shows it is difficult to shake ones "training," as well as the institutional positions (and power) that the university gives. Perhaps interdisciplinarity is just a gesture never fully realized. In   a way, it reminds me of Harney and Moten's critique of the academy in *The Undercommons* (2013), where even those who aspire to be critical and innovate academics only end up being managed by the institution, becoming "professionals par excellence" subsumed and disciplined (p. 40). Such is the nature of the perspectival positions of those of us who are disciplined, and in a way, my own effort to fill in a gap by approaching UHI from a critical educational vantage, is an attempt to deal with this—making sure that I am not just replicating the same tropes and standardized accounts about what is going on.

The *new humanities* in Williams' final conclusion function as a kind of possible "adaptation," similar to others that the academy has faced within its history. He argues that much is "still in contest" in regard to "who and what these crossovers serve" (p. 9.) Notable are issues of sustainability, whether these programs will become parts of the existing university, continue existing as a privately funded alternative space between institutional structures, or simply disappear once the money runs out. To phrase this as a question: Are these programs actually

opening up new areas of knowledge and practice that seed innovative practices inside the university long-term? Or are they only trendy money-sinks that disappear when the next 'innovative' approach to knowledge arises? At the present moment near the end of the decade these questions are still contested and up for debate, with some programs becoming more legitimated and ingrained parts of institutions, potentially becoming more formal programs, and others falling away.

The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 perhaps will change this, marking an end to an era of experimentation as budgets from both internal university sources and outside funders become tighter, or as resources are reorganized for other areas of need. It may in turn also create new areas or subgenres of existing hybrid study, for instance the environmental, medical, and urban humanities creating a kind of pandemic humanities within the space between (with digital mapping and data representation built in). This will be an interesting trend to continue to keep an eye on in the future. They also align with changes occurring in the framing and practice of graduate education. For instance, Erica McWilliam (2012), in the introduction to a book focused on new models of graduate education argues that the "risky learning challenges" of this century demands of "graduate [students] that they demonstrate an ability to select, re-shuffle, combine or synthesize already existing facts, ideas, faculties and skills in original ways" and that "advanced knowledge workers" will need to embody this complex set of skills (p. xx).

This is the area where we turn to next.

3.3 Framing Graduate Education within the University

Precarity in Graduate Students

At the center of this is the figure of the graduate student, or the *who* of who is being educated. Here it is important to highlight the graduate students as a specific category of student drawn into and participating within these New Humanities programs, but who have been undertheorized. Making the graduate students an interesting and important subject. Compared to other areas of education, pedagogy at the graduate student level, and other issues relate to graduate students as a category, has been under theorized, though this has started changing due to the structural issues outlined above. Graduate pedagogy with interdisciplinary components has perhaps been theorized even less. Some of this is because it stands within a weird category of education, weird because it does not fit easily into how education is conceived and studied, say for instance, in Graduate Schools of Education.

If we remember the etymological roots of *pedagogy*, it come from the Greek for "leading the child," showing something of the ungirding bias when we think of pedagogy as oriented towards a learner who is not a graduate student: that is K-12 or undergraduate students (on this note, the one who lead the child, the teacher, was also a slave). *Andragogy* is actually a better term (Costa, 2020), though little known or used in conversation, meaning adult learning, but this is also used more technically within adult education its own wide area of education, where something like a Ph.D. does not fit within as easily, though other professional forms of graduate education do. A genre of self-help books like Semenza (2010) and Kelsky (2015) act as guides, or alternative mentors, for getting graduate students through the student process, acting as informal mentors.

Rogers (2020) has recently written a volume that directly addresses new ways of conceptualizing the humanities Ph.D. and other outputs and forms of dissertation work (Presner, 2013; Patel, 2016).

The precarious economic situation of the post-doctorate landscape, where the majority of Ph.D.s produced either cannot get a job or become part of adjunct labor, is vast and disheartening with human costs (Hayot, 2018; Childress, 2019; Harris, 2019; Carey, 2020). Recent graduates from the humanities have written convincing, and melancholic, self-portraits of their decisions to leave academia for other types of work, often called *Alt-Ac* (for Alternative-Academic). These include Andrew Kay's (2019) controversial account of the 2019 MLA conference ("Academe's Extinction Event: Failure, Whiskey, and Professional Collapse at the MLA"), Lucia Tang's (2020) spectral account of "haunting" a conference after making the decision to enter the publishing business, and Robert Cashin Ryan's (2019) "fight song" for a university in ruins, where he faces with gallows humor and punk-rock vigor the "punchline of an unfunny joke" that his generation of humanities scholars has faced (p. 1). Pettit (2019) describes dire hiring prospects from even top ranked humanities graduate programs.

Graduate Student as Subjects

Each of these accounts highlights the distinct, and at times weird, subject position of the graduate student. Technically the graduate student is an adult, since they have "graduated" from school or college. They are not the infantilized undergraduate of popular educational imagination, at least in American higher education. Yet, at the same time, they are a kind of apprentice, learning a knowledge and profession, from those who are already ensconced within the profession itself. In

this way, it is an in-between position. The graduate student knows things, often lots of things, but is not fully embodied with the authority to know. The graduate student, both the scholarly and the professional—as there is a distinction between these that is important to this project—also come into the educational space of graduate school with experience and commitments, often deep ones. This experience and commitments, the knowledge of it, is then put to a kind of test within the academy, as it must find its place within a discipline, or not (hence why some find homes in interdisciplinary spaces). This can often times be traumatic, and in this way, there is something psychoanalytic that happens in all educational relationships, a kind of suffering related to knowledge (see Britzman 2009/2015).

This is all to say that the figure of the graduate student, a kind of minor figure in the meta-narrative of the university, is an important one for this particular project, as they make up the main empirical subject, but also in the way that they rest between the Scylla of the neoliberal political economic realities of the academy, and the Charybdis of such a tenuous knowledge position. This makes them (us), a "tempting labor pool," a "mode of exploitation" (Community of Inquiry, p. 34-35), and a subject for further study.

Other scholars have developed recent work that focuses on a variety of sub-issues within graduate education. Wedemeyer-Strombel (2019) argues that Ph.D. identities are in crisis due to unclear outcomes at the end of the process. This aligns with Smith et al. (2019) longitudinal study on fragility in graduate student identity. Paulson (2017) discusses competition in graduate programs, while Evans et al. (2018) examine mental health issues in doctoral programs. Manathunga (2019) raises the issue of "temporal equity" in graduate schooling, between different groups of students and disciplines. Labaree (2020) sees graduate education as pulling into two incommensurable poles, at least within the social sciences, either focusing too deeply on

professionalization and becoming "academic technicians" who lack scholarly imagination, or a "justice warrior" who through close focus on problem-solving or a particular conceptual lens, close themselves off from wider, more comparative and plural approaches to knowledge. Peabody (2014), Skakni et al. (2019), and Pretorious et al. (2019) give further ethnographic studies of precarity and transitory identity in graduate student subjects, focusing on how to better scaffold care and well-being within the process.

The point of all this is not to wholly critique the academy, or say that things are hopeless, but rather point out key structural issues that affect graduate students at research universities, giving some context to the issues and anxieties they may be facing within their programs. The larger goal is to show some of the logic for why joining an interdisciplinary program like UHI might have multiple justifications, including but not limited to: (1) the additive function of building a more diverse resume and set of interdisciplinary skills, and (2) finding alternative communities within the university that are outside in-discipline program groups. These are not mutually exclusive and can occur in tandem, shifting throughout a UHI program year or graduate career.

Graduate Student Encounters with Interdisciplinarity

If the above processes have created a situation of precarity where those who are invested within the humanities have scrambled to plot a vision for the future, an area of knowledge that is still "and various "manifestos" have been written in past years to address this. First among these is Leonard Cassuto's (2015) *The Graduate School Mess*, where he calls out graduate education for being broken on multiple levels, both structural and pedagogic, proposing analysis and strategies for change. Notably, he diagnoses an "individualistic graduate culture" that sometimes ends up

destroying the motivations (intellectual, activist, artistic) that brought the student to graduate school in the first place.

In *Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in Good Enough Times* by Sidonie Smith (2016), argues that the academy is still stuck in "late twentieth-century" teaching practices, not adapting to changing epistemic infrastructures that include the emergence of new media and modes of scholarly production and communication, increased global and transnational interconnections, and trends to better open-up knowledge and the classroom to the outside world.[8] At least this is true for doctoral students in the humanities and some parts of the underfunded social sciences. This is exacerbated by waning graduate funding and employment uncertainty, which increases anxiety and feelings of competition among students, as a singular type of professionalization has been instrumentalized as the only way forward, erasing other potential pedagogical outcomes such as the intellectual, social, and affective.

As a response, both Cassuto and Smith both offer a "pedagogical vision" for graduate education in the form of manifestos that propose a "usable future" for the academy, one where education is effectively tailored to students through better design, better collaboration between all actors, and the integration of active and experiential forms of learning. The goal would be to "generate experiences" that better "train future thought leaders," both inside and outside the academy, though they conclude that there is much to rethink within coursework, pedagogical training, mentorship, and the job market. (Cassuto, pp. 1-5, 59-60; Smith, pp. 1-4, 155). They

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[8] These issues are not just confined to the humanities, as the other key disciplines in UHI also face similar problematics. For instance, regarding architecture education, Ockman (2012) writes, "Architecture schools are undergoing far-reaching transformations in the early twenty-first century. Globalization, digital technology, and an increasing market-driven education economy are among the power forces reshaping academia" and the teaching that occurs within it (10).

propose one possible location for re-thinking graduate pedagogy, which would be in project-based courses running over one or two years, designed around 'big problems.' Smith describes these as spaces where "programs might join with others to offer interdisciplinary. . . courses whose goal is to build collaborative experience, provide skills training, explore issues of methodology. . . and bring to fruition some kind of product, whether website, article, or teaching resource" (p. 156). Kathleen Woodward (2016) proposes a similar type of space that could contribute to pressing public problems through a combination of humanities knowledge with the practical arts (p. 63).

Would an interdisciplinary zone of inquiry, which brings together students from many places to work on problems that extend beyond, but at the same time contribute to their individual research, be a possible remedy of this issue, which in turn would reflexively work back into the practices within home disciplines through a process of cross-pollination? It might look like something like Staley would create through speculative design, where these courses would act as laboratories to experiment with processes of knowledge production through interdisciplinary connecting and boundary crossing, creating spaces for exchange and learning. The goal would be to prepare future graduate students who can "proactively imagine multiple futures" while also having the intellectual, technical, and communicative skills to enact them (Smith, p. 163). Together Smith and Woodward accurately describe what UHI is: a program that brings together diversely trained intellectuals through collaboration-based projects with the goal of actively engaging with public problems.

This aligns with emerging literature on the value of graduate student experiences with interdisciplinarity, coming from many different disciplinary areas. Manathunga et al. (2006) imagine an interdisciplinary doctoral pedagogy that would increase skills in the following areas:

- Epistemological understanding of home disciplines to better be able to collaborate and deal with conflicts;

- Intercultural knowledge to move "beyond disciplinary cultural relativism to interdisciplinary synthesis;"

- Increase "higher order thinking and metacognitive skills" through the "wrestling" with "multiple disciplinary perspectives;

- Create more "relational, mediated, transformative and situated learning experiences (p. 368).

This would be cultivated through the creation of spaces of interdisciplinary dialogue where interactions with the tools and texts of other disciplines can occur, while also giving the chance to transform knowledge through original synthesis.

This would have the added benefit of creating "personal, interpersonal and communal intellectual contexts" that are situated for true exchange (p. 369). Other sources make similar points, including Kemp & Nurius (2015) who situate the need for interdisciplinary research skills and connections in social work, while Gil et al. (2015) tie interdisciplinary skills directly to community engagement and dissemination of knowledge. Gorovitz et al. (2019) argue for the importance of rich interdisciplinary mentoring who can help shape both professional and personal identity. Williams et al. (2017) make the case for how interdisciplinary training, for instance training in groups from across the university on pedagogical classroom skills, can benefit graduate students teaching as much a disciplinary training, both in terms of individual learning and community and late teaching skills. More connected to UHI is Akpinar et al. (2016), who propose an interdisciplinary design studio pedagogy for graduate students in urban design master programs.

Still critical questions remain, for instance: What does it mean for a student to participate in one of these zones, in addition to their normal disciplinary work? Does it add skills, form additional networks, and create new knowledge? Or does it distract, pulling the student away from the benefits of being grounded within a disciplinary center? Are these models new, or simply replicating past experiments? Do they really teach something different? Do they engage with the world and if so, how? And do they set out future paths for educational formations can deal with complexity, and in turn, produce students who can practice the same?

Synthesis: Radical Takes on the University, New Humanities and Graduate Education

Throughout my fieldwork I have noticed a kind of general anxiety and uncertainty within my student comrades, exacerbated by precarity in the university, as well as the world at large as these are related and cannot be separated. Current pressures have led for the desire for different kinds of radicalization, or at least an active questioning of how to better inhabit the position of scholar, knowledge worker, denizen of the academy, as this is the fate that has been chosen (at least until one gets off the train and goes elsewhere). The following synthesis deals with that tension and have visions for making a better university, or rather, a different form of study. It stakes a position of understanding how graduate students exist in the university and have agency to make their own cross-university, interdisciplinary communities of study within it. I argue that UHI represented one such a place to work this out as students and gain important solidarities, but also carried into it many of wider tensions of the academy and society, theorized here.

Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's *The Undercommons* (2013) reorganizes the university around the idea of Fugitive Study. *Fugitive Study* is a combination of education and solidarity that

happens within the structures of the university, but off the radar and on the margins of the regime of managerial professionalization that they argue is the dominant regime of knowledge production. They are interested in those who are "in" the university, but not wholly "of" it (p. 26, see also Tamdgidi, 2012)—that is not fully professionally or ideologically subsumed into it, and who are posed against the domination of institutions but must rely on them for survival. These are the disposable and unprotected labor: adjuncts, Marxists historians, alienated graduate students, janitors, students of color, the Bartelby's (Žižek, 2006)—those that can't or won't be disciplined or professionalized into a smooth liberalized inclusion.[9]

Among these unincluded folks, the "undercommons" is both a space of generative solidarity, where a different type of commons and education based on *study* can happen, as well as being antagonistic to the larger managed university that is "always at war, always in hiding" with it (p. 30). It is messy, subversive, ground-up, dissonant, and in many ways parasitic, space, trying to short-circuit relationships to power. It is where "the work gets done, the work gets subverted" (p. 26). In the preface, Jack Halberstam writes that the undercommons "gestures to another place. . . a wild place that is not simply left over space that limms the real and regulated zones of polite society; rather it is a place that continuously produces its own unregulated wildness" (p. 11-12). Central within this is the idea of "study" which is a term that emphasizes collectivity and is opposed to individualistic learning or instrumental knowledge production. At the end of the book is an author interview, where Moten states:

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[9] On this note Harney and Moten are particularly brutal towards so-called "critical" academics, seeing them as something akin to bourgeois collaborators whose position is to maintain the status quo despite the radical words that might come out of their mouths--champagne (or cocaine) socialists, if you will (Cocker, 1998). This is a similar argument to the one that Roderick Ferguson (2012) makes about the formation of interdisciplinary departments or "studies" fields around race, gender, and ethnicity that emerged within the 1960s and 1970s as being "constitutive" of power, rather than opposed of it, used by the university to cordon off radicals and get them to buy into the system.

We are committed to the idea that study is what you do with other people. It's talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice. The notion of a rehearsal—being in a kind of workshop, playing in a band, in a jam session, or old men sitting on a porch, or people working together in a factory—there are these various modes of activity. The point of calling it "study" is to mark that the incessant and irreversible intellectuality of these activities is already present (p. 118).

When defining the "togetherness" that fills the title of the dissertation, this is what I mean: where study is a mode of being together with other people that has its own intellectuality. An ironically rare moment that happens within the school or graduate school.

This is a point that has been picked up by other critical educators, include Eli Meyerhoff whose *Beyond Education: Radical Studying for Another World* (2019) uses the idea of study to try to open-up other "modes of world-making" that are beyond a narrative of educational progression (e.g. the education gospel) that is individualistic and romanticizes instrumental progression. Study can make new worlds, both intersubjectively between people and through a kind of "making" creation or praxis with the outside. Other modes of study as proposed by the Undercommons, or by Meyeroff, offer different ways for being in the university; with different practices, different ways of organizing, and that move towards different ends.

At its best moments, I argue, UHI approached something close to this for the graduate students who participated. It did not do this all the time, or even most of the time, but there were moments of this anarchistic and agonistic energy, where another place was gestured to, a place which was drawn from the built-up solidarity of the students, their experiences within the

university, and political convictions. This allowed for a different mode of being-in-but-not-of the university to be produced from time-to-time, crackling up from the collective study of the city. That is the importance of holding "study" up as a mode that can be used for later analysis.

In a final related take on the university, graduate pedagogy and the in-flux identities of those within, la paperson, the nom de plume of education and ethnic studies scholar K. Wayne Yang, proposes in a work of provocative theory entitled *A Third University is Possible* (2017) that within "the colonizing university also exists a decolonizing education." (p. xiii). The university is a colonial enterprise in the US because it is historically built on land extraction, particularly at public, land-grant universities as well as private colleges with their extractive endowments also do this (Lee & Ahtone, 2020). This argument is more than the university just being corporate. Decolonization is not just about the curriculum but the physical space and infrastructure that universities exist on. It is a "giant machine attached to other machines" (p. 32) and using theories of "worldings", la paperson claims that there are three types, or worldings, of universities, creating a critical typology.[10]

The *First University* is the imperial R1, which is a machine of accumulation and extraction as part of the academic-industrial complex. This is now distributed globally through satellite campuses, study abroad centers, and so on. The *Second University* is more "humanized," the more genteel colonization of liberal arts universities and humanities programs. It is the idealized university of the past, where Kant, Marx, and Freire, for instance, talk theory together, but

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[10] Drawn from New Materialism theory, among other places, "Worlding," according to Anderson & Harrison (2010), "the term 'world' does not refer to an extant thing but rather the context or background against which particularly things show up and take on significance: a mobile but more or less stable ensemble of practices, involvements, relations, capacities, tendencies and affordances" (p. 8). See Palmer & Hunter (2018) for a longer overview of the term.

abstractly removed from the world. This university is "the house of the hegemonic radical, the postcolonial ghetto neighborhood within the university metropolis," again echoing the argument from above that the university is nothing more than a holding cell to keep critical thought housed and controlled within a larger power structure (p. 42).

This university is "false" because it still solidifies a liberal and extractive order, creating individual pedagogical self-awareness and criticality in students but without any radicality, not changing anything at the level of land and possession. A false utopia. Furthermore, most universities, UCLA included, are built up from versions of both the First and Second university, operating in tandem, two fronts of the same imperial machine. The *Third University*, then, emerges out of the cracks, from the places where the machinery of the First and Second university break down, strategically assembling them, the ruins, into something new. The argument here is that the third university already exists and is being built by those—scholars, students, others—who are already part of the machinery but who use it to "wreck, scavenge, retool, and reassemble the colonizing university into decolonizing contraptions" (p. xiv). In this way, la paperson provides a more agentive theory than say Bill Readings above, who is melancholically resigned to dwelling in the ruins, rather than making something anew from them.

But what does this mean more practically? Later in the book, a second key theory is introduced, that of the a *Scyborg*.[11] Influenced by Donna Haraway, Queer Theory, and Assemblage

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[11] la paperson: "Rather, the scyborg delights in the ways that hir agency is extended by the very circuitry of systems meant to colonize. Scyborg is system-interference and system-witchcraft, the ghost in the machine. Like a mutant code, scyborg is structure's agency in a nonstandard deviation. Scyborg's silent addition begs the question of what it is: a Scylla or a Scully, an alternative spelling, a plurality, or an assemblage, a slippage between cyborg and system? I mean for you to apply this term to yourself.[3] I hope you have fun with it. And also build a decolonizing machine while you're at it."

Theory: a *Scyborg* is la paperson's agentive term for those who assemble themselves from the experience of being within multi-scales within the university. For instance, a *Scyborg* may have been educated by the Second University's critical humanisms, or the First University's neoliberal mode of competition, and very well having succeeded within both. Still, they know they are imbricated in the larger structures of the university—they cannot escape and have paid their price in blood to the university. It is an account of positionality and agency that allows for being compromised between different structures, desires, and ideals. It is not pure and that is the point. And there is something more active, and therefore agency, in this account, through the ability to assemble different things together. There is a way to be in the university, using its spaces in multiple ways, and creating counter, decolonial spaces can be assembled from the mess. This can be from scavenged critical and physical resources, or overlooked infrastructure, which can then create new sites of agency and activism, hacking a space for different educational and activist purposes.

Later, when thinking about how UHI students, who are themselves embedded in the First and Second University, have utilized their agency within the university, assembling different disciplinary and interdisciplinary tools and experiences into their identities and practices, this theorization will come back: they have something of a Scyborg in them.

Conclusion to the Chapter

"This hope isn't something I've sought. This silent wing of the Unknown University."

-Roberto Bolaño, *The Unknown University* (2007)

This chapter has tried to lay out a background context to two interrelated institutional areas that make up the background of UHI. What's important to remember going forward is this: various structural tensions in the university and academy have opened up needs for different spaces and imaginations for what it could be. Interdisciplinarity (from the previous chapter) has been a constant powerful force within the university used to create and organized the new, where different ideas and synthesis emerge, sometimes coalescing into something meaningful, sometimes just being an experiment. The *new humanities* are one such area that is currently emerging, and which UHI is part of. Many figures of the university move in and out of these areas, but graduate students are one set who experience this, and it has possible influences on their identity as a scholar.

My hope is that through my position in Education, as a diverse and undisciplined *field*, that supposedly thinks about meta-processes of pedagogy and of the interactions of people in educational spaces, allows for a different perspective—than say from a perspective that sits solely in the humanities or architecture or planning—and an appropriate room for engaging in meta-level analysis, that I am in the position to theorize this. Remember, as Freud (1937) stated, educating is an "impossible" profession, and I think that confronting the impossible relationship is what gives Education studies part of their critical disposition, as well as access to what Lacan would call the "Other Side" in his *Four Discourses* (Seminar XVII, 2007), which include, in part, the knowledge, or desire for knowledge. For instance, knowledge as produced within the university (e.g. the University Discourse) that represents a bureaucratized form of knowledge production. This is part of four discourses that structure our relationship to knowledge and desire, and include: the discourse of the Master (knowledge violently forced from above), the University, the Hysteric (radical knowledge that disrupts the status quo), and finally the Analyst, which represents a kind

of subjectivity of knowledge that emerges from the unconscious (For more discussion on the four discourses and how they relate to education, see MacCannell, 2009 and Johnson, 2014)

The chapter has attempted to theorize and articulate something complicated and changing, and which is perhaps still settling into a final formation. These trends are even more in flux with the 2020 uncertainty in higher education that has emerged during the final writing process, which will further transform some of the issues presented in negative, but hopefully also positive, ways. It cannot be emphasized more strongly that the current events of 2020 in many ways seem to be forcing an end point of a periodization within critical studies of the university and phenomena like UHI. I predict that this will be more apparent in the years to come as the post-COVID-19 realities of higher education settles into what it will eventually become. The result of this is that some trends from the past decade will continue and grow, others will fall away. Will the *new humanities* and UHI survive? I do not know. That is to be determined, but from this vantage in the middle of things, they seem to be very much a product of the time between 2008 and 2020—that is between the economic recession that torpedoed public education budgets and led to things like increased tuition, internationalization of the student body, and much precarity in areas such as the humanities (and the outside funding money that tried to revitalize it), and the present crisis where many of these are changing once again. They are a product of trends, logics, funding patterns, and institutional and extra-institutional goals of that time. These may be different in the time that will come.

Therefore, this project, although seeming to be following the wave of a trend that might keep going in perpetuity, is set what seems now as being wholly within a now gone era: because in times of precarity, alternative programs existing on the fringes or within interstitial areas of the university, and university budget, may be the first to go—unless that is, they represent a different,

and legible way forward. Yet, at the same time, one of the powerful logics behind the *new humanities* is that they present a better way for addressing big and complex issues through marshalling different resources and building different forms of research and education. This seems needed now more than ever. And perhaps they will continue to have transformative power in how scholarship is practiced and taught. This sits at the horizon limit of the dissertation but will hopefully be speculated upon within the conclusions. And in revising and re-organizing, I have tried to bring out some of the nuance of these changes *in media res*, as a way to lay markers for when what will come in the future can be seen more clearly.

To end with the words of poet and novelist Roberto Bolaño, who himself is intertwined within the fabric of UHI, as an important literary figure of Mexico City, who gestures towards an "unknown university" in the epigraph, a sentiment which aligns with Reading's *university to come*. If nothing else, this is what this chapter in its generative aspects has been about, and which the dissertation as a whole is also about. It is about finding these alternative sites where something else can happen, where the inhabitants and ideas of the unknown university can become *known*, becoming something else. This is not to propose so much of an ideal, utopian university (though we are perhaps in a dystopian one right now), as my idealistic ancestors named theirs. Rather, I see something more like a heterotopic university (Foucault, 1967; Knight, 2014), or a thirdspace university (Soja, 1996), which would be a space of Otherness and experimentation, of plural diversity (or pluraversity, see Escobar, 2017) in form, composition, education produced and knowledge created, and attention to wide concepts of what constitutes the 'human' in the 21st century.

The next chapter turns more directly to the urban and pedagogies for learning the city.

Chapter 4 Pedagogies for Learning the City

Introduction

What is the relationship of the city to learning? How can we learn from the city? This chapter reviews literature that think through what I call the *pedagogies for learning the city* that undergird the educational activities of UHI. These are pedagogical strategies that utilize the layered complexity of cities to not just teach prescribed content but also can structure encounters that can open-up different understandings of the world, as well as self-reflection on the student's engagement with what is encountered.

The educational philosopher Jan Masschelein reflected on the idea of learning from the city at a recent conference on *University Futures* in 2016.[1] Responding to a question about the university's role as a "site for collective public study," he discusses the importance of reclaiming the university as the "pedagogical forum where things and people are brought together . . . to not only know something, but also put the knowledge in a certain way to the public." This can be done, he argues, through an engagement with cities, where, by taking students into the city, you can make "the city into a school."[2] He has done this over the past decade through a series of intensive

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[1] UNIKE Conference: University Futures to promote "collective thinking about the future directions of universities in the knowledge economies of Europe and the Asia-Pacific Rim." Aarhus University, Denmark. June 15-17, 2016. (Video Interview)

[2] For other references to this term, see Levine (1967): "The City is a school in the sense that it is the setting in which the attitudes, talents, and behaviors of the people who live in it are shaped" (p. 1). Freire (1993) also situates education specifically in urban areas with *Pedagogy and the City*.

place-based travel seminars a part of the *Laboratory for Education and Society* at KU Leuven in Belgium, where he takes students to other cities in Europe in order to "to study something about our actual condition, our actual global condition, so to say, and the main point about it is precisely to try to transform the city, if I may say so, [transform] the city into a school." These are "collective experiments" where the city "becomes something that is out of its usual context [that is the city's] the economic function [or the] touristic function and so on, and [we can get to where] the city shows us maybe something different."

This "something different," that which is unexpected, contingent on the layered world that can be only encountered in city beyond the school. The end goal of this process is to try to produce a kind of "wisdom" from the educational experience, following Gert Biesta (2016, see Chapter Seven on "Virtuosity"), which is saturated by what is learned through being in the city and by trying to understanding its complexity. In this case it is a wisdom that derives from the encounter with city, a wisdom that will later be practiced in the future academic and professional lives of students (as well as the civic life of *being* an individual who lives in cities).

To put the chapter in context, if the previous chapter focused on institutional conditions, this chapter now turns to theorizing the relationship between the object that is being studied through interdisciplinary inquiry—the city—and the influence that has on the type of learning that can happen through the educational process (the right side of the diagram from the introduction). It provides some examples of efforts that connect education to cities. And it builds on the idea that the city can be made into a kind of school, where the complexities that can be encountered by individuals and groups of students in cities can be utilized in a way that produces learning—a particular type of learning that is imbued with the experience of engaging with the city. To ask it another way, it seems common sense that cities *can* teach us, but what can they teach us?

Generally, the chapter follows inquiry into three broad questions:

- Why is the city, or the urban, important as an area of study? (I)

- How the city is becoming a site for learning and thinking about education? (II)

- What sort of urban-based pedagogies and learning strategies have been developed? (III)

Across the sections, I first provide some of the broader rational for studying cities, giving some of the conceptual background on the urban that exist across urban-focused disciplines, and are part of the conversations UHI emerges from and contributes to. Next, I look briefly at some top-down policy connections and trends that put the city in conversation with education. Finally, I survey some different pedagogical theories that directly include a focus on cities or learning from the city.

4.1 Urban Contexts: Cities in the 21st Century

The urban, which is the research object of UHI. And Urban Humanities emerges as an important field within a world that has rapidly urbanized. Just as with Digital Humanities, where there is little separation between the term digital and human in our increasingly technologically integrated lifeworld's, there is the similar idea that on cannot understand what it means to be human without understanding what it means to live in the city. This brings up the questions of how we can practice an urban-centered humanities that engages with key dynamics 21st century, without grounding it, in part, within the realities, problems, and questions that urban life raises.

A recent special issue of *National Geographic* ("Cities: Ideas for a Brighter Future:" March 2019) explores contemporary issues in urban life ranging from Beijing to Uganda to Singapore to suburban California—operating with the tagline from "mega-regions" to "micro-houses." Throughout the volume is the argument that the key goal of the city throughout history is to "bring

people together," and that over the twentieth century some of this collective human vision for the city was lost as suburbanization and urban alienation occurred (p. 78). The issue shows through a variety of articles efforts for revitalizing urban sustainability, resilience, and life through design processes and planning, which include the intersection of social understanding at the human-scale, for building the city. Articles include speculative designs for futuristic eco-cities, a "walking tour" of Tokyo ("Walking through a Megalopolis"), and a focus on the city's non-human animal inhabitants ("Rats: They'll Always be with Us"). All of these examples reflect the breadth of contemporary approaches to the urban, and even though *National Geographic* is a popular publication, it is useful as an example of a developing common sense that in regard to how society needs to approach the urban.

This is communicated in the opening editorial, where the noted human-centered urbanist Jan Gehl is quoted, giving a vision for the future of cities that is firmly centered at the human level, where the hopes and expectations of individual lives, rather than the outward infrastructure, is the litmus test for cities. Gehl says, "Waking up every morning and knowing that the city is a little bit better than it was yesterday—that's very nice when you have children. Think about that. . . your children have a better place to grow up than you could when you were young. I think that's what it should be like" (p. 6; see also Gehl, 2010). This is a small-scale and phenomenological-oriented style of urbanism, which is always reaching back to the human-level for meaning.

This sentiment echoes recent work by Richard Sennett who in *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (2018) makes an argument for developing an "open city," where design and an ethical understanding of the social fabric come together in order to "encourage complexity and create an interactive synergetic [overall city] greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 9). This would be a more "vigorous urbanism, but also a visceral urbanism" where "space and place come alive

in the body" of individuals living in the city. Other recent volumes along these lines ask how we envision better cities for people (Chase & Rivenburgh, 2019) or cities that are "soft" and able to grow density at the same time as human livability (Sim, 2019). All highlight the way that any future city will need to be imagined from the perspective and at the scale of the human, a logic that is representative of UHI's urbanist position for creating generative imaginaries for how we can live together better.

Urban Phenomena and Urban Problematics

The reality of the 21st century is that urbanization is continuing on a planetary scale where nearly 70% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050 (Brenner and Schmid, 2014; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs). According to these views on urbanism, the city is part of a wider continuum of urban processes that stretch from the large scales of mega-regions through individual city areas, with both centers and suburban and peri-urban areas, to smaller towns and villages, and even the rural. Relationships with environmental or non-human aspects of the urban have also become increasingly important (Ernstson & Sörlin, 2019). Cities have become a key area of study and level of mezzo-level analysis, as sites that bring together many different types of elements and scales (Hall & Burdett, 2017; Chen et al, 2018).

Through processes of globalization, cities are also intersectional sites of global and transnational interconnection, whether via financial and economic networks, media and cultural production, or human migration (Appadurai, 1990; Castells, 1996). Many of these coalesce within what are called global or world cities that act as hubs in the global economic system (Clark, 2016). McNeill (2017) argues that global cities are "an industry in its own right" and devotes a volume to

investigating "what objects and practices are involved in putting together" the city and global, and how they affect the social, economic, cultural lives of people (p. 1-2). In this way, cities have become vast collectors of wealth and this has been physically manifested in the material infrastructure of the city through top-down state policies that utilize starchitect designed skyscrapers, financial centers, shopping malls, and other signifiers of global cosmopolitanism (Easterling, 2016). They are also hubs for creative industries and cultural production and are desirable incubators for the global creative class (Florida, 2014; 2012), not to mention important hubs for global higher education (see various chapters in Meusburger et al., 2018). Overall, the city is often seen as a "triumph" of human civilization (Glaeser, 2011).

But, of course, there is a flip side, where cities are also sites of inequity, containing poverty that is often spatialized, as well as other complex problems that arise from dense populations, pollution and other environmental stressors and extremes (Dawson, 2017), and social tension, to name a few. Spatial justice issues and the right to the city of diverse of individuals and communities remain constant tensions, but also as important sites for radical movements and experiments in building new futures (Davis, 2005; Harvey, 2012; McGuirk, 2014; Verso, 2017). Other tensions include too rapid growth, uneven technology, and uncontrollable density. These are the other oft portrayed in the media imaginary of megacity-scapes, for instance the Orientalized Los Angeles of *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), as well as an in other sci-fi and anime representations of future cities, where the tension between the glamorous utopian surface of how the city is presented with a dystopian undercurrent, a tension that plays out in how the urban is imagined.

Contextually, then, the field of *urban humanities* emerges from this larger need within academia to develop new approaches for studying the city and in particular megacities. There are

already specific disciplines where the city is a central focus: architecture, urban planning, and geography, to name a few. Other disciplinary areas have become increasingly more and more interested in the city, adding the qualifier of "urban" to various areas of inquiry. This so-called "urban turn," has influenced the social sciences and humanities, either creating rich sub-fields— urban sociology, urban history, urban anthropology—or broad fields that collect different knowledge, practices, and methods from all of these under an umbrella fields like urban studies, which as a specific field has become more and more interested in theorizing at the global or planetary level (Harrison and Hoyler, 2018).

What fully constitutes the urban, however, continues to be site of great academic effort and rich theorization, with scholars from multiple fields actively debating and defining a wide range of urban phenomena. Fundamentally, there is a constant tension of scale and approach. Do you analyze from a macro-scale economic standpoint (Gottlieb & Ng, 2017), which focuses on flows of money, or the creation of buildings? Or an ethnographic, micro-lenses that brings specific processes or experiences to the forefront (Highmore, 2005; Parker, 2015)? Do you take a more empirical approach, or a real-world policy approach? Or do you approach the urban from a specific critical lens?

Often these questions are at the heart of interdisciplinary efforts and approaches to the urban, or to cities. For instance, a volume edited by Iossifova, et al. (2018) provides a survey of different disciplinary and professional approaches for "defining the urban," while looking for, through the survey, "points of departure, synergy, and conflict among the various perspectives" (p. 5). Leitner et al. (2020) cover similar ground in a volume that looks at urban studies, developing a *both/and* approach that puts contrasting theories and methods "in conversation with one another" rather than in opposition, and proposing a collaborative, critical urban studies (p. 20). These

volumes, as well as others such as Simone & Pieterese (2017), also attempt to theorize the urban from different locations, for instance theorizing urbanization from the position of cities in Africa.

Situating Megacities

The megacity is the overall organizing city-type of focus within UHI. What is a megacity and why are they important? At the most basic definition the "megacity" has been defined purely quantitatively—simply the amount of people living in that place, over 10 million. The rise of megacities in the world is tied to globalization and larger narratives of the developing world (Sassen, 1991). In 1950, there were only two cities that had populations of more than ten million: New York and Tokyo. Both of these were in developed countries. Since 1950 the majority have grown in developing countries. The figure for cities of ten million plus in 2007 was 19, with four in developed countries and 15 in developing countries (Sorensen & Okata, p. 1). Castells (2000) argues that megacities represent a "new spatial form of the global economy and as dominant centers of population, magnets [from the] hinterlands, and gravitational power toward major regions of the world." And they are places that because of economic opportunity draw more things (people, capital, and so on) into their orbit, growing larger and larger.

Kraas and Mertins (2014) add the idea that megacities both are influenced by and influence global change, arguing that globalization processes are amplified in such spaces, and this amplification in turn influences the future direction of globalization (p. 1 & 4). They write that megacities are characterized by "new development dynamics as well as intense and complex interaction of different demographic, social, political, economic and ecological processes" (p. v). What this shows is that there is something about the push towards development that focuses the

urban and centralizes populations through migration in the city. Estimates say there will be 40 cities of 10 million plus by just 2025 (Ericsson). This causes the megacity to "loom disproportionately large in economic flows, political processes, social stresses, and environmental risks" and will therefore "play a central role in the future of human civilization." This is the central premise of *Megacities: Urban Form, Governance, and Sustainability* (2011), which argues that "the urbanization patterns achieved during the next four decades will be critical to the long-run sustainability and livability of the globe, and that megacities are a central part of that challenge" (p. 1).

Asian Megacities

Asia is at the heart of the world's urbanization and is a major contribution to the growth of megacities. Many of the 47 megacities are in Asia, growing in parallel with the economic development in these countries, and making the Asia Pacific region an important area of urban focus, where "Asian [mega]cities are increasingly imagined as global frontiers of urban studies in the twenty-first century" (Bunnell & Goh, 2018, p. 9). The two major drivers for this change are China and India who have both added urban residents by the millions in the last decades and will continue to do so in the future. Currently, Asia contains 53% of the global urban population and this will only increase (Kraas & Mertins, p. 5). Tokyo, Mumbai, Shanghai, Beijing, and Delhi will be the top five cities by population in 2025. In 2030 China will have 221 cities with 1 million or more inhabitants and 23 with five million or more. India will have 68 cities with over a million and 13 with over four million, and 6 with over ten million.

With their sci-fi skylines, and "varied textures, alluring reflective surfaces, vibrantly multicolored materials, and mesmerizing mass quantities," Asia megacities have become stand-ins for the future.[3] They also provide a different lens through which to understand processes of urbanization and of "being global," which are cities of the Global North dominated (Roy & Ong, 2011).[4] This imaginary represents many of the hopes and anxieties that the world feels about its future and they get layered into the discourse of how we view Asia—as both a rising entity and one that contains new forms of urbanization (as well as urban stresses). Roy and Ong write:

> Impossibly heterogeneous, the idea of Asia functions in this book as much more than a geo-political location. While massive urban problems prevail in the region, "Asia" is increasingly invoked as the testing ground for successful models of economic growth, rational planning, and ecological sustainability. Inter-Asian comparisons and contrasts have become common practices in many urban initiatives to attain "world-class" status. Thus, in this book, Asia is a geographic location, a space of urban innovations, as well as an emergent symbol for urban renovations that have global applicability (p. xv).

The takeaway from this is the relationship between urbanity and "world-class" status, and how this exists in a realm of innovations and symbolic capital, as invested by the rest of the globe. Within

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[3] For instance, in the film *Her* (2013), where Shanghai stands-in in part for Los Angeles, or the most recent season of *Westworld* (2020) where Singapore does the same.
[4] This opens up an important critical critique of UHI that will become important in the final chapters: whereas UHI attempts to be relational it is still, in the conceptual circuits it builds both between cities and between universities (UCLA), western, or Los Angeles, dominant. Figuring out how to make something like UHI more relational, multi-directional, and globally equitable is something that is being worked toward within the back burner and emerges to the forefront at the end.

megacities "individuals continually negotiate encounters with great quantities of things [and] simply put, there is more in megacities: more people, more products, more cars, more buildings, more trash, and, in Asia specifically, more money." This has also created new types of culture, including film and literature, specific to the conditions of these cities (Watson, 2011). Because all of these factors, megacities become a "forceful presences in the lives of city dwellers," at a scale never before experience, and therefore, they are an important site for studying the city (Miner & Weinstein, 2016, p. 11). Yet, at the same time, megacities are vulnerable to a whole host of risks because of this scale, for instance a heightened vulnerability to climate change because of the combination of density and proximity to water due to closeness to global trade (Fry, 2015).

This is why UHI has made the study of megacities a pressing central focus in Asia Pacific, a region that encompasses both megacities in Asia (Shanghai, Tokyo) and the Americas (Mexico City, Los Angeles) on either side of the Pacific, and the relational circuits that develop between them becomes an important generative framework for research and urban thinking. As Sassen (2014) writes in a more recent book, "the network of global cities functions as a new geography of centrality that cuts across the old North-South and East-West divides" (p. 9), and therefore there is ample need for learning these new urban environments.

4.2 Connecting the City and Education

The following section examines some examples of where cities and education meet, exploring the relationship of how they interact within different forms of education to produce different types of learning. The literature fills in, and works towards, an argument for the city as

an important site of educational inquiry that can be engaged with across multiple educational levels. Additionally, it sets up the city as a site that is worthy of interdisciplinary educational efforts.

Cities are Sites of Experimentation and Mutual Learning

Because cities, and more generally the whole scale of urban phenomena, have become an increasingly important category for understanding the future of the world, both in terms of the built environment and for social organization and human living. Cities are an important "locus" for experimentation because according to Potjer & Harjer (2017), in a report called *Learning with Cities, Learning for Cities*, they combine local, horizontal, and vertical registers (see also Evans et al., 2016). By the local, cities always fundamentally of their local place, "happening in their own street, in the endless and unfinished state that is characteristic for urban society" (p. 3). They are suffused within a place (the local) that is distinct, which put them in a unique position in the world. At the same time, there are connections to other cities in the world through similar or parallel problems and challenges (the horizontal), as well as are at a point between scales of local, regional, and national governments (the vertical). Cities are also sites where new technology is implemented and where there are opportunities for implementing these technologies. Most important, they are "inherently serendipitous: places where you find everything that you were not looking for," as well as being places where collective problems can be confronted with shared resources (another argument for the interdisciplinary position of urbanism).

All this comes together within how experimentation actually happens within cities. The authors advocate for a pragmatist approach that is practice and place-based, centered around processes of "learning by doing" that can actively develop new solutions and innovations to

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problems (p. 4). In this way, the experimental urbanism being proposed is inherently Deweyan in nature, as it develops from an experimental and experience-based method that also creates *communication* between different actors within the city—the public, the private, and community groups (Hlebowitsch, 2006; Palermo & Ponzini, 2015). In turn, horizontal structures of knowledge sharing where cities learn from each other's experiments in order to deal with shared problems.

Cities and Higher Education

Starting with a top down, institutional view of the relationship between cities and education, universities have long been tied to the cities they exist in. Diner (2017) gives a history of the relationship over the last century, arguing that "universities in cities [have] increasingly engaged in urban research, using their home cities to broaden their students' education" (p. ix). Brennan et al. (2018) and Brennan & Cochrane (2019) tie the university and the education that happens within them directly to place and as "spaces for living," in an era of where this has been questioned by global networks and virtual learning (p. 190). On this note, Jason Owen-Smith (2018) argues for the future of the research university an important social "hub" within cities that can "cultivate. . . complex, diverse, and balanced networks that span many fields and approaches to problems" (p. 165), acting in the role of "physical anchor [that can] integrate" different locales and scales seriously (p. 104).

Neubauer (2013) writes about the relationship between megacities and globalized higher education, arguing that they in their ability to be "collecting nodes for global capital" have also made higher education a key commodity (p. 140). This has allowed elite universities to sites of global capital concentration within megacities, changing town-gown dynamics through, for

instance, international students who effect local urban economies (not to mention contributing to specific types of diversity). In this way, cities have become hubs for global universities (Torres, 2015), which attract, among others, international students (Rhoads & Szelényi, 2011), who in turn interact and potentially transform the city around them and have increased the internationalization of higher education through exports of university campus models and satellite campuses like NYU Shanghai (Kamola, 2019).

Learning Cities

In recent years education and learning have been more closely conceptualized with the city. As Keri Facer and Magdalena Buchczyk (2019) argue, concepts of 'learning' and 'education' are becoming more important to "urban planners, geographers, international agencies, and city leaders" (p. 151). The set of UNESCO policies organized around the label of Learning Cities are another obvious connection between the city and education. Emerging out of the Educating Cities movement (Bosch, 2008), there exists the idea that the city "can, and must be, a setting for education as well as an educating agent" (Maragall, 2008). Learning Cities were first proposed at a 2013 conference in Beijing as a policy framework that could deal with global urbanization in a way that is locally centered within individual cities. It is a policy framework that tries to cultivate learning across multiple scales of government, as well as multiple ages from children to adults, while at the same time bridging economic, technological, and social/humanistic goals around themes of sustainability and holistic well-being (UNESCO Global Network on Learning Cities, 2013). In this way, it is a kind of everything-under-the-sun policy framework that can collect varieties of local variance within a wider net of initiatives. Two case study volumes (Valdes-Cotera

& UNESCO, 2016/2017) look specifically at how these elements play out locally within specific cities, providing a horizontal mechanism that cities can learn from each other.

There have been critiques of Learning Cities frameworks, notably being that they exist often only at the level of formal policy, rather than being "actually existing." Boshier (2018) questions whether they are the "real deal" or "fake news," giving criticism on their bias toward urban elites living in the city, as opposed to rural migrants, and also only foregrounding formal settings of education. Facer & Buchczyk (2019) continue this critique by arguing that they exist within a "management regime" that sometimes fails to recognize wider issues of "social justice" and "grassroots agendas" of communities within the city who exist outside the scope of governance (p. 153). They continue (p. 161-162) to argue that Learning Cities also fail to take into account pedagogies, and registers of learning, for instance "thinking through place and body," including how senses and senses of place have the power to educate (Elwood, 2005), and how the materiality of the city interacts with people's learning creating the "co-emergence" of how an individual begins to know local knowledge (Ingold, 2010). In this way, Learning Cities are primarily an external educational framework, imposed and concerned with outside facing metrics, rather than grasping at more subjective, messier, and embodied forms of knowledge and learning that exist within the spaces and places of cities.

"Learning from [x]": City Studies

Next we turn briefly to a very specific genre of the urbanist book, or city criticism, one that has learning plus a specific city in the title (e.g. "Learning *from* Los Angeles"). These are case studies that center a single city an attempt to theorize important learnings from them, delivered in

a single package. There is a longer history of classic texts, from both urbanism and the humanities, where the central premise is a kind of learning report on a particular city. This includes, for instance, Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* (2002) that catalogued urban life in Paris, as well as texts like Jane Jacobs' (1992) *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* on New York and Reyner Banham's (2009) *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, mentioned in the preface. Each draws out a kind of pedagogical lesson from their respective city. Colin Marshall (2019) discusses this type of book and city critic in more detail, arguing that city critics use the city as a focus because "their subject is a nexus of subjects," where the city opens up lessons on any number of topics. In academia, case studies or comparative case studies of cities are the norm, though efforts have been made to make these cases more creative, encompassing multiple scales and regions rather than just a single or comparative case (Leitner, et al. 2020).

One recent entry in this genre stands out, and that is the trend of volumes that directly position themselves as learning from a specific city. The origin document of this comes from architectural studies and is *Learning from Las Vegas* (Venturi & Scott Brown, 1972), a book that documents a Yale architectural studio visit to Las Vegas to learn from the vernacular buildings there, where the idea that one could "learn" something of value from neon signs and strip malls was at the time revolutionary. Shelton (1999) learns from the urban landscapes of Japanese cities in order to teach western design. More recently, there have been volumes that "learn" from Shanghai's education system (Tan, 2013), Shenzhen (O'Donnell et al., 2017) as a site of China's experiments with capitalism and the long term social, cultural, and material effects, and Bogota (Berney, 2017), as a pedagogical city, where the city government has utilized urban policy to teach citizens different ways of living and interacting in public space. What all these books have in

common is the belief that individual cities have specific and unique knowledges that can be actively learned from and that this knowledge can teach others.

Interdisciplinary Urbanism

Perhaps the most important intersection between the city and education at this level is how the city has increasingly become an interdisciplinary object of study in the academy. On this note, on the efficacy of studying the city in an interdisciplinary way, the volume *Now Urbanism* (2014) makes the argument that in order to deal with that complexity of cities, "scientists, policy-makers, and academics [must] increasingly acknowledge the interdependent nature of built and natural environments and the consequent challenges such relationships suggest in the advancement of urban sustainability, social equity, and political empowerment" (Hou et al., p. 4). Here the city becomes a key location for collective knowledge building and change, where, "Professionals, scholars, and political leaders are tasked with the collective description of these complex challenges and the definition of possible interventions and responses" (ibid). The authors conclude with the proposition that "we need a wholesale reconfiguration of how urbanity is conceived and configured [where] these alternative approaches must accommodate the processes of urbanization driven by interconnected flows of capital, people, ecology, and resources at local, regional, and global scales" (p. 6).

Other authors such as Fraser (2015) make similar points from the field of urban cultural studies, which has been developing through the journal of *Urban Cultural Studies* since 2014. Drawing from existing urban-centered cultural studies such as the work of Henri Lefebvre and Ben Highmore's (2005) investigation of cultural cityscapes, Fraser argues that because humans

live, work, and create within cities, and through our own "self-production we at once reproduce the city," a process of "unending oscillation between thinking and thing .. . [where] the city is an image, an idea, as well as a physical reality" that is made up of environmental conditions, history, material conditions of built objects, and the cultural production of novels, painting, films, and music (p. 5-6). In this way, "the urban spectacle is only decipherable to the degree that we employ an interdisciplinary method to make sense of it" (p. 7).

Perhaps the most beautiful articulation and call for an interdisciplinary thinking of the city comes from the late architect and urban thinker Michael Sorkin (2018) in his essay, "Two Hundred Fifty Things an Architect Should Know." This essay consists simply of a numbered list of seemingly random but axiomatic statements of two to ten words, which range from the sensory to the orientational to the theoretical to the embodied to the technical to the economic to the poetic and opinioned (and many more). The entries through their seemingly subjective arrangement, work together to show in their totality the plural knowledge that is needed to truly know and understand the city. Sorkin shows that to learn the city means to be able to access these different forms of knowledge and think from them.

UHI as Interdisciplinary Meeting Ground of City and Education

I am proposing that UHI is another example of where the city and education meet, where UHI operates as one contribution to this sort of urban knowledge building, a hub among many others that is trying to make urban studies and urban practices more critical and multi-scale. What then makes it novel, if it is simply one among many? On this note, a first reaction is: perhaps not much. There are plenty of other similar critical approaches to the city, many of which blend ideas,

concepts, texts, and so on, from the humanities, and cover the same ground, and in fact UHI draws on many of these approaches. For instance, a focus on Henri Lefebvre's "right to the city," or other literature sources that are named in the preface, is pretty common for critical urban studies across the board, from humanities to architecture to planning and the social sciences—and they represent the general field of critical urban studies that finds itself into the DNA of UHI. In this way, the academic inputs and elements are not necessarily novel in themselves, that is they not the only thing going on, and too deep of a genealogical dive into these academic sources is not the aim of this project. It has been done elsewhere in a few of the writings produced about UHI internally (these will be mentioned in passing), though I do trace out some of these critical urban perspectives to better understand how they can be applied through education as "pedagogies for learning the city" below.

However, there are a few aspects stand out that I do think does makes UHI different from the rest of the field of urban based studies: First, is the structural form that comes from being part of the *new humanities* (re: the previous chapter), which I think changes the emphasis somewhat from normative urban studies in how it emerges and manifests institutionally. Second, is that rather than making the humanities one input that is subsumed in studying the urban, UHI, at least in theory, attempts to equalize all the disciplinary inputs, creating a distinct nexus for generative interdisciplinarity. In this way, it balances multiple disciplines, as well as educational training outputs of interdisciplinarity. And third, is how the process of UHI plays out its relationship with the urban educationally, which apart from being the focus of this project, creates a shift in emphasis, where instead of the question being "How can we study the city from an interdisciplinary perspective?" becomes the more radically generative: "How can we create scholars and

practitioners who are trained with an orientation or sensibility to understand and engage with the city from such an interdisciplinary perspective?"

4.3 Pedagogies for Learning the City

This third section brings together and examines a variety of approaches to learn the city. The city as a specific site of pedagogy has been a growing dynamic in educational literature, as well as from other fields, in recent decades. These sources utilize the way that the city combines different registers—material, physical, social, cultural—within specific places, as a living site that can engage individual students with complexity. Because the city is experienced collectively—we all inhabit the same space, but perceive different things within it, as well as exist in it differently through our individual embeddedness in social structures—it is also can serve as a field from which we can learn from each other. McGuire and Spates (2011) argue that we must teach about cities "at street level" because cities "are living organisms created and maintained, for good or ill, by people who live and work in them" and must be experienced from the view of the encounters generated upon the streets that make them up" (p. 71).

Pedagogies for learning the city can also be seen as an education form of spatial practice. DeCerteau (1984) defines spatial practice as the "act of creating or transforming a place through everyday lived experiences [for instance] the act of walking in an urban system is, for instance an enactment of place and creation of meaning" (p. 56). Spatial practice is tied to movements within urban studies and planning to practice different forms of spacemaking, placemaking, and tactical urbanism, which are ground-up strategies for seeding change within cities through small-scale interventions that take into account community knowledge while containing a future-oriented

aspirations for better cities (Hamdi 2010/2014; Lydon & Garcia, 2015). All the pedagogies surveyed have such spatial practice embedded within, whether implicitly or explicitly. To highlight a point more clearly here, spatial practice means not only just a passive learning but also an active creation, of place or meaning.

In this way, pedagogies that are derived from the city can be powerful tools for learning because they have emerged from this complex engagement with place and people. They can also be powerful tools for "unlearning" where encounters found in them, for instance within an urban-centered crisis, challenge key assumptions that individuals have about how the city and specific places within them are created, lived in, and experienced (Robin, et al., 2019).

Place-Based Learning

Foundationally, these pedagogies have their origins in place-based learning (PBE), which argues that learning institutions must go outside the classroom in order to utilize local contexts of place, whether as an environment that can provoke real-world lessons or as site for community engagement and partnership (Sobel, 2004). John Dewey was an early advocate for this type of learning, arguing for the close interaction between schools and local communities, believing that "education should be experiential, promote active learning, and be relevant to real-world problems" (Park, 2018, p. 32-33). And Dewey's progressive theories have been foundational in different educational areas that use place, including project-based learning and learning for sustainability (Williams, 2017).

In the 21st Century, Lansiquot & MacDonald (2018), propose a model for "interdisciplinary place-based learning in urban settings" arguing that it provides "multidimensional" benefits to

students through the scaffolding of a variety of activities both inside and outside the classroom (p. 13-14, 128). These include urban placed-based fieldwork and documentation via film and photographs and collaborations with local organizations, as well as a variety of strategies for digital or virtual classroom meetings that still include a sense of place (something necessary in current classroom realities). In the same volume, Park argues that place is important because it "activates self-reflexivity" through the physical interaction with places, where we can encounter the physical and phenomenological layers of a particular location, as well as the "mark of human values (both in good ways and bad), politics, history, and effort." This interaction, and the ensuing reflection with all these elements at once within the city, "can remind the student of her own reflexive relationship with the world" (p. 53-54).

Related to this are pedagogies developed from urban planning and architecture: the place-based design studio. Sarah A. Elwood (2004) discusses the importance of experiencing a place "in the larger learning process" of remaking a student's understandings of the city (p. 55-56). In turn, Michael Neumann (2015) values field studios as being important for adding "complexity" through creating multi-scalar interactions, including those between students (and faculty), with place-based problems, and with community groups (p. 2). Brown et al. (2017) provide a case study of a place-based transdisciplinary studio that worked in the small Northlake neighborhood of Seattle, looking at how cities are "both networked at the global scale and dynamic places for everyday interactions and processes" (p. 314). They build a theoretical framework that combines ideas of place, public, and technology, and produced a series of public-facing web installations that articulate their findings using DH methods.[5] And in describing one studio educational program that traveled to

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[5] See: http://lulab.be.washington.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/northlake--investigation-into-

Brazil, Joseli Macedo (2017) argues city focused design studios are able to produce "mutual [experiential] learning" through critical and creative problem solving that can bridge students from different disciplines and countries (p. 72).

On this note, educational travel programs are another form of place-based pedagogy that directly engage students with place, sometimes overwhelming so, whether they go places near (a neighboring city for a short-term project) or far (a semester in a foreign country). UHI utilizes both these strategies for place and project-based learning through embodied fieldwork and design studios, and through traveling studios to other cities in the world, which create a comparative learning that draws from the relations between places.

Cities Generate Assemblages of Urban Learning

When I discuss learning the city, I also mean something close to what geographer Colin McFarlane (2011) conceptualizes, where the city is an object that can generate learning. For McFarlane, learning is a kind of "wayfinding," a process where people find their way through the city, and the world, and in the process come into being, within everyday living and activities. Thus, it is kind of a constant location for informal learning, as an individual navigates through different registers of the city, including the physical and material, the political or bureaucratic, or the social and cultural. McFarlane argues this occurs through a process of "making, contesting, and reproducing knowledge" across a triad of people-materials-environment. This triad is particularly important, as it displays learning as coming through a combination of relations, or assemblage, also including other registers of knowledge that interact with individuals as they navigate the city, including the those related to time and memory. McFarlane writes, "In dwelling the city, people

draw upon previous experience or memories, and the multiple temporalities and rhythms of the city itself to help shape the possibilities of learning" (p. 23). That is learning comes from an immersion in the lived "space-time" of the city, rather through linear or top-down and imposed processes, and in this way is tied directly to concepts of experience and becoming (p. 32-33).

From these materials, McFarlane conceptualizes a critical geography of urban learning, which manifests through these "urban learning assemblages." Assemblages are the ways that different elements above come together, sometimes unexpectedly, through different open-ended processes, which are fragile and provisional, infinitely extended through encounters within the city. These encounters shape our understanding of the world, and in turn, shape the way orient how do different activities, as a "process of doing, performance, and events" that occur within the city (p. 26). Furthermore, they have implications for developing progressive urban politics from different practices (Coe et al., 2013).

McFarlane defines his learning theory as "the labor through which knowledge, resources, materials, and histories become aligned and contested [connoting] the processual, generative, and practice-based nature of urban learning." In turn, learning can happen *translocally*, where knowledge is not just spatially bound in local places, but also relationally produced between local places and Other places, and it can be "incremental or radical, and is as much about developing perceptions through engagement in the city as it is about creating knowledge" (p. 1-4). McFarlane's theorization of learning the city has be influential during the last decade, appearing in work from urban planning as well as beginning to appear within educational sources (see Facer & Buchczyk from above), providing a generative theory that re-imagines urban life in a number of settings. One example is Francis L. Collins (2018) has used urban assemblages to help theorize the way that migrants to Seoul have learned and encountered that city.

Picking up on the political dimensions that the city can generate, Derek Ford (2019) proposes "an urban*ist* pedagogy" that emerges from the contested elements that assemble in the city. He theorizes a creativity, different from an individualistic capitalistic creativity (*a la* the work of Richard Florida), that comes from how the collective public learns from confrontations with power to produce new forms of urban life through radical collective learning (p. 154-155). The US (and global) protests of May and June 2020 around the murder of George Floyd stand as an excellent example of this. Here the public collectively mobilized, producing new strategies for creating the city, and opening up new ways of thinking and engagement with public space to challenge racist political structures and bureaucracies. Together, the public created strategies for sharing critical learning across both physical and digital media platforms (e.g. defunding the police). Together these enact the possibility for change in public consciousness as well as government policy, through a collective learning of the city (see Hartman, 2020 for more reflection on this).

Socio-Spatial-Cultural & Sensory Approaches to Learning the City

Sacré and Visscher (2017) provide a socio-spatial-cultural perspective for understanding how people engage with learning the city, arguing that learning occurs for individuals at the intersection of space and culture. They provide a bottom-up focus on the everyday citizen of the city, who encounters assemblages of people, materials, and the environment. The interaction between these, and how they are experienced, open up a kind of "wayfinding in society," where the city becomes "a text that invites citizens' multiple readings and (re)writings, and ultimately . . . a curriculum in itself" (p. 16). This framework, they argue, explains an essential dimension for

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educators to understand that the civic learning that is generated from the city can also open up different types of "political and cultural practices" (p. 17). In a later chapter of the same book, educational geographer Nora Pyyry (2017) develops an embodied epistemology for learning the city called "hanging-out-knowing" that takes into account the effect that simply being in place for an extended period of time, basically participating within the living practices that occur, can be a method for learning.

This view is built from a longer history of participant observation of the urban that builds research from phenomenological data gathered from real life, including Whyte (1980) who developed a method for observing social life in urban spaces like public courtyards and Gehl & Svarre's (2013) contemporary toolset for studying the public city. Sarah Pink (2008/2012) argues for a sensory approach for understanding and doing fieldwork in the city, which in turn can be a practice of place-making, a view further explored in a collected volume on experimental ethnography (Elliot & Culhane, 2017). These approaches are also similar to the anthropologist Bradley Garrett's (2013) idea of place-hacking, which was developed through an ethnography of urban explorers in London.

Laura Oldfield Ford's (2011) experimental zine/novel *Savage Messiah* is another example of an embodied urban learning, built from sketches and journal entries that were published in individual cut and paste/and collaged zine form (newsprint images, photos, journaled writings), examining the intersections between space, place, and memory in late 2000s London. This work teaches the city, in the words of Mark Fisher (2011) from the preface, through the way that it "rediscovers the city as a site for drift and daydreams, a labyrinth of side streets and spaces resistant to the process of gentrification and 'development'" (p. ix). This has critical pedagogical and political dimensions for resistance and imagining the city, in this case with looming urban

gentrification of the 2012 Olympics, as something other than what is imposed through top-down processes.

Ford's work is similar to that of Steve Pile (2005) who emphasizes the way that the material aspects of cities overlap with psycho-emotional and psycho-geographic layers: dreams, imaginaries, hauntings, desires, anxieties, ghosts. These phantasmagoric elements of cities have developed into a growing genre of urban-humanistic analysis, most recently of Asian cities in a time of neoliberal post-socialism, where Erin Huang (2020) uses the trope of urban horror to theorizes political, economic, and social changes in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

Walking as an Education of the City

Walking the city is another pedagogical approach for learning, which has been theorized by, among others, Walter Benjamin (2002), Guy DeBord (1956) and the Situationist International, and Michel de Certeau (1980). Walking is educational because it moves the walker through the city subjectively, engaging both with place and the way place changes over time and movement, as well as the unpredictability of what one will encounter as one moves through the urban scene. It also helps to humanize the city, pulling it out of abstraction, as well as from the divisions imposed from above. Careri (2017) writes, "As a teacher I feel I have more responsibilities, and I have begun to understand that walking is an indispensable tool to train not only students but also citizens, that walking is an action capable of lowering the level of fear and of unmasking the media construct of insecurity" (p. 8). He further argues on this point that walking is an aesthetic practice that constantly has the power to change us and our perceptions of the city.

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On this note, Salin & Pesso (2017) have studied the way that walking through different urban spaces can change an individual's mind-set, as it creates both social interaction with people and the built and natural environment, as well as social reflection about the meanings of those environments, spaces, and people. They propose that walking is an important part of "embodied placemaking" and can be used to learn new social worlds (p. 386-7). Moretti (2017), in a book about experimental forms of ethnographic research, sees walking as a practice of learning and being in a specific place, which in turn de-totalizes the view of the city from above or afar as a large-scale and totalizing object. By placing the learner or researcher within the city, they gain solidarity with places and lives they encounter.

Critical Spatial Practice & Engaged Urbanism

Another theorization of urban learning comes from scholars and designers centered within the urbanism program at the Bartlett, Faculty of the Built Environment, University College London. Jane Rendell (2016) theorizes the term Critical Spatial Practice to mean a "self-reflective artistic and architectural practice which seek to question and to transform the social conditions of the sites which they intervene" (p. 1). In a volume that collects different reflections and examples of practices, for instance urban design projects, Hirsch & Miessen (2012) argue that critical spatial practice is about contributing to space through a process where one self-reflects upon how they practice (a kind of meta-disciplinary awareness) and the politics of what the project is contributing to the space (p. 3). This is similar to the site-specific work that UHI does, where it is tied to an individual learner's self-reflection as they engage with a singular place in the world, trying to

understand and potentially enact change. It is an important theory for connecting the term *space +criticality*, that is worked out through a practice of creating something.

Emerging out of the same institution is *Urban Pamphleteer #5* (2015) a collection of theoretical, reflective, and practice-based writings by students and faculty around "global education for urban futures." In the volume, Duru proposes a critical urban pedagogy that is reflexive drawing from ethnography to help teach students to be self-reflexive about their multiple positions within the classroom and the city. Bina et al. propose an urban pedagogy that works at three registers, the analytical, the technical, and the experiential, whereas Hermida et al. focus on ways to create ways that individuals can "iteratively construct knowledge through action and reflection in-situ" (p. 16). This would consist of a range of place-based and experiential activities in any classroom that take students out into the city, including international studio trips. Finally, Allen et al. propose a "decentered" urban learning that is built around these keywords: active, relational, collective, embedded, and reflexive, stressing that "meaning-making theory and practice are constructed during learners' journeys between their previous experience and background knowledge and their encounters with the experiences and knowledges of others" through the process of "co-exploration of the city" (p. 37).

These pedagogical processes are formalized by Campkin & Duijzings (2016) in the volume *Engaged Urbanism*, which collect a variety of projects and theoretical approaches undertaken at the Bartlett. In the introduction, the authors define the goal of engaged urbanism as: "critically and purposefully respond[ing] to concrete problems and issues that are important to improving quality of life for city dwellers" (p. 3). Growing out of the "experimental turn in urban studies," engaged urbanism is built from interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary questions that bridge theory and

practice, for instance bridging: "social and historical sciences, the arts and humanities, the built environment and the engineering and physical sciences" (p. 4).

Learning in *engaged urbanism* would take place outside of traditional academic environments, pushing for "strong collaborations between academic, professional groups, community-based organizations, artists, activists, and others," which at the same time experiments with different types of hands-on methods that are "collaborative, interactive, and participatory" (p. 4-5). This includes drawing on cartographic strategies that reimagine the city and place, different types of participatory performance, embodied cartographies that include walking, engagement with smell and sound, and different material practices. Keeping with other key intentions from above, engaged urbanism is also built from a situated position of self-reflexivity about knowledge, discipline, and critical intention, emphasizing the ethical dimension of engagement with others in the city.

Building Pedagogies for Re-Making Cities for the Anthropocene

Looking toward the future, and building off of arguments from the previous chapter about imagining alternative forms of the university, Tony Fry (2015) in a book about re-making the world and cities for the realities of climate change, also envisions how "the city can become the university" (p. 136). Here, Fry imagines a new orientation towards knowledge that is post-disciplinary and built around creating "sustainment," his action-oriented concept for new ways of knowing that can counter disaster. Sustainment comes through a reorganization of education built from three principles: (1) unlearning existing unsustainable orientations to the world, (2) making sure that learning occurs *in situ* within the problems of local places, and (3) are stitched together

through a new culture of learning. This university would fuse together "design, psychology, anthropology, environment, artifice, information and exchange" for "trans-generational learning" that would "seek to find the right questions, while recognizing that where 'we' are in the world, a city, falling apart (even beautifully) is where learning must happen" (p. 136). This example repeats the argument of the necessity for learning that grapples with the city and is directly in tune with it in organizational and pedagogical structure to being central to future learning.

Thinking Cities Together: Learning from Comparative Cities

Another form of learning from cities that exists is through comparison. Though comparison has long been a strategy for learning about the city through comparative case studies, recent efforts from urban studies have attempted to create a more relational form of comparison. These draw from other areas of social theory, such as post-colonial and literary studies (Felski & Friedman, 2013), to create a relational comparative methodology (Sheppard et al., p. 36). Here, the emphasis is more on generating understandings out a range of relationships between two or more places, rather than sterile top-down empirical boxing. Other work extends this through trying to find other starting points of comparison, which for instance destabilize the primacy of dominant Global North cities like New York, London, or Tokyo, as the starting point for comparison.

This includes geographer Jennifer Robinson (2016a) who proposes a "thinking cities through elsewhere" framework, which opens up the possibilities for comparative imagination between cities that are not normalized by assumptions of progress or development. Robinson writes, "such an approach would start from the premise that conceptualization can begin from any city while also acknowledging the located-ness of all theoretical endeavor" and this would

transform urban theorization from "an authoritative voice emanating from some putative Centre of urban scholarship to a celebration of the conversations opened up among the many subjects of urban theoretical endeavor in cities around the world, valorizing more provisional, modest and revisable claims about the nature of the urban (Robinson, 2016b, p. 25-27). This allows for imaginative experiments to be created, where thinking between cities can follow connections to see where they lead in order to trace out phenomena or launch further discussion. Much can be learned about the city through the training in such frameworks, as it adds a level of play and imagination to comparative practice, generating understanding that is outside of the imposed frameworks.

Material Installations: Panoramas for Learning the City

To conclude, this section I present a real-life local example from Los Angeles that is illustrative of this process of learning from the city in a creative manner. The Velaslavasay Panorama (VP), an arts organization located in University Park nearby USC. It creates imaginative urban knowledge through putting Los Angeles in a comparative conversation with an unexpected city. Located in the Union Theater the VP displays fully 360-degree panoramic art, a 19th century form of immersive entertainment used to present historical scenes or views of other, often exotic, places (Pinkus, 2006). Over the past twenty years there have been three versions of the VP, with the current *Shengjing Panorama* (2019) a work of comparative imagination that puts Los Angeles in conversation with Chinese city of Shenyang in the 1920s. On the surface glance, there is not

much in common about these two cities, or two eras, but digging a bit deeper points of comparison emerge.[6]

At the purely material production level, the panorama itself was painted as a collaboration between the VP and experts on panoramic painting masters in Shenyang—one of the last places where this type of art is formally practiced (Carlson & Velas, 2018). When viewing the panorama: it displays a moment of Shenyang that is caught between cultural influences: Manchurian, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and most importantly, the colonial Japanese. This can be seen in the way that the city is displayed, with city grids and vernacular architectures of each cultural influence, and pre-modern and modern, pushing up against each other. This imagined scene parallels the reality of the city outside of the panorama's walls, where Los Angeles was formed through similar meetings of cultures, and continues to, which have physically left their marks on the city.

For instance, Hoover St. where the VP is located is the point in city is the place where the city's grid changes from the original Spanish grid to the contemporary Anglo grid. More time spent generates more comparative connections between these two seemingly unconnected places, which is enhanced by the organizational programming. All these comes together to become a unique example of thinking between cities that manifests across physical, temporal, historical, and imaginative registers. It manifests materially through an art-based act of creative making that synthesizes the local spatial reading of the city with humanistic knowledges in order to create something that can teach; though not part of Urban Humanities, in my opinion the panorama is an example of a UH project *par excellence*.

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[6] https://panoramaonview.org/

Other organizations across cities in the world use similar strategies for learning, teaching, and engaging with the city and place, for instance courses that use site-based urban street art, mural creation, or two-way urban installation projects like Venice Beach based artist Filomena Cruz's *Wall that Gives*, as part of the curriculum (Holmes, 2014; Williams, 2016; Reusche, 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented and reviewed literature that: (1) shows how the city is an important area of academic inquiry, (2) catalogued some ways that the city and education have come together through different policy frameworks and emerging interdisciplinary fields, and (3) outlined a variety of *pedagogies for learning the city*. These pedagogies engage with the urban as a field of study and as a site of real-world practice, where individuals encounter the city and learn from it. In particular, it emphasizes place-based and small-scale pedagogies that put individuals in situations where they can encounter the diversity and contingency of the city in a way that it can produce new experiences, and in turn, new understandings, about the world.

These *pedagogies for learning the city* combine multiple registers at once, layering the physical space of the built environment with the mental and imagined spaces of lived reality, including layers of history, memory, as well as everyday social life (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). In this way, a good pedagogy of the city combines both an epistemological register, access to a *knowing* about the city, with an ontological register, access to a *being* in the city. The former includes traditional forms of knowledge that can be learned through books or research, the second encompasses wider experience, sense, and feeling.

Pedagogies for learning the city do not just learn and interpret the city, but also have the ability to produce new urban imaginaries. Soja (2000) writes that urban imaginaries are "the mental or cognitive mappings of urban reality and interpretative grids through which we think about, experience, evaluate, and decide to act in the places, spaces, and communities in which we live" (p. 324). More recently, Lidner and Meissner (2019) argue that because imaginaries are "intrinsically political" they have the ability to "reconfigure" the socio-spatial politics of cities (p. 9). For instance, where current "global-urban imaginaries interpret global challenges, including poverty, environmental pollution, health hazards," they also exclude certain "subjects and subjectivities" (p. 15), however through the convergence of activism and aesthetics individuals can create new political imaginaries that can then in turn can "actually intervene in the relationship—or the transition—between the urban present and the future (p. 16).

In his 1983 essay "The Importance of the Act of Reading," Paulo Freire describes a situation where the word (*theory*) and the world (*practice*) collide in dialectical ways to create a new "critical reading of reality." Pedagogies for learning the city are close to Freire's new critical reading of reality that occurs *in situ* through a dialectical process of reading and writing. Here, instead of a text, reading occurs from the encounter with the city, and writing is the way that we individually or collectively try to rewrite, re-make, or re-imagine the city that we live in. Therefore, what these pedagogies for learning the city highlight are attempts to structure this process and create *praxis* from it.

In the following chapter and within the empirical work, I will describe in more depth what praxis within UHI looks liked, but briefly here, it is tied to the process of re-writing the world, or the city, in this case through material and artistic creation (making) that are then installed within the city to provoke possibilities for change. In this way, students learn the city, but then reflexively,

through a process of critical research and reflection, materially produce a collaborative artifact that

embodies that learning and speaks it back to the city, or allows others to learn from it, setting off

their own processes of learning, thinking, and making the city; the topic that we now turn.

Part II

Pedagogical-Conceptual Frameworks, Methodology, and Fieldwork

The literature review in Part I provided ideas and concepts that examined and theorized phenomena that situate different contextual aspects of UHI: the interdisciplinary, the institutional/university/humanities, the urban, and learning approaches to learning the city. Returning to our framing diagram from the introduction, these areas come together and combine within UHI to create a space of education.

In the below zoomed-in diagram, this is represented by the grey hexagon, which represents the program itself: the research object of the study.
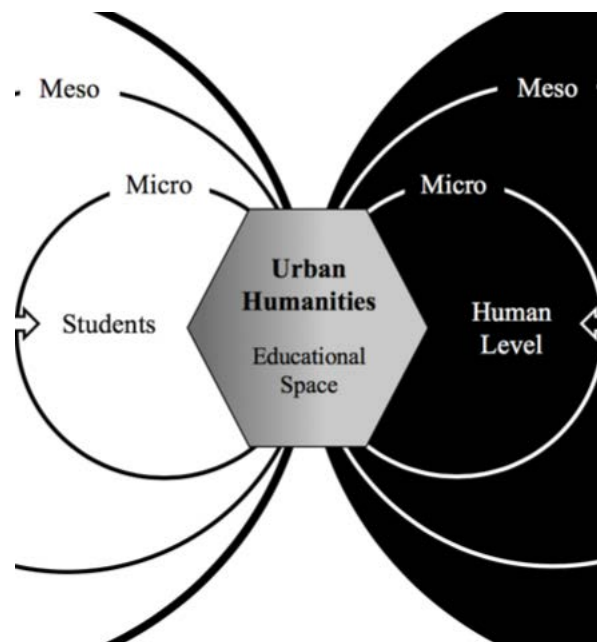
Figure X: Zoomed in Framing Diagram

The two chapters that make up Part II serve as a kind of backstage dissertational mechanics that will help frame the empirical data write-ups that constitute Part III. They are positioned within

their own section as they, in some way, stand as islands from the stream of the linear sequence: meaning they can be read peripherally with the main narrative, or out of order.

Chapter 5 provides conceptual-pedagogical framing via a theorization of what I think is going on educationally within UHI. It provides some theories for expressing what is happening educationally within the hexagon, based on my long-term observation and attempts to philosophically think through the pedagogical processes I've seen at work and experienced. In this way, it is based on the fieldwork, as it draws directly from the accretion of this experience, but it stands apart because rather than being an empirical ethnographic narrative drawing on specific data points, it is a more generalized attempt to put into words bigger pedagogic processes.

Chapter 6 then provides the practical methodological explanation of how I approached the field site and fieldwork and went about getting the data that will make up the empirical chapters. It is divided between a self-reflexive examination of positioning that expresses the way that I went into, and then returned from, the field, and then a more direct accounting of what I actually did.

Chapter 5 Learning, Thinking, Making the City (Together): A Pedagogical Framework for Understanding UHI
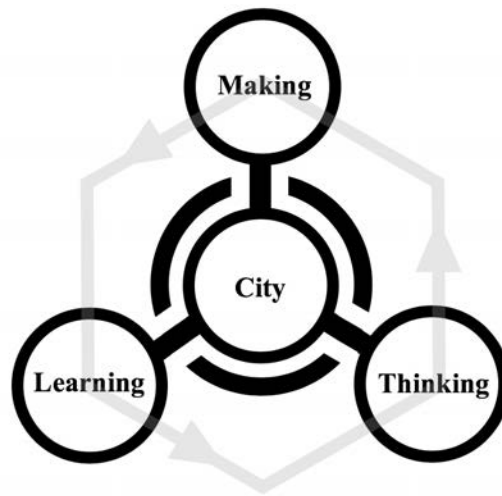
Conceptual Diagram of Learning-Thinking-Making the City Together

Introduction

This chapter attempts to theorize the process-based aspects of the pedagogy that makes up the educational terrain of UHI. It is a look below the hood; with the goal to think through and present different elements and processes that come together within the program. To do this, I provide an explication of a few of the pedagogical elements that work in combination to make UHI a distinct educational enterprise. Throughout, I contend that UHI is a site where pedagogical "alchemy" was possible, that is where something novel emerges out of an active process of

bringing different distinct elements together—pedagogies, methodologies, cities, people—to create something that is bigger than any of the single elemental inputs. Alchemy, after all, is a magical process that can *make* new and unexpected forms from seemingly disparate materials.

Though the realm of magic may seem far from the realm of academic writing, alchemical analogies have been used in describing educational processes. Thomas Popkewitz (2018), responding to growing metrics-based benchmarks within high school curriculum that separates disciplinary areas of knowledge into instrumental siloes, argues curriculums should work together to create the possibility for a more holistic alchemy that is greater than the sum of its siloed parts. In this account, alchemy does not just bring pure knowledges together in the classroom, but also produces supra-level positive outcomes in individuals and communities building citizenship and collective well-being through a multilayered and curated educational process. Conway (2013) uses the alchemical analogy to highlight the transformative power of education to engage with "the unpredictable process where students can come to a truer understanding of themselves," and Sims (2014) uses it to think more explicitly about learning design.

Alchemy is therefore a useful analogy for getting at something that is special within education: that "more-than part" that happens in real places with real people, creating something that cannot just be planned from above. Education must unfold in a process that is messy, not mechanical, and any well created pedagogical site is a meeting of both careful planning and structure from one end and the contingency of unique people, as well as other environmental or social elements, on the other. Of particular note to this project, UCLA's Peter Lunenfeld (2020) has written *City on the Edge of Forever: Los Angeles Reimagined*, a new conceptual history of the city, where he refers to L.A. in the introduction as an "Alchemical City." This is a parallel that I

wholly intend to be resonant: where the alchemy in pedagogy is echoed by the alchemy of the city that the pedagogy happens in.

Educational Alchemy in UHI

In UHI, there has often been such alchemy appearing within its educational spaces. In what follows, I theorize that a key part of what created such alchemical reactions was the unique pedagogical processes at work, which were structured through a process where the educational space structured through a variety of encounters: between knowledge, disciplines, methods, cities, world-views, and so on. The pedagogical processes that are created from these encounters are integral, holistic, and hybrid, but also are consisting of indeterminacies. There are always some reactions that elude description and quantifiable measurement, but these are the gold-producing parts in the process: where alchemical making disturbs boundaries that are seen as being non-transgressable, e.g. that between the researcher and the research object, that between different components, or that between methods and scales of practice.

To describe this, the educational space of UHI, as represented here by the hexagon,[1] is such a laboratory where pedagogical alchemy can flower and flow. This is represented slightly tongue-in-cheek by the alchemical process drawing inside the hexagon (a kind of *philosopher's egg*) augmented with the UHI logo.[2] It is inside this hexagon that the process, which I call *learning-thinking-making*, takes place.

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[1] See Eoin & Sandison (1998) for the hexagonal, and Pynchon (1965), Gavin (2018), Davis (2019) for occult and alchemical, inspirations.

[2] This diagram is not wholly accurate as the process should be read top to bottom, but this version reverses the flow where UHI becomes the *prima materia* (starting material). The idea here is just to show a *process*. (Image WikiMedia Commons)

UHI
PRIMA MATERIA

Celestial Salt   *Celestial Niter*

FIXED   VOLATILE

Encounters   **Togetherness**

EARTH   WATER   AIR   FIRE

Learning   SALT   SULPHUR   **Making**

MERCURY

Thinking
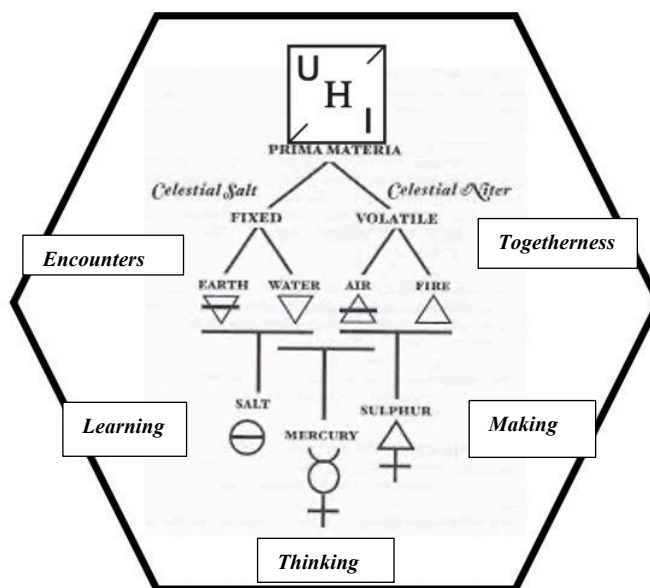
The Alchemical Hexagon of UHI

Central to UHI's alchemy is the de facto encounters between outside forces in the city and actors of learning in the classroom. These resonate with each other, working together to create something unique. But for those encounters to really make sense in ways to enhance educational experience, a hybridity of pedagogies should be set up to structure the co-creation of interdisciplinary learning possibilities; otherwise, structurelessness will end up in uneven distribution of attention and resources, broken collaboration and communication, and distrust of interdisciplinarity as the cornerstone of 21st-century education.

In the following, I begin with an introduction of *hybrid pedagogies*, followed by a theorization educational encounters, and concludes with an explanation of learning-thinking-making, which functions as a kind of conceptual framework for the entire project.

5.1 Hybrid Pedagogy in UHI

Theorizing Hybrid Pedagogy

Hybrid Pedagogy has been theorized by Rorabaugh (2012) as a learning community that brings together the functions of multiple areas of learning within multiple spaces, giving the example of the hybridization of material classrooms and digital spaces. In a following article in a series, Stommel (2012) theorizes the agentive role of hybrid pedagogy in helping to "fundamentally rethink our *conception of place*" within learning environments, where unique places of learnings can be created that can scaffolding different mixings of educational elements. These can be, to quote a few of the dynamics given in the article, the mixing of binaries such as:

- Physical Learning Space and Virtual Learning Space
- Academic Space and Extra-academic space
- Permanent Faculty and Contingent Faculty
- Institutional Education and Informal Education
- Walled-in Academia and Open Education
- Learning Processes and Academic Products
- Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity
- Individuals and Collaborative Communities
- Passive Learning and Experiential Learning
- Use of Tools or Methods and Critical Engagement with Tools and Methods
- Education for Teaching and Learning and Education for Critical Pedagogy

Furthermore, the goal of a hybrid pedagogical space is to have the tools to "think critically about both sides of each binary" in order to deconstruct our existing pedagogies, where "hybridity is about the moment of play, in which the two sides of the binaries begin to dance around (and through) one another before landing in some new configuration." The tension and encounter between poles on a continuum of phenomena is important and productive. In this way, hybrid

pedagogies allow for encounters that are both productive and create self-awareness about the educational situation.

(Inter) Disciplinary Orientations

In its own words, Urban Humanities presents itself as, "an emerging paradigm to explore the lived spaces of dynamic proximities, cultural hybridity, and networked interconnections" that constitute our urban, collective life. It frames its (inter)disciplinary combination as drawing from the "interpretive, historical approaches of the humanities" and the "material, projective practices of design" so that it can "document, elucidate, and transform the cultural object we call the city" (from UHI Website).

As an interdisciplinary space, in reality UHI is constructed as something more like this, with the extra set of fields from the social sciences present in the structure, accounting for research framings and data collection practices: as fields and disciplines from the social sciences are also key inputs, contributing methods of research and fieldwork, as well as students. Also, important to note is that fields such as urban planning and architecture (as well as education) are split between research/scholarly wings and professional practice wings, complicating what constitutes a signature pedagogical practice.

This also does not take into account one other key disciplinary area that is heavily represented pedagogically and methodologically within UHI and within the projects, and that is art or art practice, particularly of the socially engaged kind. For example, Helguera (2011) provides a framework for an artistic and interdisciplinary social practice that hybridizes a Freirean engaged pedagogy with community engaged artistic outputs (itself a key practice of UHI, borrowed from

this literature). Perhaps, this is overlooked in straight-on pedagogic theorization, because it does not have direct faculty or student representation (though there have been some guest instructors coming from the art world), but I see it as a field that acts as a kind of suture, connecting the humanities, as art is one thing that the fields study and interpret, and architecture with its making practices and similar processual studio pedagogy.

This next diagram tries to express where art practice fits among the other disciplines, through a circular diagram that shows how they are related adjacently, e.g. humanities shares something with the social sciences but also studies the results of art practice, whereas art practice shares similar pedagogies and practices with architecture, and so on:
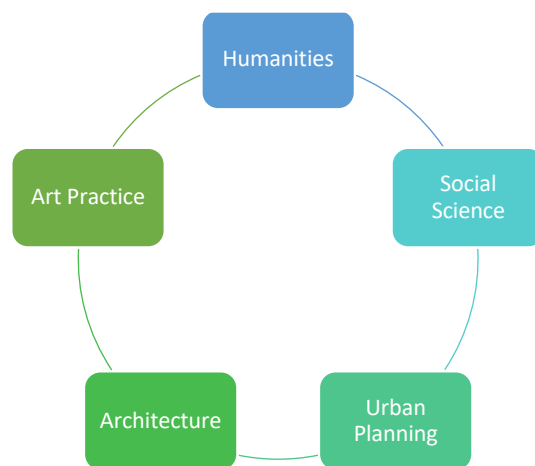
UHI disciplines in a circular continuum of relations

I see art practice as kind of the missing disciplinary piece in the interdisciplinary menagerie of UHI (and a key piece in "making"), particularly, as will become clear, in how the projects that are so important as the catalyzing of pedagogy are framed. Here the "academic," research and theory, is catalyzed through a non-academic inspired form of creative representation.

This is similar to what Allan deSouza (2018) theorizes in a recent book entitled How Art Can be Thought, where artistic practice "comprises forms of knowledge of being *in/with* the world,

which [he distinguishes from] knowledge *about* the world" (p. 13). This creates a different kind of knowledge from status quo academic knowledge, a "poetic knowledge," and I argue that the best outputs of UHI had a bit of this inside them that hybridized with those other status quo knowledges of different disciplines in the university.

Key Pedagogies

How then does UHI puts together multiple types of pedagogy within the same educational space? That can facilitate constant exchange between disciplines and ways of producing knowledge. For instance, humanities students begin to learn how to make things in the material environment, and on the reverse, the urban makers—both architects (builders) and urban planners (policy makers)— learn skills for better understanding the human dimensions of the city. This intertwining of the seminar (humanities) and the studio (architecture), with other types of pedagogy such as traditional lectures and experiential field-based site visits, draws on aspects of all the disciplinary and interdisciplinary inputs to create something new.

To give some explanations of some of the different pedagogical modes present in UHI and how they fit together, these explanations will deepen the conversation:

Lectures, or the Status Quo*:* As the base university pedagogy that is not often thought beyond, most fields have some sort of lecturing integrated within their pedagogic structure. Generally, a one-way (teacher to many students) form of presenting information and transmitting knowledge. Most commonly used in undergraduate courses and some graduate courses. Graduate courses that

are generally smaller, say 25-30 students, lectures may be a combination of professor lecturing, full class discussion, and small group discussion.

In UHI this sort of course format still happened often as a kind of default, with a prepared lecture by one or multiple faculty with conversation and activities planned. In a way, it is hard to break from professorial pedagogic training, as well as student imagination, where the lecture is the norm.

Critical Seminars: Coming from the humanities at the graduate level (or in liberal arts undergraduate institutions with a smaller student count), seminars are smaller groups of students, say 8-12, arranged in circular conversation, with a more open-ended goal of critical inquiry. Reading and writing intensive, as well as verbal communication and argumentation, the goal is to pose questions, deconstruct common assumptions, and build new collective frames for understanding the subject matter (Edmundson, 2018). Seminars can be heavily theory based, saturated by the jargon of a particular discipline making the structuring of an interdisciplinary seminar more difficult and requiring a greater level of scaffolding. On this note there is a lack of pedagogical theorization of the humanities seminar, with most productive accounts coming from new humanities fields.

In UHI, this sort of seminar is an ideal but hard to pull off for a number of reasons, including: a larger size of students, students who are not used to the format and do not actively contribute or feel intimidated by those who do know. Seminars most often lead to long-sized research papers, modeling the publication process in humanities disciplines.

Design Studios*:* Project-based and iterative pedagogy coming from design fields, where students work on versions of a project design brief with a lead instructor who organizes individual and group feedback. They are the key feature of architecture education (Ockman & Williamson, 2012; Boling et al., 2016), art and design education (Lyon, 2011; Heller, 2017), and to a lesser extent, urban planning education (Bayer et al., 2010; Neuman, 2016; Frank & Silver, 2018). Projects develop over a quarter with a series of key check-ins that culminate with a final public review, where outside reviewers critically judge (often harshly, so the stereotype goes) the student work. Studio pedagogy is about process, but it is also about the end-product, as all efforts are being directed to that product (a piece of design, an architectural image or model, and so on), which is judged by a sometimes famous individual. Studio pedagogy is intensive, taking far more time than other pedagogical forms, architects are known for spending more time per a week than any other field. There is often anxiety and exhaustion tied to the intensity of the push towards reviews and the competitive nature of studio culture (Cennamo, 2016; Gray & Smith, 2016).

UHI uses a form of studio pedagogy that is relatively intense, depending on the position of the student. The process is more intensive for those unfamiliar, in time scale (quick) and expectation of work commitment, with the process, but less intensive for those accustomed to studio pedagogy. UHI starts in the summer with an introduction to studio pedagogy and returns to it in the spring quarter.

Field Site Visits: Versions of site visits exist in many different fields, including Education, but it is particularly used in Urban Planning and Architecture as a form of experiential learning from the field. In discussing field-based pedagogy in the urban environments, Elwood (2004) discusses the importance of experiencing a place "in the larger learning process" of remaking a student's

understandings of the city (p. 55-56). In turn, Neuman (2015) values field visits as being important for adding "complexity" through creating multi-scalar interactions, including those between students, with place-based problems, and with community groups (p. 2). Studios can also function as a kind of 'worlding,' through engaging with both local and worldwide interconnections, while also attempting to imagine new experimental futures that move across such scales (Hall & Davis, 2016). And in describing an international field visit to Brazil, Macedo (2017) argues studios are able to produce "mutual [experiential] learning" through critical and creative problem solving that can bridge students from different disciplines and countries (p. 72).

UHI integrally uses such site visit pedagogies and practices from Urban Planning and Architecture within all of its courses

Hybridizing Pedagogy in UHI

The following diagram theorizes about how these different elements come together to create UHI. It gives a simple illustration of how UHI is a collection of both different disciplinary knowledge and the disciplines/fields pedagogical approach to delivering that education. It is rough processual diagram that shows the process of hybridization, as there are other disciplines and other pedagogies involved in UHI, but the point is that they are collected and come together in the final circle.
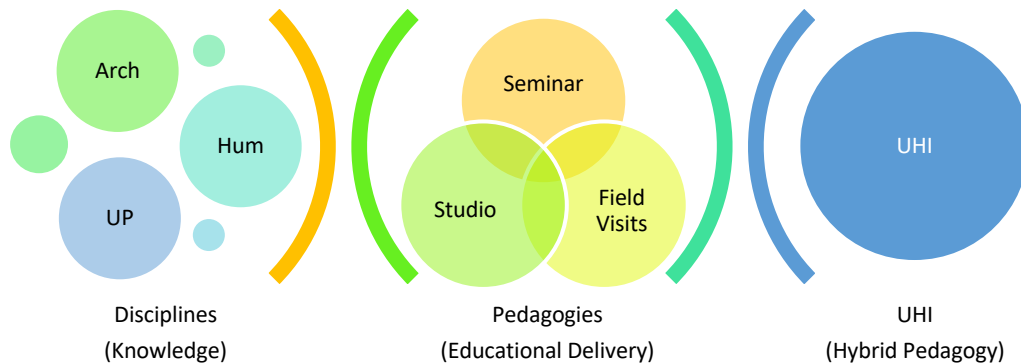
Synthesis of Knowledge and (Hybrid) Pedagogy in UHI

Within the hybrid pedagogy that is created, other key elements of the program can be scaffolded, adding more layers that make the pedagogical program, unique. From my experience observing the Urban Humanities for over the past six years, "something new" is indeed created (pedagogically, methodologically) from the combination of parts.

Many student participants have informally communicating to me the way that the program has influenced any number of factors in their life of being a graduate student, from their individual research to their sense of belonging within a diverse intellectual community. This occurs from both their experience within the program, encountering the pedagogy, and from the way that that experience interacts with their experience in their home program, creating new hybrid pedagogies that they carry with them into future educational situations.

As I argued (2016) in an article published in *Boom: A Journal of California*, the Urban Humanities, "Are experimental, engaged, and speculative forms of knowledge-making, rooted in

humanities perspectives and values, charged with creating new knowledge, new kinds of tools, and new possibilities for opening up the walls of the university and addressing spatial injustices through transnational creativity and networks" (p. 128). These experiments and new forms of knowledge-making can only happen because a hybrid pedagogy exists, which can draw-in and put into conversation different elements.

5.2 Encounters

Encounter is an important conceptual and analytic keyword for the project, as it describes the types of relationships that I see happening within the educational space of Urban Humanities, where the hybrid pedagogical space scaffolds a process where different elements are catalyzed through their active encountering each other. This section gives an overview for thinking about encounter and theorizes what the educational encounters that occur in UHI are.

Theorizing Encounter

In *Encountering the City: Urban Encounters from Accra to New York* (2016), Jonathan Darling and Helen F. Wilson argue that "encounters, it seems, are everywhere and nowhere" and thus overdetermined. However, they push against the easy reading that encounter simply equals a "metaphor for the social and material assembling of urban life," where instead a full understanding of the term must "critically attend to the many complexities, contestations and contradictions of

contemporary urbanism with attention to difference" (p. 1). Difference becomes the key attribute of an encounter, where "encounters are centrally about the maintenance, production and reworking of difference" (p. 2). Again, this is not just a meeting of differences that do not produce any change, but instead the encounter has the "ability to make and transform difference in unpredictable ways [with the ability to] destabilize, rework and produce difference as much as they can maintain it" (p. 10).

Two points here to take into the broader theorization: First, is the somewhat ambivalent nature of encounter. Encounters are not inherently positive or negative. They can be generative, but they can also reproduce and maintain power structures. This is a point that postcolonial theorist Sara Ahmed (2000) highlights within a context of encounters with people who are strangers (immigrants) within the city, the way that encounters "between embodied subjects always hesitate between the domain of the particular—the face to face of this encounter—and the general—the framing of the encounter by broader relationships of power and antagonism." In this way, encounters form "social space" and "meaning as a form of sociality [where] meanings are produced precisely in the intimacy of the 'more than one'" (p. 14). Encounters also offer points of possible transformation and an opening to change" (p. 2). What I want to highlight here is that possibility for change and transformation that is part of the encounter, its contingency and unexpectedness, where the singularity of the encounter leads to different potentials. This can occur within the classroom as well, or by individuals who are learning out in the world.

With this idea of encounters within the urban sketched out, I want to move to think about what an educational or pedagogical encounter might look like. Surprisingly there is little explicit theorization on this topic, and perhaps that is because it is strongly implicit that any educational experience is both at once an encounter between an individual and new knowledge and between individuals who are inhabiting the same educational space. This could be between the teacher and student, or between two or more students. Or perhaps, encounters with their possibility of difference and non-linear or expected change, go against key educational logics of the contemporary era, which aspire for control rather than messy contingency. For instance, an educational encounter cannot be standardized, or measured.

This is the take that Derek Ford (2013) engages with in his theorization of educational encounters that relies heavily on a close reading educational philosopher Gert Biesta. Ford puts theorizing of educational encounters in conversation with critical urban theory literature on the *right to the city*, an interesting and important connection that illustrates the key connections between educational encounters and urban encounters. From Biesta, Ford examines the way that education always has "risk" as a possibility, as it represents an almost violent "coming into the world" that produces new subjectivities in people. This goes against neoliberal educational views of measured learning, or learnification, and instead educational encounters "militates against" these terms with the goal of "reclaiming the public, rethinking educational purpose, and opening up education to different new forms of subjectivity" through encounters (p. 300).

Aligned with above, is a focus on difference, or "alterity," which according to Ford, "is how one comes to encounter oneself or how one 'comes into the world,' and how one learns" (p.

302). Following this, is the role of the educator, or those who make education. Educators act as facilitators of the encounter, where they create and maintain "worldly spaces" where, first, encounters can happen, and second, they can ask (provoke) students what they think about it, to extend the encounter into deeper learning. I propose that Urban Humanities has the potential, through the different encounters it structures, to be such a *worldly educational space*.

A second theorization of educational encounters comes from the Seery (2016) who, similarly, sees the encounter as a "learning event" that "brings forth something new" through the "sudden irruption or disclosure within the imminent confines of the learning situation of something that *did not 'exist' as a factor prior to the event*." This occurs through "the dialectical relationship between a curious, inquiring and desiring human subject and some immediate object of a desire that promises the individual meaning, knowledge and truth." In Seery's evaluation this object that provokes the learning event can be a number of different things, including "teachers/mentors, a group of inquirers, a book, film, play, or idea or activities," creating situations of intersubjectivity between individuals and between individuals and the world.

Intersubjectivity has been theorized by Moore (1994) as being tied to the praxis of being embodied within a particular (educational) space where "social interactions" take place in "concrete space and time," and where experience is not "individual and fixed" but "social and processual" (p. 3). Gill (2016) places intersubjectivity within a framework of Gadamer's "fusion of horizons," where through the process of encountering the Other, we begin to understand the "other's horizon" (p. 494). This is not a process "without tension," instead emerging out of the "attentive to-and-fro between oneself and the other" in order to come to an understanding about something with someone else (p. 495). Finally, Lorenzi and White (2019) situated intersubjective encounters as occurring within liminal spaces, where the in-between is transformative because it

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is located "within structures but also outside them" and where a "third-space is created from which rigidly scripted teacher and learner roles can be abandoned" (p. 198-200).

In the following section, I theorize UHI as a site of encounters that are multi-dimensional, occurring within and across different registers, often at once. For instance, there are the encounters between different types of knowledge that occur within an interdisciplinary exchange, but these occur at the same time as the encounters between the people who are doing the exchanging. And of course, there is the central encounter of the program, between that of knowledge and the city, and which plays out at multiple levels—again at the level of knowledge and that of individuals encountering the world.

Types of Educational Encounters in UHI
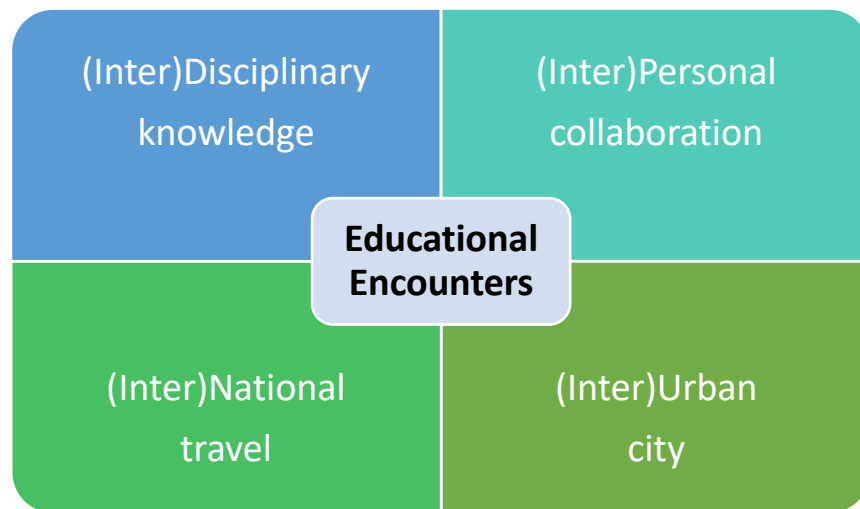
Typology of Educational Encounters in UHI

The above diagram provides an overview framework of four general areas of encounter that occur within UHI. The following sections explain and theorize how I am conceiving and using

these different terms. The explanations follow a clockwise order but work multi-directionally, in synthetic (alchemical) tandem.

One final theoretical note, encounters can come in two forms within educational activities. These are the *expected/structured* and the *unexpected/unstructured*. Expected/structured refers to those consciously structured from above, such as designed course activities, the curation of interdisciplinary reading materials, or the intentional creation of student working groups, as well as the building of projects may possibly encounter something interesting in the world. While the unexpected/unstructured encounters represent this possibility, all those that fall outside of the curriculum, which cannot be controlled, but in the end may be more meaningful and productive.

(Inter)Disciplinary Encounters: The first type of educational encounter that UHI structures are disciplinary, existing between types of knowledge in the interdisciplinary space. This area does not need much explanation, as it has been theorized in depth within the above section and in Chapter 2. But as has been presented, the knowledge stance that UHI takes is polyvocal and heterogenous, where many different forms of knowledge, practice, and engagement, the possibility exists for them to encounter each other, interact, and then synthesize to become something new. In UHI, the process of encounter happens, in part, through the way that students collaborate on a series of linked projects that attempt to actualize their interdisciplinary knowledge through the creation of different types of scholarly and non-scholarly outputs.

For example, what is provoked intellectually when an architect and a literature scholar sit down to work on a project. They have different areas and frameworks for knowledge. Each may think about space, but in a very different way: one theoretical and another materially. They also might have different time and process orientations to producing a project. For instance, an architect

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might work quickly, trying to prototype different ideas visually and working from there, whereas the humanist may want to spend time first critically conceptualizing the historical, theoretical, or ethical approach to the project, more slowly gathering information and preparing it. When faced with having to work within each other's modes, it is by no means a smooth process of easy synthesis, there are always moments of dissensus, where ideas or practices are simply incommensurate, but these are also important parts of encounters, generating a more difficult, but equally valuable, learning.

(Inter)Personal Encounters: In Urban Humanities, interpersonal interactions are important in the day-to-day at an intensive level, because of the nature of the year-long cohort and that all work is group work. One of the overall pedagogic goals is to build a learning community or community of practice with the students (Wenger, 1998; Lenning, et al, 2013), an important part of the first course that can work together flexibly throughout the year, developing the interdisciplinary conversation and exchange skills. Students are put on collaborative interdisciplinary teams from the very beginning and have to negotiate the interpersonal and affective elements of working on these teams, which either may be second-nature or something wholly new depending on the student.

Yet, this cannot be entirely managed from above as a purely knowledge venture, as we know sustaining interdisciplinary collaborations is difficult (Bendix, et al., 2017). Close connections also mean the interplay of personalities and emotional effects, which is a growing area of research in collaboration, interdisciplinary or otherwise. For instance, Callard and Fitzgerald (2015) discuss how interdisciplinary spaces are "deeply dependent on forms of emotional regulation," and are a "fuzzy domain" where feeling "bad, confused, or irritated" often bubble up

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(p. 112). This is because to be interdisciplinary is always to be on somewhat shaky knowledge ground.

The result of this is that within UHI these interpersonal encounters are always important, and an equal part of the educational experience. In some ways they may be difficult and uncomfortable, but at the same time the collective process of navigating intense work environments and emotional terrain adds to the general sense of community within cohort groups, where by the end of the year there is a closeness that seems rare in other parts of graduate school. This collaborative interdisciplinary solidarity has long term effects, from research influence, to deep friendships, to even a number of interdisciplinary romantic pairings (itself a kind of ultimate interpersonal encounter!)

(Inter)Urban Encounters: Moving the location of learning outside the traditional classroom is another important practice that facilitates educational encounters. As outlined in Chapter 4, UHI draws from both place-based and experiential pedagogies that put students within an embodied relationship with place in the urban environment (McInerney, Smyth, & Down, 2011; Henthron, 2014; Lansiquot & MacDonald, 2017). In Los Angeles, active fieldwork occurs from almost day one of the program, students learn the city, encountering urban issues through site-specific research. These include encounters that exist in the past, like learning about historical erasures through the archive; the present, for instance seeing first-hand tensions of gentrification; and the future where projects can facilitate an encounter with a future that students would like to see. Overall, the city is where the knowledge of books or the classroom encounters the real physicality, materiality, and sensual phenomenology of the city, as well as the contingency of the city, where the serendipity of encounters, with people, places, things, natural and built

environments, as well as more conceptual categories like time, history, ethics, and injustices as they exist in specific places, unlock different types of learning and experience.

After traveling to another city (below), students return to Los Angeles and encounter it in a new way, completing a dialogic and relational comparative (or contrastive) circuit. Knowledge, insight, and understanding gained from the experience of going elsewhere allows, in theory, for the home city to be seen in a new way, opening up a new relationship with it, which is then practiced through a capstone project where community engaged scholarship is used to build something that can have lasting impact within a community or community organization (Holland et al., 2010; Post et al., 2016; Goodhue, 2017).

(Inter) National Encounters: Because UHI does not just focus on Los Angeles, but instead has the additional focus of putting L.A. in comparison with one other city, with a curriculum developing out a dialogic relationship between the two cities: where they are thought about together and read through each other. "National" is not quite the right word, but it aligns with the others in the conceptual diagram, and I mean it to not just mean nation in the state sense, but also a variety of transcultural valences. This is to get at the way that UHI's curriculum stages an encounter between cities in different national and cultural contexts, where students are encouraged to develop projects that speak thematically to both in a way that is reciprocal and can think about both cities in complex and generative ways. This "thinking cities through elsewhere" (Robinson, 2016) is practiced physically through travel to the other city, during the break between winter and spring terms, where an intensive week-long travel studio course that includes fieldwork in the other city (Senbel, 2016).

During these trips the complexity of the city grows, as the other city is a new place, with new language, culturally specific practices, and so on, adding more layers to the encounter via a short-term study abroad fieldwork setting, which brings with it another set of intercultural and ethical questions (Pink & Morgan, 2013; Bloom & Miranda, 2015). There are also encounters with other students from the cities they are working in, through international educational collaborations.

Conclusion: Interdisciplinary Togetherness

Through all these educational encounters, and the ways that it is reflected upon view critical conversations in the classroom and through project work, students are challenged to engage with the city at multiple scales and resonances, ranging from the macro-political economic, policy, and infrastructural processes that structure the city (*the urban*) through the micro-level experiences of the individuals who live their everyday lives within these processes (*the human*).[3]

UHI is of course not the first type of educational space or program that relies of agentive encounters with the "real world." Much of the social sciences is built on embodied fieldwork (e.g. anthropology) where encounters take a central role. As presented above, planning and architecture have long-term practices of studio and site visits. However, UHI differs, perhaps subtly, in two areas: (1) UHI has a particularly blended worldview and orientation to the city that is not disciplinary specific, and in this way, the interdisciplinary classroom approach interacts with the inability of the object of the city to be understood through just one disciplinary lens; and (2), the

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[3] As well as the sensory, cultural, artistic, historical, literary, etc., layers of the city.

collective nature of the fieldwork and inquiry is important—you feel the sun and pavement together, you negotiate the city *together*—where the collective negotiation happens across multiple levels—between students and their knowledges, and between the students and the city.

UHI is structured through the encounter between these two terms, and it is exactly within this encounter between the urban and the human—the complex and multi-layered encounter that students have with the scales and processes that make up a city, that is its *thickness*, and the interplay of how this unfolds within both classroom and the city itself—that the unique education of UHI occurs. The process of *learning the city,* or learning *from* the city, or *with* others in the city, as argued in the previous chapter, is an important part of the dissertation's pedagogical theorization and the analysis of UHI.

In UHI, because everything is seen, at least on the surface, as being collaborative within an environment of cross-disciplinary exchange, there is an emphasis that all work is done together: creating projects as well as the collective experiencing of the city (and then the possibility of collectively imagining it). One of the faculty members has repeatedly described the intention of the program to be like the "best dinner party ever," where all the most interesting and innovative thinkers about the city are collected together to learn and think over the table and then, for dessert, make or imagine something new. For the majority of the program, this has been the prevailing spirit.

This brings up the keyword of *togetherness* (Sennett, 2012). Togetherness, the act of dialogue and co-operation is important in an increasingly competitive and alienating academy, where the solo experience of traditional doctoral programs has only intensified within a context of an uncertain job market. In this way it is a collective thinking, a thinking together (Pyrko et al., 2016), which creates community and meaning beyond the structures of the university. "Together,"

is not only about individual students being together physically, but also finding ways to connect with the subjects of their collective learning and to compare things they are familiar with to those they are not. This is the "together" from the dissertation's title, representing a kind of ongoing process of interpersonal encounter, which emphasizes an element of the program that goes beyond just surface-level collaboration, for perhaps a more meaningful kind of being together inside the educational spaces of an increasingly instrumental focused and competitive university environment.

This shift from participating in *urban humanities* to becoming an *urban humanist* illustrates a key product of the hybrid pedagogy and educational encounters*;* what once was a disparate group of individuals and disciplinary identities has now coalesced in a community of like-minded thinkers organized around a set of scholarly practices. It is the true alchemy of UHI, and what lingers beyond the curriculum itself (as will be seen in the empirical data). I argue that this shift is produced, in part, by the (inter)disciplinary pedagogical structure that coordinates learning between disciplinary ideas, people, places, and so on, to create communities of practice. The method for this is the creation of *interdisciplinary togetherness*, which creates meaning through collective engagement.

Learning, Thinking, and Making the City Together: A Pedagogical Conceptual Framework

The above chapter has theorized two aspects of pedagogy that come together for understanding the education in UHI. This final section synthesizes these different pieces together to create a working conceptual framework. These two aspects are: (1) that it consists of a hybrid pedagogy, bringing together different pedagogical practices from the constituent disciplines to form something new, and (2) within this new hybrid pedagogical space a variety of different educational encounters occur. Overall, I theorize that the hybrid pedagogy, educational spaces and encounters, and interdisciplinary sense of togetherness within UHI have the possibility to produce new, and risky, subjectivities for students (Biesta, 2013), in their relationship to their disciplinary orientation and identity, understanding of each other, research or professional work, and understanding of the city.

This brief coda helps to further illustrate the processual nature of UHI's pedagogy, through an explanation of the central terminology and diagram of the project. It gives a framework for the process itself, building out the three educational triad—learning, thinking, and, making—from the dissertation title, as well as working through how the social-interpersonal aspect of being together, or togetherness, serves to catalyze this process, where city rests at the center as the key mediating object, as it is object that all the disciplines share (and which all the students are interested in).

The experience itself of *learning the city* through embodied and engaged ways has been theorized in Chapter 4, and opens-up interdisciplinary urban knowledge, serving as a stage to put this knowledge into practice within the world. Through the collectively engaging with the city, that is through engaging it *together*, a new understanding of both the city and the (inter) disciplinary knowledge practices that structure this understanding are gained. And an education is

produced through what I call the pedagogical process of *Learning-Thinking-Making the City (Together)*.

Here, I expand more on how I am understanding and using the three different terms:

Learning	• Knowledge • *Gnosis*
Thinking	• Critical • *Praxis*
Making	• Material • *Poiesis*
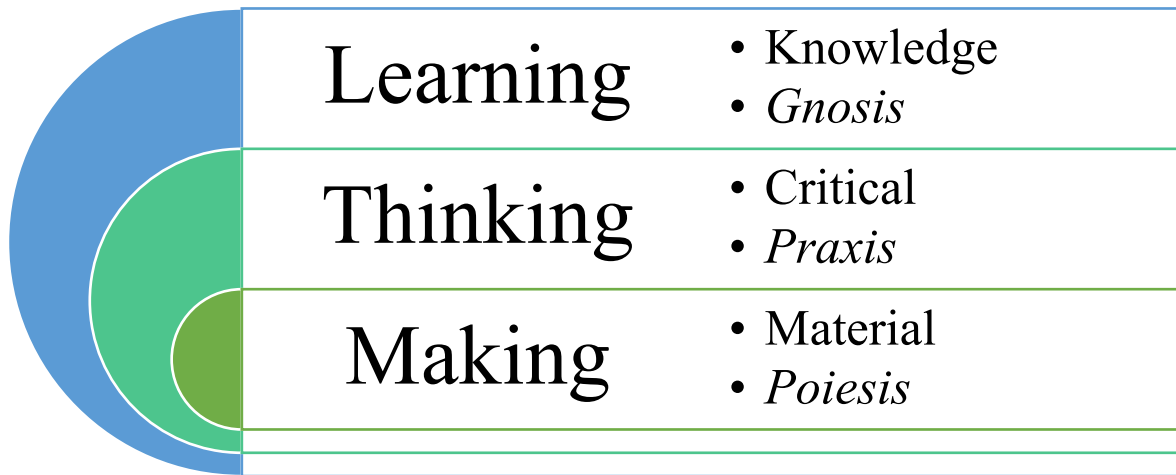
Learning, Thinking, Making intertwined

Learning: Learning does not require much additional explication, as it aligns closely with the transmission of different knowledges from disciplinary inputs, though presented in an interdisciplinary way. Though foundational, I see it as somewhat passive and status quo, part of the qualifications and giving of dispositions to follow Biesta (2013), but on its own lacking a larger socialization or subjectivity. Most interdisciplinary courses stop here, providing knowledge streams to be learned from different disciplines but leaving individuals to synthesize on their own time. Pedagogies for learning the city are parts of the particular knowledge (*gnosis*) provided to be learned within UHI, but just learning would not be enough. Interdisciplinary classrooms spaces, if scaffolded correctly with meta-disciplinary awareness of the blind spots and power-privileges of certain types disciplinary knowledge, can, through a bringing together of ideas and people, structure thinking from knowledge from multi-dimensional learning. More critically learning can

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also constitute a kind of (un)learning (Seery & Dunne, 2016; Dunne, 2016), where prior concepts, frameworks, and ideas about the city (for instance about progress, aesthetics, history, and so on) are changed and re-thought via the encounter with other ideas.

Thinking: then represents a kind of middle ground of synthesis, where ideas and frameworks, approaches and applications, are worked out critically, and where some new knowledge or perspectives are found. Thinking is a process, and in UHI it is a collective process, which critically moves through the disciplinary limitations in order to reach for something else. In this way, I tie the process of the critical thinking that I am highlighting here, which emerges from the bonds of interdisciplinary togetherness, as a kind of *praxis*, meaning it is starting to think of how to put the learning into practice through the encounter with the city, through conversations with others. My key image of this thinking together is when the abstract ideas of classroom texts are faced with realities in the world through fieldwork and a group of students must *think together* in an embodied and contingent ways in real places in the urban world with their specific conditions. It is that dialogue of back and forth, the missteps, wrong-turns, and arguments, as well as the breakthroughs and moments of synthesis, which represent the thinking (together) that can happen.

Making: Making is then a kind of *poiesis*, an action in the world, where ideas are turned into a new form, in this case a new material or media form, acting as a final translation and synthesis of the ideas, which can then be installed somewhere in the city, as the city is something that is made (Landry, 2006). In this way, making is tied to, as Nilsson (2013) argues, the way that designers think, where the object bears knowledge out to the world, having material effects. Maker pedagogy, according to Novotny (2019) is interdisciplinary, integrative, project-based and collaborative,

providing a "unique epistemic position" that crosses boundaries (p. 50). Tim Ingold (2012) ties making to thinking (showing how these terms work as triads) and Deweyan inquiry, arguing it is a "process of growth" where the maker uses the materials synthesizing and distilling to find new emergences (p. 21). Bogers et al. (2019) provide the idea of "critical making" that following my sense of the critical aspect of thinking above, as they think making is sometimes too instrumental and elides the critical-conceptual axis, arguing that "'making' is an important mode of production for interdisciplinary work because it can operate as a non-disciplinary middle ground for different communities and groups" and is "a unique mode of engagement with the world" (p. 20-21). Making occurs the final projects of UHI that make something that combines design, media, and art practice, but where the concepts, thinkings, feelings, and collective ideas of the interdisciplinary learning process are distilled within.

The diagram presented as the opening image in the chapter [**Figure X**] provides a conceptual modeling of this process and will become the central pedagogical theorization:
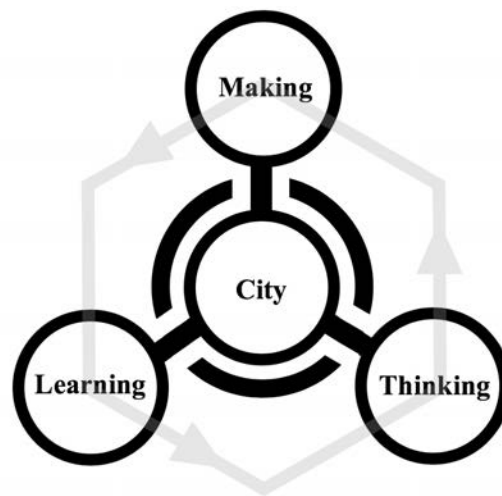
Pedagogical Diagram of Learning-Thinking-Making the City (Together) Process

Putting it all together: In the diagram, this occurs a cycle, where the student moves through the triad of terms, where the educational space of interdisciplinary togetherness (grey outline hexagon) is structured by the city in the middle. It is a cycle (grey arrows) because it happens at various times throughout the curriculum, for instance roughly using some of the pedagogical modes from above: one learns via lecture, one thinks in a seminar, and one makes in a studio.

For instance, after *learning* about the city from multiple disciplinary perspective, the students in the class then critically and collectively *think* through issues that are encountered within the city, for instance issues of spatial injustice or historical erasure within a specific site, using a blend of different research methods and approaches gleaned from their learning, and gain new knowledge and understanding through their inquiry. Finally, in an act of generative *making*, they apply this knowledge through a process of creating a shared object that holds both what they have learned and critically thought about the issue and that goes back out into the city, taking on a material form that can interact with the public.

Again, this is processual, cyclic, where the process is repeated multiple times throughout the program year, in Los Angeles and abroad, and through different combinations of students, and different objects of research focus. It is the collective practicing of these different registers—the praxis of encountering the world together, then thinking through it together, and finally the making of it together—that combines to create the *thick* pedagogy of UHI.

And what then is end-point product, the result of this thick pedagogical process? The answer to this, though it will not be fully answered until through the voices of the students, is something like a sensitivity, or sensibility, or disposition, or orientation, to not only the city, with its myriads of registers, contestations, issues, but also to knowledge and practice itself. Where

there is an understanding that to know and think and do and make are not just individual activities, based on solo expertise or top-down power, but must be created in ways that are open to the knowledge and experience of others, and in fact can effectively work with that other knowledge to create something new and unexpected.

Chapter 6 Methodological Framing and Accounts of Fieldwork
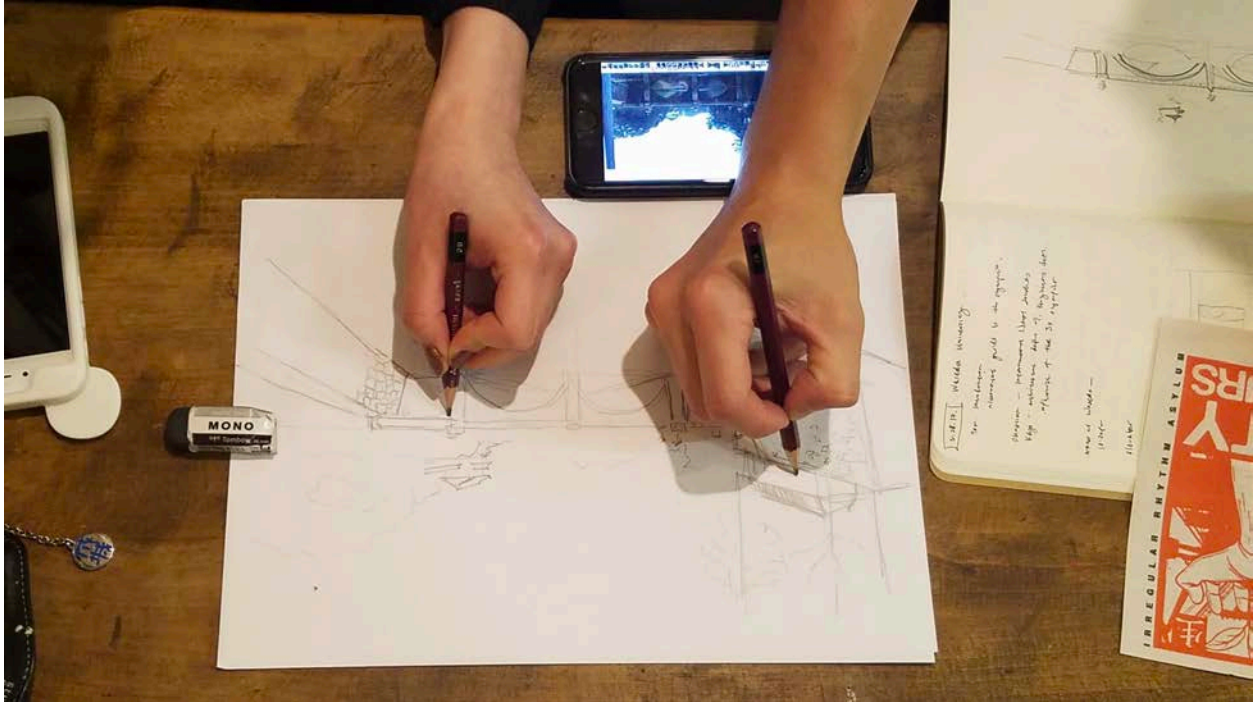
Collaborative Drawing, Tokyo 2017 (Photo: Author)

Introduction

This chapter acts as important bridge between the more abstract conceptualization and theorization that came before and the chapters built from actual data, observation, and experience. It outlines how I designed and undertook a number of different strategies for gathering data over the course of interactions with UHI and my fieldwork time (2018-2019). To engage both technical and reflective writings of methodology, I structure it as follows: a critical introduction of existing

research methodologies that deal with interdisciplinary activities; then a more detailed account of my participation in the program which sets the ground for both reflection on positionality and specific descriptions of framing, research, and data collection; next, the sources of data; and lastly, a coda that recounts the process of leaving the fieldwork. These efforts fit within a framework of qualitative fieldwork and data collection, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, document and materials collection.

Besides the traditional methods of qualitative research, I experimented with a few other data collection strategies as well, including an active practice of photographing, filming, and audio recording events, as well as staging some outside the main curriculum collective events. These included sessions of an alumni networking and social-intellectual sharing group (the *UHI Alumni Salon*), public exhibitions and event happenings that were put on by this group, and two conference panels that I organized where questions and themes from my dissertation were explored in a public setting with fellow UHI graduates.

I have also kept up an active process of self-reflexive writing that tried to work through articulating my "various positions" within the research study (Cohen, 1984). Briefly, I inhabited multiple positions (student, teacher, peer), often simultaneously; as well as being a researcher who was studying it at the same time. This means that for the time I was actively involved with the program, I was deeply entangled in the day-to-day pedagogical operations, as well as the planning. The multiplicity and simultaneity of positions and roles ensured that I was not only observing data from a distance, and the distance may persist even when observing from within the program as long as the observation serves purposes other than understanding the students' own transformation and meaning making. But I was in that data, engaged with and co-creating what I was observing.

My intentions for undertaking this research project were in part to help me better understand the pedagogy involved, with the end goal of not only being able to write about it as a researcher, but also to practice it as a teacher. This relationship between *research for research purposes* and *research for pedagogical practice*, I see as being an active relationship, where the two work in tandem, affecting each other: intertwined. With the end result of the activity not just being the research written on the page, but the way that the pedagogical experience can be actualized in one's own future teaching.

In this way, I see my approach, and the process of methodological reflecting on doing fieldwork, as another example of the larger pedagogical research that I am arguing for in the dissertation, which focuses on how a unique and signature pedagogical experience then produces later afterlives in an individual's life and work. It helps to shake out and analyze my own layered relationship with UHI and is in some ways the most personal part of the dissertation, as it attempts to self-reflect on my own experience with UHI, positionality, and how I mined that experience to critical engage with it as a subject through research.

Through my fieldwork, and countless conversations with students, I have documented that they have found important meaning in the experiences, integrating this meaning into their later scholarship and professional practice. I know this from the time I spent with multiple cohorts of students, many of whom have now, at the time of writing, moved into careers, academic positions, or if still in graduate programs, are actively working on innovative projects that have benefitted in some ways through the encounter with an interdisciplinary space.

As I articulated in the Introduction, my intention through launching a study on this topic was to record not just the "what's" of UHI—the curriculum, the participants, the research goals and projects, and even the skills transmitted—but the many meaningful indeterminacies in that

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transmission, the "how's" in which the educational activities are made sense of and built into the students' identity as someone who makes the most of his/her relationship with the city. It is, in other words, about making people with sensibility to humanity, or an urban humanist sensibility for engaging with the city, not the usual experts of X, Y, or Z, within the restrained frame of an educational experience. I try to tell this different story through my positioning, engagement and time spent with the research object of UHI, as well as my own disciplinary background coming from Education, and therefore am able to provide a multi-dimensional take on what is produced educationally via the combined process of all these practices. Perhaps, this constitutes the research *product* of the dissertation: an educational account of interdisciplinarity that at the same time creates productive interdisciplinary encounters within educational scholarship and pedagogical theorizing.

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6.1 Positional Approaches to Fieldwork and Research

Origins of the Project

The origins of the project, and my ways of understanding, navigating, and framing it, go back to my own first encounter and experience within the program. As I was a student in the second year of UHI's existence (Shanghai: 2014-2015), and this corresponded with my second year of coursework in an Education doctoral program. I was thinking deeply about pedagogy and education and the ways that these are structured to provide something to students. I came out from that year as a student thinking UHI was that it was nothing like anything I had experienced within my own education. More than the actual interdisciplinary content it represented a different way of

being in the university, participating in graduate school, engaging with knowledge in a collaborative fashion, and then putting that knowledge into practice—and the closest to the above experience in terms of form and function. It also provided a different way for thinking about comparative and international education, through the way it reframed what could be done through a short-term study trip, as well as the relational research set-up that existed between cities.

All these issues and experiences provoked interest and following that interest opened up further study and investigation.

Overview of My Participation

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I was actively engaged with the program for five years, starting with when I was a student of the first Shanghai year and ending when I co-taught the second Shanghai year (2018-2019). In between I held a variety of roles including teaching assistant and research assistant. In these roles, I worked with faculty members to organize class activities, research course content, research content about the cities that would be visited, help lead class discussion, help evaluate work, and help with travel logistics and communication for fieldwork. In the summers I also worked on a variety of book and publishing projects as part of a summer research team.

More affectively, I took it upon myself as a central figure in building community both within a program year and making connections across it. I could do this from being in position to hold some of the institutional memory. Besides working side by side with the faculty, I was present in the day-to-day activities, filling in the gaps between class preparation, teaching, after class Q&As, and logistics planning for field trip, exhibitions and events that the faculty did not charge

themselves to do. I also worked through two different program coordinators (a non-faculty, salaried hybrid teaching and administration role), by which engagement I bridged different organizational versions (and visions) of the program.

My involvement in UHI was balanced with the work and requirements in the Education school, as well as other teaching duties across campus. Spatially this meant moving between different physical locations on campus, each with their own "world," a point that I note from my own experience because it mirrors the general structure of the program and experience of students. We are brought into the university within one "world," a main disciplinary department or program, into which we are socialized and institutionalized (and informally siloed from other areas of the university and their practices). Participating in UHI gives a new world, a second physical location, for our day-to-day activities within the university. This process of traveling between sites and worlds within the institution, which I perhaps experienced more than other students, is a key conceptual piece of the fieldwork and the overall UHI experience.

To articulate my participation more clearly, the following chart outlines my role in various years of UHI and where the year corresponded with the evolution of my fieldwork:

Program Year	Academic Year	City of Focus	Formal Participating Role	Pedagogical Events Attended	Dissertation Research Focus
One	2013-2014	Tokyo I	Did not participate; attended final review	Final Review	None
Two	2014-2015	Shanghai I	Participating Student	All	None
Three	2015-2016	Mexico City I	Teaching Assistant	All	Conceptualizing project; fieldnotes
Four	2016-2017	Tokyo II	Teaching Assistant	All	Writing Prospectus; fieldnotes
Five	2017-2018	Mexico City II	Teaching Assistant	Summer, Winter, Travel, Spring	Active Data Gathering; Interviews
Six	2018-2019	Shanghai II	Leading Teaching Role	Summer, Winter, Travel, Spring	Active Data Gathering; Survey and Interview

Table X: Overview of UHI Participation

Overall, I participated as a in four summer institutes, two summer courses for undergraduate students, five quarters of seminars and three quarters of humanities spring studios, as well as co-leading the seminar and studio for the second Shanghai year (and auxiliary Seattle program). I traveled with the program to cities outside the US in five consecutive years.

Reading the chart and tying it to the development of this project: I started conceptualizing the basics of this research project during year three of UHI, completing an initial pilot study where I spoke with six participating students. This research was later presented at the GSEIS Research and Inquiry Conference. During year four, I worked through my dissertation prospectus, defending the proposal in the summer between years four and five. I finished my time with UHI, and the primary season of fieldwork and data collection, in June 2019, the sixth year of the program

Across these different program years there were many similarities but also differences, places where the curriculum evolved, new experiments were taken, different directions explored. There is also the factor of different students each year and different mixes of faculty, which adds an element of contingency. From my position, I was able to witness continuity and change, what was similar and what was different, as the program evolved over time, and responded to changing institutional and world contexts For instance, there is a significant shift that occurred during the fourth year of the program (2016-2017), as the world began to change after the 2016 US Presidential election, and this continued in the following years as the program tried to respond to the political moment. More will be discussed of this later, but it is an example of how educational programs are not straight trajectories but change over time, as global power asymmetries became more start and the illusory imaginary of free travel for all in a globalized world began to break

down.[4] The long-term qualitative researcher through their witness can begin to make sense of a larger picture.

Positioning My Experience

I self-reflect on my positionality as someone with multiple relationships with the object of study. I am not wholly objective, if one can ever be, coming from an "emic" (insider) position to the material, and therefore self-reflexivity is an important tool in qualitative research for locating one's position and seeing how the process of the study was both influenced by prior experiences and has influenced the researcher (Olson, 2011). Though I also have an "etic" (outsider) position because I am researching it. The careful dance of trying to define, navigate, and move between the continuum of insider and outsider positions, what is perhaps the central knowledge strategy of anthropology after the "so-called reflexive turn of the 1980s," is the point of that is not wholly resolved (Faubion & Marcus, 2009, p. 1). This is also a ground that Henrietta Moore (1994) theorizes in her critical reflections about questions of location, where an individual is not simply "[reinscribing] an essentialism of place." I try to avoid the slippage of positionality in justifying my research through statements such as "I know because I've been there" or "I know because I am one [a UHI insider]." In this way, I have attempted to balance multiple epistemologies and audiences.

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[4] Here I follow Isaac Kamola's (2019) assertion of the "unexpected fragility of the global imaginary," and how this plays out from the position of US based higher education institutions as they engage with Other places in the world (p. ix).

Overall, I consider this sort of self-reflection important within an education-focused dissertation, where there should be a heightened sense and awareness of pedagogical matters and processes. The researcher is never outside her own learning. In this way, there was an ongoing side practice that drew from autoethnographic writing, where I tried to express my own positioning to myself, as a way to both gain more insight and also check my own subjective responses (Delamont, 2009). Luvaas (2019) discusses how autoethnography is being increasingly seen as part of the process of the researchers *becoming*, which in turn becomes a site for producing knowledge: you become something different through a deep engagement with something, and that is an important part of education and scholarship that should be paid attention to. As I am interested in the educational *becomings* of fellow students, the parallel is important.[5]

Through all of this time and these activities I was present and paying attention. Writing fieldnotes, taking pictures, collecting different materials (to be detailed below), but more importantly I was actively participating, talking to people inside and outside the classroom, contributing ideas and strategies. This active participation means that I was not on the sidelines, observing from a distance, but in a central classroom role, either as a learner or a teacher (or somewhere in between, as both were happening at once). This is the fundamental position that I take: as someone who was there, present, listening, paying attention—being in the space of the educational program long term. In the ideas of the anthropologist Tim Ingold (2018), this can be expressed as *attending* to a particular educational life world.

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[5] Though this is not directly present in the data, working instead as an internal and intentional method for drawing out my experience, in order to see it clearly, with the goal that I would be more critically sensitive and able to ask better questions and draw out better insights. Whether this is actually the case, only time will tell, but I have left a set of digital breadcrumbs—in word documents, Apple notes, and voice memos—that can be stitched together by later researchers writing on this topic, if they wish to visit this archive.

Within the process of attending, I also left my mark on UHI, so this must be taken in any study, but where my contributions exist is hard to disentangle. I tried to push the pedagogical aspects of the program in a certain direction, advocating constantly for pedagogical structure and self-reflection while fully aware that I was at the same time the researcher observing what was happening. This means I did not and could not take a neutral and objective standpoint in my study. As a researcher, scholar, and teacher, this is where my fieldwork commitment was, as a sustained attending to UHI. I wanted to be there, as much as possible, to see a possible end (or a point where it was no longer tenable to keep watching). This was to see it through and not make judgements about just one version of it or another. I wanted to see the other side of it, where it possibly reached its limit or broke down. This meant balancing my excitement and cheerleading of the program with an attempt to see past it, vanishing into it, in order to dig out a wiser understanding (Allen, 2016).[6] Wise knowledge of this sort, is not wholly scientific or measurable, but it is the most important thing that lingers in the afterlives of education, in the ways that once educated we act, imagine, dream, the world. It is a key philosophical and pedagogical belief I hold that Educational studies should always be pointing to this sort of wisdom.

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[6] Here I use "vanishing" in the sense of Barry Allen's philosophical consideration on Chinese metaphysics and practice, which I see fieldwork as a form of. At the end of the book during a rumination on the "art of wise knowledge," which we consider as something like learning, or teaching, or research, Allen writes, "[wise knowledge] knows how to soften whatever comes contingently in touch, how to orchestrate multiplicities without abolishing differences, how to turn analysis into synthesis, orthodoxy into unorthodoxy, and method into a viable way of evolution. We vanish into things with resonant forms that connect and endure, that enhance the commonwealth and that make the artifact of knowledge a lasting work of art" (p. 231). Something like this is my intention in the practice of fieldwork.

Vertical and Horizontal Positions

I provide a unique perspective that is different from other existing accounts of UHI. I view my strength as a researcher is that I was more entangled than faculty or other students across different levels and viewpoints. In some respects, I held a *vertical* position, as I had a nominal position of power and influence as a teaching assistant or instructor, yet at the same time I was still a graduate student, so I was always aware of that in between position. For that reason, the positioning relationship that became more important was the *horizontal* positioning to other students, meaning that I am not approaching it completely from the outside as an outside researcher or evaluator, or even from the position of a faculty member who are institutionally positioned vertically above the program.

I consider then my horizontal observation position as combining the subjectivity my own experience and the objective/critical stance of trying to understand it as a researcher at the same time. Because I experienced the education of the program, I was uniquely in tune to certain practices and the experience of the other fellow students, who are the central empirical contribution of the study, as well as provide critique of aspects of the program and other critical areas of the university that are in solidarity with the position of the graduate student.

This horizontal position is a *with* position, intentionally entangled and non-distanced, *sympoietic* and with the ability to contaminate and be contaminated by others (Tsing, 2015; Haraway, 2016). The term "entanglement" has been used in educational ethnographic research to describe the multiple positions that a researcher might have, particularly in splitting the research role from a teaching role, as certain genres of educational research blend these registers (Hauge,

2013). A learning *with* others of this class category of the university called graduate students (reflected in the literature framing). I am in tune to their politics and their precarity. I too am entangled in different shared spaces of the university and UHI became through its formation a shared learning space. Their insecurities and their attempts to dream and create futures for themselves. I am invested in what Moore called the "inter-subjective" dimensions: the anxieties, the performances, the troubled relationships to what you know when it is still being formed. Pressures from the university. Pressures from departments. Pressures to be and represent a discipline. It is a muddled space, bigger than this writing project, but this writing is informed by a sense of these subjects in motion. By taking a horizontal position, I tried to be in tune with all these things.

The next section is the more nuts and bolts account of the fieldwork: numbers, dates, activities, results. It should be read alongside the above, where together they work out the full approach.

6.2 The Fieldwork
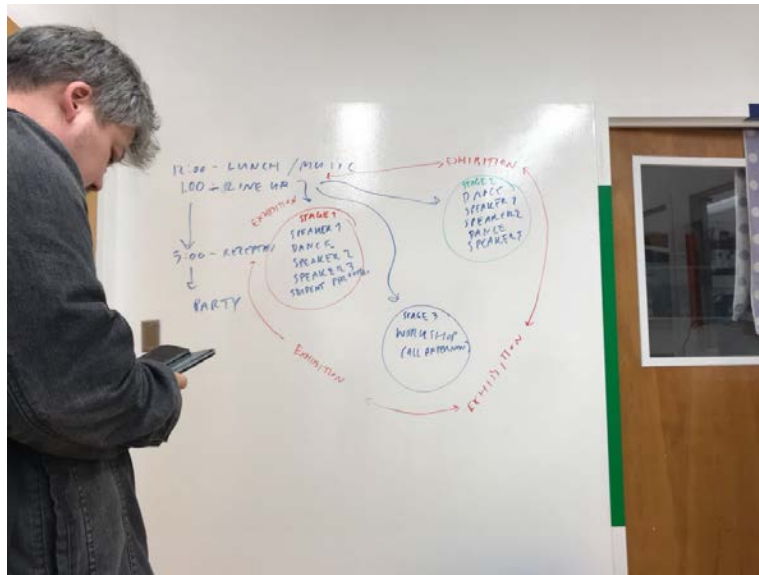
The author taking notes in the field

Conceptualizing the Study

In carrying out a comprehensive qualitative study of UHI, I have used a combination of observational fieldwork, document analysis, surveys, and semi-structured interviews to create a body of data for this project. The end result is not a full ethnography, as it will not have a sustained linear structure, but rather an account built from a patchwork of qualitative data that are expressed through a combination of ethnographic, theoretical, and analytical writings.

Urban Humanities, if seen at any given point on its timeline, would have diverse and wide-ranging practices happening in the same moment. But it is also the activities taking place at different times and situations: inside the classroom, outside the classroom, in the city, and in other countries, as well as the multitude of interpersonal interactions that happen between students while

creating projects. My "field" is one that encompasses multiple things: an attending to pedagogy, to students and interactions, as well as my own practical training in how to be and teach in interdisciplinary spaces.

Timeline of Fieldwork Activities, Pre- and Post- Proposal

The following chart roughly illustrates the process of fieldwork and overlapping activities:

Participation in UHI		
2014-2019	Observational Fieldwork	
Long-term participation and collection of materials (informal observation)	2016-2019	Interviews and Surveys
	Fromal observation on either side of dissertation proposal (August 2017)	2018-2019
		Formal data collection with graduates of the program
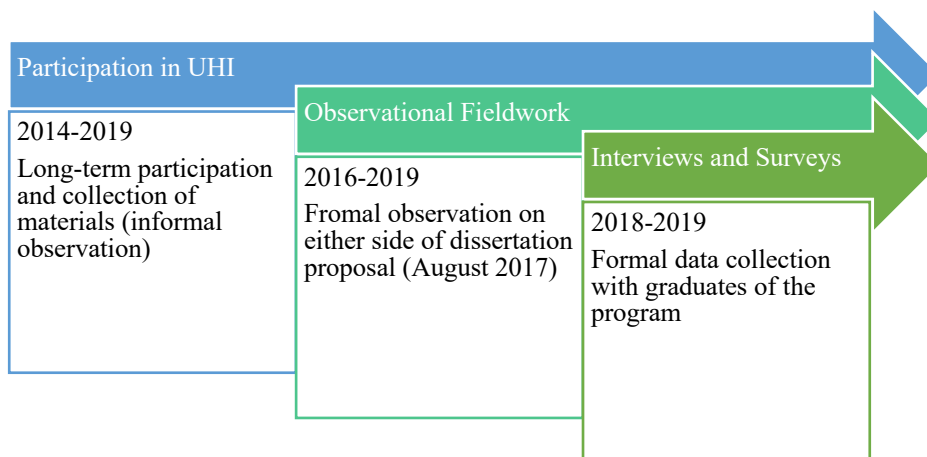
Temporal Stages of Fieldwork

My fieldwork is split between general approaches of qualitative methods, and the participant observation that I completed as the program was going on (subsection A), with a second set of data that I gathered from those who had completed the program to get a sense of their UHI "afterlives" (subsection B).

A. Methods for In-Progress Fieldwork

Qualitative Approaches

Qualitative approaches bring the researcher into a close relationship with interlocutors who have lived experience within what is being studied (Merriam, 2009) and as a way to communicate the experience of being within an educational space through thinking and writing. Additionally, ethnography is good at highlighting registers of discomfort within educational site, as well as demanding empathy of the reader for those who are presented. Education is seen as a "generative site for ethnographic research" because it can be "put to work" to both communicate this experiential sense of learning and being, as well as become a tool for providing insight to other educators for their own understanding of structural conditions in specific educational areas or within their own teaching practice (Mills & Morton, 2013, Kindle location 107-173).[7] At the same time, I take into account recent trends in post-qualitative research (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013), which tries to destabilize assumptions about easy "objects of knowledge" and instead focus on the assemblage and the "mangle" of how "diverse elements . . . are constantly intra-acting, never stable, never the same" (p. 630).

These are the values that I believe in and I utilized my active position within the program to engage with other students as equals, as fellow travelers on a collective journey. This was how I advertised myself as someone who was also moving through the program and the array of ideas, methods, and engagements brought together by it. I also advertised myself as someone who was interested in education and the types of pedagogical meta-questions that were experienced through being in the program. This was a natural process of trust building through the developing of relationships that engaged with both academic-intellectual and personal registers. I take this

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[7] There are also clear critiques of how fields like Education have used ethnography, a signature practice of anthropology, as a subsumed and instrumental practice within qualitative research, see Carter (2018), who argues that "ethnography is much larger, profound, and illuminating" (p. 392).

position because I was (and still am) truly interested in the lives and research of my UHI colleagues. And this is why the empirical study focuses primarily on this population.

At the same time, the fieldwork approach that I take is slightly complicated because it is aware of all these issues. It must (1) acquire rich enough "data" to turn into an educational study, while at the same time (2) reflecting enough on my own experience and positionality as a researcher who was embedded deeply within an evolving, multi-locational, and multi-year field site.

Observant Participation

Switching "participant observation," "observant participation" (Tedlock, 1991; Moeran, 2009) highlights the situatedness in which I often found myself observing from the inside, as an alerted and genuine participant throughout. Moeran describes this positioning as understanding the difference between just seeing the front space articulations of informants in a field site and being inside the back space where things are messy, emerging, and contested in the process of being created. Tim Ingold (2017) has a further explication of how to do situated participant observation, arguing that it "can only begin from the acknowledgement that others are others, not because they are set apart on opposite sides of a frontier between cultural worlds, ours, and theirs, but because they are fellow travelers with us in the *same* world." In this there is an "ontological commitment" within the act of study with others, a "commitment to the habitation not of multiple worlds of being, but of one becoming world of nevertheless infinite multiplicity" (p. 67).

These observations were turned into field notes and field memos, which I have organized by year (e.g. Mexico City I or Tokyo II) and coded by subject matter and type of activity discussed. The field notes were then collated into working documents of key observations, where a second

layer of analytical writing was added. These observational documents have been primarily used in constructing the descriptive accounts of pedagogy in action.

<u>Key Areas of Attention</u>

In my fieldwork, I paid close attention to the following areas within my observation, with the following list being a rough guide for things that I consciously made note of in my fieldnotes:

Topic	Example
Pedagogy	Observations of pedagogy in classroom: how scaffolded, implemented, received by students
Interdisciplinarity	Conversations or approaches to interdisciplinarity; tensions between disciplinary perspectives
Methodology	Discussion of experimental or hybrid methodologies within UHI
City Discussions	The way that the city was talked about from different disciplinary and experiential perspectives
Fieldwork	Both discussions about fieldwork (the ethics of it) and discussions occurring in the fieldwork itself
Reflective Conversations	Occurring after major projects or travel experiences
Collaborative Interactions	Interactions about collaboration through project work
Discussion of Ethics	Discussion of ethical practices of engaging with people in city; political moment

Fieldnote Observation Categories

<u>Locations of Research</u>

My research site is the various spaces where Urban Humanities happened, divided between formal educational spaces of the university, informal educational spaces including those outside the university, and other spaces of sociability, for instance post-class sessions in bars or restaurants. Fieldwork spaces include different spaces of the city through urban research in Los Angeles, Mexico City, Shanghai, and Tokyo. I traveled to Mexico City twice, Shanghai Twice, and Tokyo twice (the second trip was for a follow-up exhibition with Japanese student collaborators).

Overall, the spaces where I have collected data through observant participation in my fieldwork include, in a rough typology (though there is a lot of bleed between these different spaces depending on the practices and activities different amounts of formality/informality existed):

Type of Space	Description	Examples
Formal Academic Spaces of Program	The classroom spaces of UHI tied to pedagogical activities	Classrooms (at UCLA, Perloff Hall); lectures; course reviews
Formal Academic Spaces in Other Cities	Classroom spaces at other universities around the world	Waseda University, Tokyo; UAM-C, Mexico City; Tongji University, Shanghai
Non-classroom Spaces of Program	Other key sites that are not directly tied to educational/pedagogical activities, like the office spaces of program; this could also be working studio spaces from Architecture where project work sometimes happened	cityLAB; architecture studio spaces (after hours); woodshop or other places where project making happened, with loose connections to UHI or disciplines involved
Formal University Spaces outside of UHI	Other University locations that have formal educational functions within the institution	University conferences; related events in other disciplinary areas; the library
Informal University Spaces	Spaces in the University that do not have direct educational function but are still important grounds for meeting	Campus café or other interstitial spaces, for informal meeting
Fieldwork Spaces in the City	Anywhere in Los Angeles or other cities, where fieldwork occurred via projects	Streets, neighborhoods, places in the city L.A.: DTLA, West Adams, Sawtelle, Boyle Heights World: Shinjuku, 1933, Tlatelolco
Other Spaces in the City	This is reserved for formal institutions, such as community or arts groups, which were encountered via fieldwork or specific projects for engaged scholarship collaboration	Community organizations; arts organizations.
Other Social Spaces	Any other informal social space where students gathered	Restaurants & bar; public lectures at museums; program parties
Alumni Spaces	The Alumni Salon was a series of events put on to connect alumni from multiple years	Alumni Salon dinner parties and work sharing; Alumni conference (2018 & 2019)
Digital Spaces	Anything in the digital realm, including archives and other social media	Digital archives of projects; Social media of program; Social media of student colleagues

Locations of Fieldwork

<u>Other Data Collecting Strategies (Collected During Program)</u>

During my participation in the program, I also drew on a several other strategies to gather data. These include different strategies for documenting UHI activities through different media and intentional collection of variety of documents to be used as primary sources, such as course syllabi and student work. The following outlines my collection of materials and how I see them being used as sources of empirical data.

- **Photographic and Video documentation**: During UHI events I documented activities using (phone) photography and built an archive of images. These include images from class, of fieldwork, and of projects in various stages of completion, from drafts to final projects at review. Approximately, after editing for repetition, I have an archive of approximately 300 images from five years of the program organized within a coded album. These have been used within the empirical text.

  The images have two purposes: (1) they are used as memory devices for helping to set descriptive scenes from fieldwork, bringing back textures of place and event; and (2) they will be threaded through the text as illustrative images. Generally, I try to use photographs of objects, projects, or if people, wide shots of public events including many audiences. In specific cases where a student is centered or close-up focus, I have checked with them individually about representation.

I also have a number of short videos shot of activities (primarily as part of fieldwork) that are used to also to remember place. All of these were used to help create passages of the dissertation, for instance the opening preface.

- **Audio Recordings:** I also kept up a practice of audio recording via voice memos some public discussions, for instance at review settings that were open to the public, as well as during fieldwork. Again, the goal here was to document the sonic landscape of place, to help with description, as well as record some public statements that could be translated into ethnographic description. The opening story from the preface was also pieced together from audio notes during that event. This audio practice is separate from audio recording for interviews (see below).

- **Paper Document Collection:** I have amassed an archive of various documents from my time in UHI. These are used as primary source documents for analysis, weaved into the analytical chapters, and they include:

  - Select syllabi from UHI courses
  - Formally produced publications by UHI (see bibliography section for UHI publications)
  - Material versions of objects produced by students, for instance a collection of zines, small pamphlets, and other small paper books

These will be used within the writing, but also stand as an archive of projects that will continue beyond the dissertation.

- **Student Projects and other Digital Artifacts**: I have also amassed an archive of student projects, in visual (photos), print-material, or digital artifacts, which include both web links (for interactive websites) and mp4. Files for student films, downloaded when possible to deal with YouTube or other hosted links dying. These include:
  - Student films
  - PDFs of student mapping projects
  - Websites, like that for *A LAyer Deeper* project
  - Instagram entries from UHI Instagram

At points in the empirical chapters I will refer to student projects. Because of IRB concerns, I do not intend to give direct citations of which students made the project. I am conflicted about this, because it is *very* important to give credit to individual and collaborative project work (though the nature of UHI means that individual contributions are more or less lost in time), as being the work of the people who made it rather than say UHI as a whole. Though this is an issue that the dissertation does not go into directly, I want to use this space to highlight it here, and I appreciate the student's effort in the making of the projects and have kept track within internal documents of who made what. As one subtle way to alleviate concerns, and highlight different students individual intellectual work, I have threaded citations by UHI graduates for official publications, dissertations, and so on, within this dissertation, to create an attributional meta-text where they are experts on the

topics they are experts on, echoing my wider position of valuing ground-up knowledge over the top-down.

- **Program Data**: During fieldwork I collected descriptive data on all the student backgrounds over six years of the program in an Excel spreadsheet that I updated every year, documenting students by discipline, graduation, and what they are currently up to (at the end of research collection in summer 2019, with a more recent Spring 2020 update for graduated Ph.D. student jobs in academia). This data was captured through conversations (interviews, informal) and online posts (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn).

B. Methods and Data for Post-Program Fieldwork

This section outlines the three ways that I acquired data about student experience after they had participated in the course. They combine to create a data set that is both anonymous and personal, and which speaks to the experiential aspects of the students. Again, following the general qualitative orientation of the project the data is primarily written or verbal, with only a little bit of surface-level quantitative data gleaned directly from the students. Therefore, it is not top-down comprehensive, e.g. it is not scientifically scalable or a demographically even in sample, as surveys were completed by those who wanted to do it and interviews by those who wanted to talk to me. However, the data is still substantial and was designed to work in tandem with the observational and archival materials from above. I, as the curator/critic/translator, stand in between.

Data Source #1: Alumni Survey

In December 2018, I sent out an online survey to four cohorts of UHI students. These were Shanghai I, Mexico City I, Tokyo II, Mexico City II, as they were the students that I had worked with and had their contact info. Tokyo I was excluded because it was before my direct experience. Shanghai II was currently underway, and I made a second smaller survey at the end of that program (see below).

This was a long survey, approximately 100 questions, with a mix of quantitative rating questions (e.g. rank your experience with UHI on a 1-5 scale) and qualitative questions (e.g. in what ways of UHI educationally meaningful). The primary goal was to get written answers, so the survey was weighted more heavily to qualitative questions, so the quantitative questions were designed for quick responses. I designed the survey in the online platform Typeform, which allows for clean flow of questions for a quicker and stylish survey. When tested the survey took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. I created two versions, one for Ph.D. students with some academic job market specific questions, and one for master's students for professional job experiences. The students were divided because the afterlife experiences and applications of the two groups were different enough, for instance many of the master's students were already graduated, whereas a smaller number of Ph.D.s had finished due to the comparative time length of degrees. Generally, the questions focused on these areas:

- Overall experience with program
- Rankings of different program aspects, from specific course parts to methods
- Experience with interdisciplinarity
- Experience with social aspects of the program (collaboration, community)

- What students learned from cities: Los Angeles and the other city

- Uses after program: for jobs, scholarships/fellowships, in teaching, or other practice

- Reflections, critiques and suggestions

The emails for the survey were sent out via cohort. The response and completion rate were not particularly high, approximately 29% (30 completed surveys out of 101 total students in the set), but the amount of data was comprehensive, meaning there were a rich set of qualitative text answers, which is what I wanted and privileged with the choice to make it longer, even if the total number was low. The surveys were split evenly between Ph.D. and masters, with 15 responses from each.

The full results of the survey will be presented in Chapter 10, with a discussion of both the quantitative answers and qualitative answers. For the quantitative answers, I was able to do some basic statistical analysis, completed with consultation as this is not my methodological forte, which are used in relation to the other data. Qualitative answers will be discussed in more detail through collection of quotes clustered around topics.

Data Source #2: Semi-Structured Interviews

The major source of data collected was a series of semi-structured interviews, or open-ended conversations, which I had with UHI graduates. These occurred roughly from the spring of 2018 through the summer of 2019, lasting from one-hour single sessions with most to multiple sessions with a few interlocutors. These conversations tended to be person specific, but generally covered these topic areas:

- Experience/Memories of UHI Program

- Reflections on specific parts of the program that were meaningful

- How it is being used in current academic research, teaching practice, or professional career

A full rubric of questions was prepared for IRB, but I often went off book, flowing with where the conversation went. Before each conversation I did write down a series of talking points and areas of interest, for instance specifically asking about something related to their research interests or work plans. This was easy because I generally kept up with all of my interview subjects and had already developed close relationships with them.

Interlocutors were selected in two ways. The first was I reached out to people that I knew who had strong reactions or were doing interesting work with their UHI experience, applying it in new or exciting ways in their research, teaching, or work practice. Second, in the surveys, and in a few other places like Facebook groups or message boards for each cohort, I posted if anyone was interested in talking to me.

Overall, I was able to have 28 conversations that include 17 Ph.D. students and 11 master's students. The Ph.D.s came from the humanities, social sciences, and urban planning, with one from architecture. All of the master's students were urban planning students. Architecture masters are missing from the sample, which I attribute to one main issue: they are generally busier than already very busy graduate students, with an impossible window during academic quarters for arranging interviews. In the summer they are working in intensive internships. I tried to set up interviews, but most fell through. This is a major gap in this study, though I was able to talk more informally with a number of architects via hallway conversations where issues were discussed, these were just not formalized, recorder-on types of interviews.

Interviews occurred in a number of places, both on campus and off. Generally, I wanted my interlocutors to be comfortable, but in some cases, we agreed to experiment with our locations. On campus was more predictable interview sites, and included classroom and office spaces (cityLAB), coffee shops, and outdoor patio areas and benches. Off campus interviews were more creative, often involving attempts at recreating UHI fieldwork practices, that is exploring the city on foot. A number of interviews occurred during urban walks. One interview happened on a city bus. Otherwise, interviews occurred at coffee shops or restaurants around Los Angeles. A few interview portions were also conducted digitally, over email and text message/messenger.

The majority of the interviews were recorded (21) with voice recordings and then transcribed, using the app Otter, a voice transcription that is editable for clarity and coding. These were then printed out and coded by hand by key parts of the conversations, and cross referenced in an excel document to build topic areas for writing. The other 7 conversations were not recorded, but I took notes during and then wrote up typewritten fieldnotes of key points.

These interviews make up the bulk of the data used for Chapter 11, which is a series of case studies and narrative portraits of UHI students that document their afterlives of the program.

Data Source #3: Staged Public Events

The third data source were a series of staged events where conversations occurred UHI occurred with alumni from multiple years, including (a) activities with an alumni group and (b) two conference presentations that I organized with UHI students.

Alumni Events: Originally, I had conceived of organizing a cross-cohort focus group but the formation of an alumni group during my fieldwork year, which I was part of the planning committee, gave the opportunity to stage a few events. This alumni group formed after the Tokyo II (2016-2017) year among students who had close social interactions and cohort identity, and who wanted to continue working on UHI issues and community. In the winter of 2018, they launched a series of Salon events, loosely structured presentations of work in progress or conversations about lingering questions about UHI, at a member's apartment. These salon meetings would usually have 15 to 20 people in attendance from multiple years.

At one of these meetings (April 2018) I organized, with another student who is interested in questions about interdisciplinarity, a conversation called "All About the Meta: A Freewheeling Dialogue on the Praxis of Urban Humanities." The ensuing conversation was recorded and transcribed, functioning as a kind of focus group session. These questions spilled over to a culminating event of the Salon, which was a student-organized conference in May 2018, where students showcased work to a broader community in the university, and where more panels discussing key UHI outputs and questions were held. A second Salon exhibition occurred in May 2019, and at this one there was a panel on professional afterlives held by urban planning and architecture graduates (as I wrote above, a more elusive research population). This panel was intended partially as a way to access professionals who were reflecting on their academic experiences in UHI, and I served as a respondent helping to ask questions. A transcription was made of this conversation that is used. I took fieldnotes and other transcriptions during both these events and they become key material.

Conference Presentations: In spring 2019, I organized two public panel presentations at academic conferences and invited alumni to be part of the panel. Both focused on reflection on the influence of the program on their scholarship and professional work.

The first was at the Urban Affairs Association (April 2019) and was that included students from three program years (three cities) and each presented on how their educational experience shaped a later application or practice. This was followed by a conversation with the audience and a debrief conversation between me and the panelists. All these different parts were transcribed.

The second panel occurred at the HASTAC organization conference in Vancouver, B.C. (May 2019. It was a panel with students who participated on the *A LAyer Deeper* project and focused on how they were applying the learning from that project.

Leaving the Field

There had been a long, but necessary, process of leaving the field and organizing the process of writing: that is the move from being inside to that of being outside, building the critical distance to be able to say something about what one is researching.

At the end of my fieldwork, I wrestled with leaving the field and making sense of my time within UHI, after years of intense focus. I left UHI in June 2019 after holding the role of co-teacher for the second Shanghai year. This was a kind of circular return, going back to the city that I was a student in (and which is also the city that is most meaningful to me both personally and intellectually). The general cognitive short-sight and lack of faculty devotion in the second Shanghai program was more apparent and troublesome than four years ago. I had also run a parallel secondary studio class for a small group of students that took a substitute trip to Seattle in the spring of 2019, which directly ran into political limitations of international travel, which is often taken for granted as an essential component of "international" education. Both were intense experiences that had me grapple with some limit points of the program. It seemed like a proper end point and point to jump ship, as it was also the end of the second funding cycle of UHI, with each city being focused on twice.

Leaving the field can be a traumatic process, because it means turning from the familiarity that you have gained through your research. Many authors writing on ethnographic methods have theorized this process as being difficult, as well as an important part of the knowledge making process. For instance, Caretta & Cheptum (2017) examine the emotional effects of dis-entanglement, as it means leaving a key site of embodied life (where events that were meaningful happened) for something more uncertain, de-linking one's self from lives and places and

communities that you have built relations with (see also Anderson, 2019; Eisenhart, 2019). This was very true for my experience, where I felt that in order to write about UHI, I had to step away into the cold and the only way to do this was through full distancing, both intellectual and social. This was what I did over the summer of 2019 and into the fall, trying to build up critical distance through writing and data sifting, a better way to approach the writing.

One thing I found was that I was less excited and naïve about the program than I had been in the past, for instance as when I wrote my dissertation proposal. In many ways, the decline in passion was due to balancing fieldwork and teaching. In the fieldwork, critical voices were opened up that I had to absorb and listen to. People with strong opinions, various grievances, and other thoughts at times contradicted the easy narrative I thought was, or wished it to be, true. Scratching under the surface of any educational site, or rather any site with people, there are structural asymmetries that come up. Based on my own values as a teacher and affect as a person, I always wanted to listen and take these voices seriously, however they did have a longer-term effect on my spirit and beliefs about the possibilities and efficacies of education programs like UHI.

On another end, there were a variety of challenges that occurred in the final two years I participated in UHI, where the program seemed to be saturated with the political, ethical, and positional heaviness of academia in a post-2016 world. Overall, everybody seemed worn out and heavy, less open to experiment, retreating to disciplinary approaches and strong positions (often due to valid political commitments), or actively critical in unproductive ways, where minimal differences become major differences in a small space—as is common in academia due to the critical heuristic structures of disciplinary flattening.

The point being is that in a time when the bigger problems were on the table, places that were supposed to be places of commonality and common thinking became less so, and that was

troubling to me. I still don't know how to square it, and don't know where else to say it in the structure of the empirical work, or how deep I can go, as there is always limited time, space, and ability to express complicated things. So, I will say it here, as a kind of condition of the backend of the data and my own position of going through it after I left the field. On this note, after you leave the field and have collected your data (however provisional, full of holes, and contradictions it is), you are left with a "mess" (Law, 2004) that you try to make sense of, but where things do not fit easily together.

After I left UHI, in many ways I felt that I could only see the mess, the contradictions and short comings. The educational moments of togetherness that had been so powerful, now seemed far away, fading into the past. This is no doubt an issue in any sort of research, where the object is slippery and resists easy presentation. I have worried extensively about how present the data and how to work through my own ambivalence about the contradictions that are present. How to represent this balancing process between loss of excitement and while still shaking out what was meaningful? You don't want to betray the spirit of the thing you are presenting, but you also want to say something clear and substantial about it, where the messy bits can live and breathe and be productive going forward.

This is also my limitation, as it does preclude a certain illusion objectivity. It has taken a lot of work to say something different, to find a position that is "outside" (not that this is plausible or really possible), but remains sometimes hard to speak: to articulate something in words that equals the experience (there is always a gaping void in between). In turn, there has been a substantial process of trying to shake out a "different" take. This has been filled with some angst, as I have had to set myself apart from dominant narratives that crystalize around something like UHI. There is an ideology. An easy story, that is a top-down story of what it means. I don't want

to wholly break that story—that is not the intention—but I want to come at it in a different way, with different lenses and materials.

These are issues I tried to work through in the first months of writing, finding ways to synthesize my more positive theorizations of the topic pre-fieldwork with the more wizened one's post. I did this through a method of open and reflective writing, along with a temporal process of forgetting (I had to become an amnesiac in order to move forward, forgetting more than I remembered). This created a kind of "retrospective autoethnography" that could rather than writing from the past in a kind of funeral and melancholic position, instead "write of our present *and* our desire for a utopian future" (Bell, et al., 2019). This allowed the letting the memory be less of a crutch and using the data collected to reconstruct the reality of the research.

This process of piecing back together, of thinking and re-thinking, creates a kind of newly made form that can represent both registers in some composite form. Big research projects like dissertations are chances to examine, think about, and then say something provisional about complicated and moving things. They constitute a dealing with both the collection of empirical data and the unpredictable unfolding of experience but in a conscious and composed way. The knowledge goes beyond the written object itself, and there will be later versions that perhaps get the balance of compositions better, but the writing is an attempt to fold back all the mess above into something speakable.

Part III

Presentation of Empirical Research

Side A. Urban Humanities in Action

The chapters that constitute the empirical work of this project are divided into two halves, or side, imagine them as two curated sides of an old vinyl record album. For instance, Led Zeppelin's classic IV album. With the first (Side A.) consisting of chapters that present UHI's program ("Black Dog"), pedagogy ("Rock and Roll"), and projects in action ("The Battle of Evermore") and culminates with an ethnographic account of a single curricular year ("Stairway to Heaven"). The second side (Side B.) collects two chapters that utilize data from students after they have completed the program, and focuses on their "afterlives," primarily how they have made sense of the program and integrated into their current work (let's call these chapters "Going to California" and "When the Levee Breaks," because there are only two).

In the year after I participated in UHI as a student, I wrote a short article in the journal *Urban China* in which I described the educational process that I had just experienced in some poetic language. It provides a nice point of reflection before embarking into the writing up of the data and constitutes a kind of pre-fieldwork artifact. This is because the words are record of an earlier time, early in the program's history and my experience of it, with the four years ahead of it that would constitute the "data" still to come.

I quote myself:

"Urban Humanities is a kind of future-oriented "thick" learning that is produced collectively between multiple human subjectivities sharing their different disciplinary knowledge and expertise. In this way, it is a structure for allowing the transferring of knowledge between disciplines. The speculative group projects help facilitate this through a process of "making," where filmic, visual, or material objects help bridge the gaps between different forms of knowledge, while at the

same time providing space for students to interact in a deep and sustained way. This takes time, which is another key factor: the yearlong inquiry, which provides room for experimentation, as well as failure, and then the space to try again, pushing further. Suturing this together is the collective community that experiences together, thinks together, wanders together, plays together, struggles together, speculates together, and most of all, learns together" (Banfill, 86).

This passage shows Urban Humanities in action. As a piece of writing, it represents a moment in time where I was coming off the excitement of my educational experience, sorting out the meaning of it, before embarking on a study of it, where the outlines of the project began appearing out of the ether. Therefore, it is an important data-point, a record of an in-between moment, which can be used reflexively to assess where we are coming from, and how the time that has been filled: The kind of pedagogical alchemy that I theorized in Chapter 5. It is the best of what I think UHI has to offer, the true spirit of it, which is the reason for this project in the first place, and what the ensuing fieldwork aimed to document and express.

Was the aim true? Did it keep producing the above? That's a harder question, but one that I hope, that through the record of showing UHI in action, can be glimpsed at.

The above words were written from the beginning of the story, these words are from the end of it. There many moments of time, many moments of the city between then and now, and the research and the fieldwork and the writing act kind of coming to terms with that time, leaving records for the future, so it would mean something. The following pieces try to balance the excitement of things in process with a kind of reflective melancholy of trying to piece together and animate moments long past, holding up their power for reflection, then to send it out into the future anew.

Chapter 7 Empirical Overview of UHI in Practice

Introduction

This chapter kicks off the empirical portion of this dissertation, moving into a series of chapters that mix accounts from my fieldwork with data drawn from the program's students, and the requisite analysis. To set this up, Chapter 7 provides an overview of UHI as it existed as a program from 2013-2019, meaning it presents the actual data of what happened, rather than the previous chapters that theorized it from a more outside vantage and tried to connect it to larger trends in education. From this point on, we are fully within the case study.

The more specific goal of this chapter is *descriptive*. It provides overview and context of a number of key areas, e.g. institutional composition, background of students, and so on, for those that do not know anything about the program. In this way, it acts as a kind of lexicon. It does not make any arguments *per se*, though I do make some analytical points about issues that emerge from the data and these anticipate other findings to come. Together they constitute a portrait of the program, through the accretion time and elements, which constitute a set now made, and provide a presentational account of surface-level archival data that I have collected long term about UHI, setting up background that readers can refer to within other chapters. Educational programs collect different practices, interests, compositional elements, and human resources over time, allowing it to change and evolve from year to year.

This data is primarily collected from my field experience, meaning it is drawn from the tacit knowledge that was built up through participant observation. I translated this into data-form

through an Excel file that I built at the beginning of my fieldwork, where I collected descriptive data on a variety of parts of the program organized via a series of sheets. These include student info, project info, timelines of events, as well as cross-listings to a variety of documents and writings about the program. I kept these up over the ensuing years, adding info at regular intervals. The chapter puts into narrative form the data from this archive.

7.1 Institutional Overview of UHI at UCLA

At UCLA, UHI exists at the institutional intersection between three organizing divisions: The School of Humanities, The School of Arts and Architecture, and The Luskin School of Public Affairs (Urban Planning), drawing students, faculty, and resources from all three, though it is open to students from other Schools within the university.

On paper, it looks something like this in (top-down) composition, institutionally:
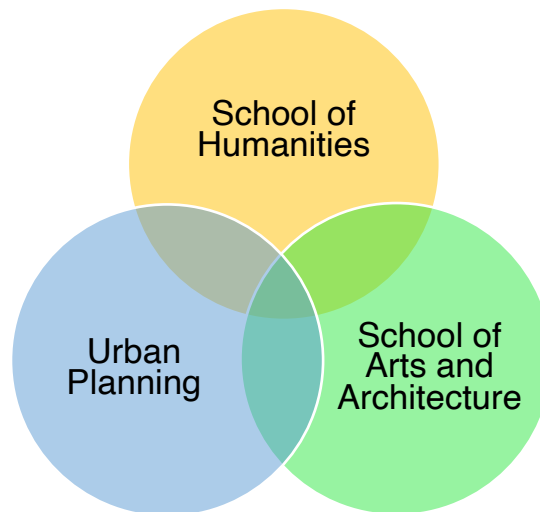
Top-Down Disciplinary Structure of UHI

Many singular disciplinary departments within these three larger organizational schools have also been involved, from the social sciences, education, and other areas (SS +) making the actual student composition more institutionally and disciplinary widespread. Where the actual composition of what makes UHI, is something more like this:
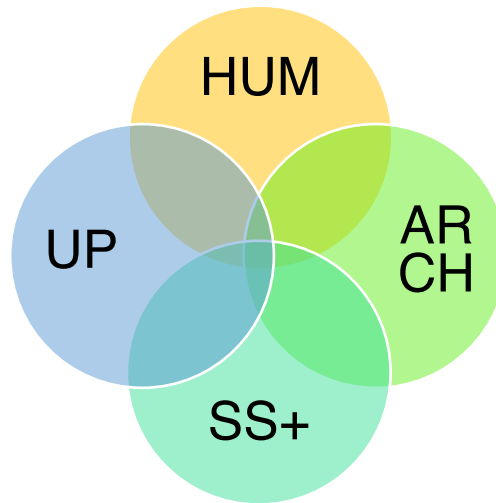
More Accurate Diagram of Disciplinary Structures

Important here is the general idea of how disciplines meet within specific institutional structures of a distinct university and how UHI exists, at the interstices of the, and therefore is in an in-between place.

What this means is that there is little funding commitment from the three participating divisions within UHI, as the program has been fully funded by UHI's main financial sponsor, the Mellon Foundation. However, the long-term goal of Mellon is to hand over the program to the university, through a process of institutionalization, where each funding round has been less as the university is supposed to take up a more active role of support. This is the same at all institutions with UHI programs that desire long-term programs.

Behind this question of ownership is the tension between allowing for new educational experiment beyond the dominant departmental divide and the interpretation of such experiment as

distraction of students from their "primary" discipline. From my ground level perspective, my sense is that is sometimes seen as a bit of a distraction, taking up time and energy for students who should be using their time on their primary degree. This will be a tension that is more empirically articulated via student experiences of being caught in-between.[1]

Situating UHI Physically at UCLA

Situating the program more physically at UCLA, it operates out of the offices of cityLAB-UCLA an urban policy and housing think tank in the Department of Architecture and Urban Design and often uses classroom spaces within the architecture building (Perloff Hall). Some of this is due to the studio space available in that building, big rooms with movable tables for doing project, as

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[1] Generally I have avoided a straight up financial or budgetary analysis besides the most superficial in my fieldwork for a number or reasons, notably that it is (1) outside the scope of information that I had access to and that I feel comfortable writing about and therefore, (2) to focus on it too directly would be a different project. However, I will from time to time give my impression of some tensions that exist because it did affect a variety of issues at place within the study, laying breadcrumbs for future researchers: A more financially focused analysis of outside philanthropic organizations in creating higher education would be a fascinating study for someone with access and the appropriate methodology.

opposed to tightly packed seminar rooms that facility just conversation, as well as the day-to-day administrators having closer access to facilities management within that building.

UHI developed out of cityLAB, sharing the same main faculty PI, and also shares many staff members, student workers (who have also been students in UHI), and other material resources. In this way, as a specific place (office) it is the key spatial hub for where UHI "happens," perhaps even more so than the classroom, as it is the site of institutional planning, meetings, as well as a variety of informal interactions. To give an overview of its mission, cityLAB: "explores the challenges facing the 21st century metropolis through research and design, expanding the possibilities for our cities to grow more livably, sustainability, and beautifully." cityLAB functions as a kind of hub for sociability in the university and in research, a safe and somewhat neutral space for students in UHI, acting as a kind of hub similar to a theorization that Bendix et al. (2017) give to the "Coffee Machine" as a physical location that promotes sustainable interdisciplinary work (p. 66-67). Here I highlight the question of *where* interdisciplinary education and research happens is important. Should it happen somewhere neutral, which is symbolically accessible to all, for instance in the library or other common workspace? Or should it happen where it is more practically accessible, e.g. what is possible to easily access, despite the fact that this may privilege one area of composition? In these ways, the "space" of where education occurs—the physical space of classrooms and other sites, as well as the conceptual space of how ideas come together in other non-classroom locations in the university and the city.

Overview of Faculty and Teaching Involvement

There are four core faculty in UHI, who were in charge of writing the original grant and oversee the planning of the program. All are senior faculty members at UCLA, and they come from architecture, urban planning, and two from the humanities. Throughout the years they have taken lead teaching roles in different years of the program and different terms. The lead PI, from Architecture, was involved in most classroom activities and planning, and went on all the field study trips. Other core faculty went on different years.

During the six years there were two Associate Directors of the Program, who were non-faculty positions in charge of day-to-day administration and teaching roles. For the first three years, this position was held by a recent master's graduate (dual degree architecture and urban planning). Before year four they left to pursue a doctorate. The second Associate Director was a recent doctoral graduate from architecture from a program in Europe, and they were part of the program until mid-way through year six.

Throughout the six years there were also a variety of affiliated faculty who were involved in the program at different levels of interaction. In the first two years, Tokyo and Shanghai, there were "area experts" from history and the humanities—basically faculty whose research was based in the city that was focused on—who were involved in a teaching role. Due to some complications and issues balancing "expert knowledge" with the more amateur interdisciplinary space, this ceased after year two. This was in part that one of the core faculty has experience living and teaching in Mexico and Mexico City, and therefore another "expert" was not needed. In year four (Tokyo II), a faculty member who had experience in Tokyo took on more of a consulting role in

the classroom and fieldwork. For Shanghai II, myself and another Chinese graduate student held some expertise with the city.

There was also a larger pool of UCLA faculty who provided guest lectures and other talks throughout the classes but had a more indirect role. As part of the grant, there was a monthly faculty seminar designed to foster Urban Humanities conversations and research with faculty from across the three divisions. Some of these faculty would attend course and project reviews. The staff in cityLAB were also involved at various levels over the years, particularly in years five and six, where the Associate Director of cityLAB, a graduate of UHI from an earlier year, also took on direct teaching involvement. In year six, two graduate students from UCLA (myself and another from architecture) took on lead teaching roles, along with a graduate student in urban planning from USC (who had a core faculty member on their committee).

Overview of Other Program Roles (Teaching Assistant and Researcher)

Throughout the six years there were a variety of teaching assistant and graduate researcher roles, which were funded via the grant. These students, including me (who filled this role the most often), were program graduates who would join in the years following their involvement. They worked approximately 10 hours per a week for the program, paid by the hour, as this position was not tied to university teaching fellowships (as it was outside the normal funding structures of the university, being an interdisciplinary program). Students took on these positions in addition to other in-department teaching positions, something that often were the cause of tensions among the different bureaucratic financing offices in the university. Benefits for taking on these roles

included interdisciplinary teaching experience, continued interaction with the program, and chance to share one's experience with a new cohort of students.

Roles included helping plan curriculum, working with current students as a peer facilitator, working on travel logistics, teaching parts of lessons as part of graduate training, and other similar duties. During summers there were more intensive hours and projects, for instance prepping a variety of publications that presented UHI work from the previous year, working with the Associate Director. Teaching assistants were able to join the fieldwork trips and played important roles on the ground for organizing and helping students with issues that arose in the field, as they were generally familiar with the cities already.

Overview of Recruitment and Issues of Different Student Populations

Each year, a competitive group of students were selected to form a cohort of twenty-four. Generally, the target was to select eight students from each disciplinary area: eight from architecture, eight from urban planning, and eight from humanities and the humanistic social sciences. Students could come from either Ph.D. or master's programs, but usually Ph.Ds. come from the humanities and social sciences, however architecture and urban planning have doctoral programs, which are small compared to the professional wing of their program.

Field Area	PhD	Masters
Humanities	Doctoral Program (5-7 years)	2-year masters on track to PhD
Architecture	Doctoral Program (5-7 years)	Masters of Architecture (M.Arch I)—3 year professional program
Urban Planning	Doctoral Program (5-7 years)	Master's in urban planning (M.URP)—2-year professional program
Hybrid Program	None	Dual master's in architecture and urban planning (4-year program)
Social Sciences	Doctoral Program (5-8 years)	2-year masters on track to PhD
Other	None	Other professional master's programs, e.g. library science, public policy, social work (2 year)

Overview of doctoral and master's Program Time

This highlights the important split between students coming from scholarly programs and professional master's programs, existing within the same classroom space. Some key issues and tensions here include:

- *Program Timescale*: Doctoral programs are much longer than master's programs, which are two to three years in length, so there is a different relationship to the university and level of embeddedness within this relationship to the institution. Building on some of the theorization from Chapter III, the doctoral graduate student is within the institution for the long hall and their decisions for where they put their time and efforts have a perhaps more serious, or at least different, set of concerns.

- *Program Intensity*: while doctoral programs are intense, they are more slow burn intense, with a building to check-ins on the horizon, this is in contrast to a more day-to-day/in-academic term intensity that exists in the master's program. Building on the last point, the doctoral student may have more institutional time but they have to think

about how to leverage it later for a career in academia, whereas master's students have less time and therefore less long-term commitment to academia, but their time within their program is more deeply structured and intensive, as it is (at least in theory) trying to provide maximum skills and competencies in a short period of time

Other differences exist, but these bring up some of the ways that the student population in its very composition includes contrasts, tensions and hybridities, which will be built upon later.

Overall, students were drawn into the program for diverse reasons that include an interest in cities, intellectual curiosity with other disciplines, the chance to gain a separate set of technical or conceptual skills, or the feeling that it is something "cool" to join. I use this colloquial term of "cool" to refer to a sense of attraction that I think is felt by applicants, existing somewhere between an excitement for adventure out in the city, the change to get out of their home department, or just something that looks different than "normal" academic business. The coolness also is generated by the choice of sites, themes, and promotional material, which are designed with flashy graphic design (at least when it comes to academia!). Though this programmatic *it factor* wore off in certain circles in later years of the program, where it became harder to recruit. Informal conversations with UHI graduates passing on opinions of students in their departments and programs back this up to a point, but not empirically (it was outside the scope of any direct questions I asked).

Justifications that were reported included the time commitment as well as questions about the political radicalness of the program (in terms of *not being radical enough*, a condition of wider political anxieties in the world and academia at the time). This lessening of excitement could also be part of the natural cycle of all things that have any hype, where what seemed cutting-edge in year two seems played out in year five or six, particularly as the program began to repeat themes

and destinations, shifting from a position of open experimentation and discover to one where certain practices became part of the program's identity and curriculum, and therefore had to be maintained for continuity. In other words, it was a shift from *Urban Humanities can be* to *Urban Humanities is*, a process of institutionalization that removed some possibility from the proceedings. As an early acolyte of the program, I am part of this shift as I sought to codify and replicate things and practices that worked before, but of course you cannot repeat the past, and I began to feel the weight of a certain programmatic self-history bear down on the present.

UHI Cohort Selection

UHI Recruitment Postcard (2016)

The selection process starts in the spring of previous academic year, with a series of advertisements (web, email), classroom visits, and paper mailings to incoming students. Because of the faster turnover and high entering class sizes of master's programs, the urban planning and architecture programs have roughly 50 students each year entering, it was relatively easy to get applications from these two areas, with each providing two to three times the amount of applications then open spots.

More difficult were students from the humanities, as the turnover in programs, as new batches of doctoral students who might be interested in the subject matter, is slower. This became an issue in later years of the program, as it was harder to find interested doctoral students, who in turn took more convincing to join because of reasons related to efficacy in long-term career value (the question of "how this will help me as a scholar?"). For the humanities, there might be only ten to twelve spots for eight positions, which also accounts for why other disciplines besides the humanities were also recruited.

Applications include a short essay of interest, transcripts, and for architects and designers, a portfolio of visual work. Once applications are received, they are evaluated and rated, first by in-discipline faculty, and then calibrated among the group. From this, the selection of the cohort of twenty-four is made.

7.2 Compositional Overview of UHI Students

With the cohort formed they enter into the curricular year. The next chapter will explain this process via narrative, so the following section provides multi-year compositional overview of students in UHI, to provide a top-down glance of the students in the aggregate.

General Composition of UHI Students

Ph.D./masters Split (n = 145)

■ Ph.D   ■ M.ARCH I   ■ M.URP   ■ Other   ■ Dual
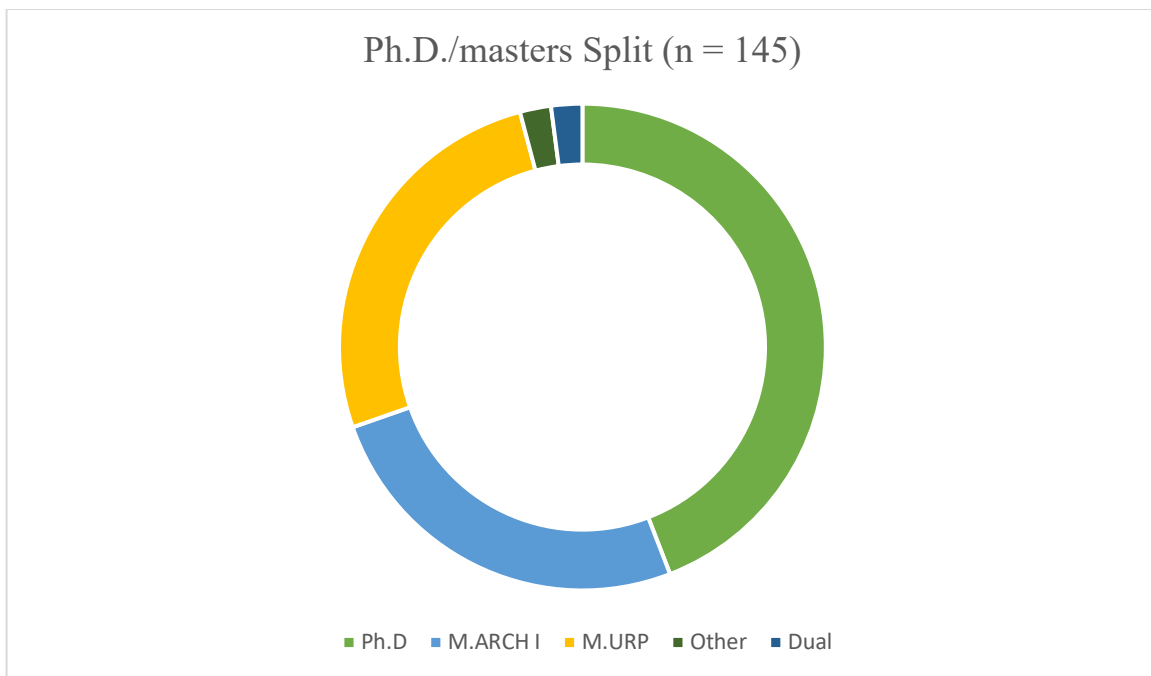
Ph.D./Masters student split by program

Overall there were 145 students in the program over six years, who completed the full academic year. There were a few students who only participated in the summer program and then quit and have been removed from the data). Each cohort had 24 students, with the second Tokyo program having 25 students. This included 64 Ph.D. students from the humanities, social sciences, and related disciplines (including architecture and urban planning Ph.Ds.), 37 M.ARCH I students, and

38 M.URP students, and 3 students who completed the dual degree program. The remaining 3 students were master's students from other programs (public policy, social work, library science).

To aggregate this in the following chart, it can be seen that there were a higher percentage of master's students in the program, but it was not as simply as 2/3 to 1/3 as may have been assumed from a quick reading of program materials, which emphasize an even program split.

Breakdown of Students in UHI: Ph.D. vs. master's (n = 145)

44%

56%

■ PhD
■ Professional Masters
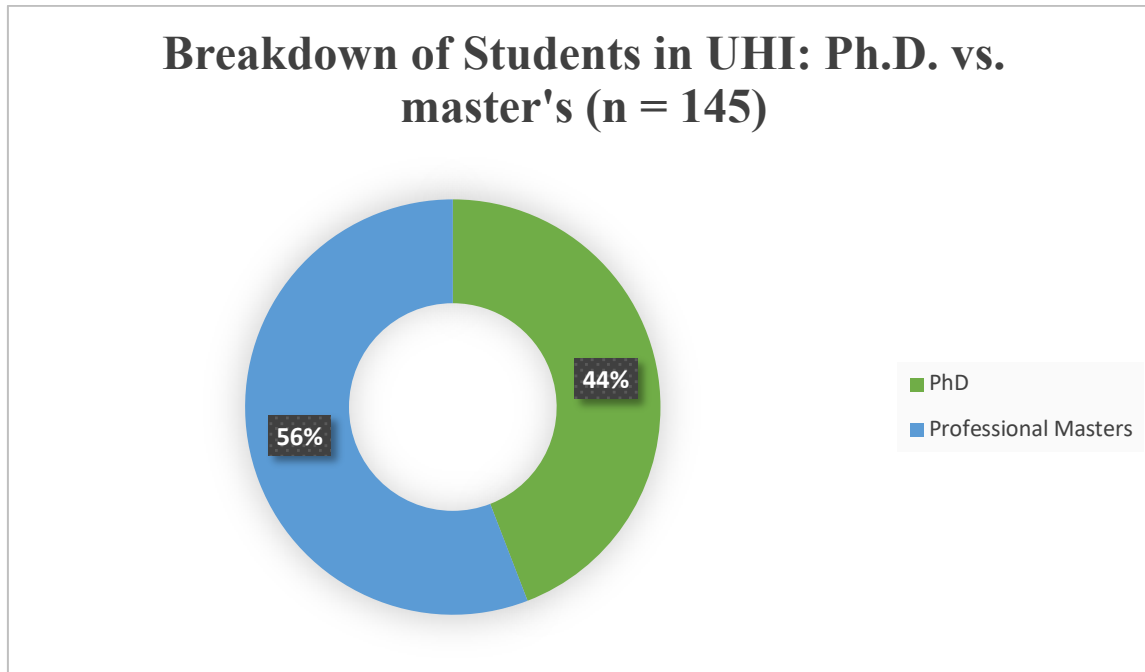
Ph.D. vs. masters split total

This is because there were Ph.D. students who came from architecture and planning, who aligned in terms of academic positioning more closely with Ph.Ds. than professional fields (though some had prior professional experience in those fields). This played out in reality in a number of interesting ways. For instance, though these Ph.D. students filled the architecture or urban planning quota in the division of students between disciplinary areas, their role when assigned to teams needed to be closer to humanists (architecture is an academic field closely related to art history) or urban planning (that shares many methodological foundations with the social sciences), as they

did not necessarily have the technical skills that were more prevalent in professional fields like computer skills, visualization or mapping software.

The lesson that can be taken from this is that student demographics rarely align with top-down sorting, particularly when it comes to disciplinary practices, where in reality things are much messier and more aligned with an individual's experience. In interdisciplinary organization, particularly when organizing students for projects, there is always a tension between knowledge that can be assumed from a student's disciplinary position and what they actually know or are interested in knowing. Therefore, as will be shown in practice below, it takes an extended effort to know the students and understand them as individuals rather than representations of an abstract disciplinary knowledge. This was a tension that was always at play in UHI, both in terms of a vertical view, as well as a horizontal view, where student perceptions of each other often reified disciplinary distinction.

Disciplinary Split of UHI Doctoral Students

In UHI, there were 26 distinct disciplinary areas or fields represented, which includes 23 distinct doctoral/academic masters programs and 6 professional degree programs. Architecture and urban planning are present in both, so are not cross listed, in their scholarly and professional forms. Most of the doctoral fields were in the humanities or social sciences, though a few existed outside institutionally in other university divisions, for instance Education and Information Studies are in their own graduate school but can be considered social sciences for the purposes of this study. Along the same lines, Chinese Language and Literature and Japanese Language and Literature are

part of a larger humanities division of Asian Languages and Cultures, but because this division is

UCLA specific, I count them as two distinct though albeit related, areas.

The following chart lists the different disciplinary areas:

PhD/Academic master's Degree Fields (23)	Professional master's Degree Fields
Anthropology	Architecture (M.ARCH)
Architecture (PhD)	Urban Planning (M.URP)
Chicana/o/x Studies	Dual M.ARCH/M.URP
Chinese Languages and Literature	Public Policy
East Asian Studies (masters leading to PhD in	Information Studies (Library)
History)	Social Work
Education	
English (plus masters)	
Ethnomusicology	
Film and Television	
Germanic	
Gender Studies	
Geography	
History	
Information Studies	
Japanese Languages and Literature	
Musicology	
Philosophy	
Political Science	
Spanish and Portuguese Languages and	
Literature	
Sociology	
Theater	
Urban Planning (PhD)	
World Arts and Culture/Dance	

UHI Disciplines and Fields

The Ph.D./academic master's student population provides the majority of disciplinary variance, the following table gives a more detailed overview of the count for each discipline with more than a singular representative student: 11 disciplines in total with a student population greater than 1.

Discipline/Field	Number of Students in UHI > than 1
Chicano/a Studies	9
Architecture (PhD)	7
Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature	7
History (and East Asian Studies)	6
Urban Planning (PhD)	6
English	4
Education	2
Musicology	2
Gender Studies	2
Geography	2
Asian Languages and Cultures (China)	2

Numerical Representation of Disciplines

What immediately stands out from this table is the prevalence at the top discipline one that is institutionally part of the humanities, at least at UCLA, taking up the lead demographic position (as well as architecture and urban planning taking spots from students directly in the humanities).

In the case of Chicana/o studies at UCLA, this interdisciplinary study area is located as part of the social sciences, though in other institutions it within the humanities. This unclear discipline position comes in part with how new fields, like Chicano/a studies which is fifty years old as a field of study (the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center was founded in 1969) that has institutionalized within academia since the 1980s as undergraduate degree programs, and only exists as a Ph.D. granting department at UCLA for about ten years, align themselves disciplinarily in the university. More specific reasons accounting for the high representation, as well as Spanish

and Portuguese Language and Literature with 16 total students, is the focus of two years of the program on Mexico City. It does makes sense that students whose research would be interested in a program that studied transnational issues across the US-Mexico borderlands (though 3 of the 16 students who participated in non-Mexico program years), with students coming from both sides of the border and the liminal spaces in-between.

On a side note, this interest, population size, and the direct life experience of the students, because of the geographical closeness of the L.A.-Mexico City circuit, made the Mexico years richer in many ways, as well as more intellectually, politically, and positionally fraught. These years were much closer in terms of subject and closeness to L.A., while the cities in Asia always seemed removed by more than just the distance of the Pacific: less direct familiarity and experience, allowing for more Orientalized "othering" at times. This is an important note to keep mind of structurally and educationally, when parsing what students learned from different years of the program.

Directly related to this is the fact that it was curious that the representation of other "area" specific students focused on Japan and China was lower, though there are a few reasons for this.[2] The size of these programs in the Asian humanities or history are smaller, not re-populating very quickly. In turn, some have higher populations of international students within them, who have different time-line anxieties within the Ph.D. process because of fees concerns (the faster to advancing to candidacy means lower tuition). This was the case with a doctoral student from China

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[2] I put "area" in scare quotes due to the general outdatedness of area studies in academia, where they are a holdover of cold-war era program structures that were primarily white men being trained to study other areas of the world and is slowly changing as that generation of academics experiences attrition (see Miyoshi et al., 2010). The trend now is to create more relational and planetary ways of thinking about places in the world, an issue also in need of work in my field of Comparative and International Education. Generally, this speaks to the bigger issues of the Othering of Asia in ways post positive (envy over economies or new skylines) and negative.

who attended the summer course but decided to not continue in order to focus on advancing to candidacy and shows other background institutional factors that account selection of student applicant pool.

Year of Participation in the Program

I have rough data on the year of participation within the program that is more accurate for master's students than Ph.D. (and only from years two through six), so I will not present it as a numerical table, rather use the data more descriptively. With doctoral students the exact year of participation is harder to parse, as they come from longer programs with different timelines, so a better sense is to give an impression of what stage of the Ph.D., for instance coursework, exam/proposal period, or post-candidacy.

- **Architects**: From years two through six, 29 out of 35 architecture students participated in their second year of the M.ARCH, with a much smaller number participating in year one (4) and year three (2). I account this for the fact that architecture is intense and the first year takes some transition, as well as developing a portfolio for application. The third year consists of preparing for the job market, so the second year constitutes a middle logical middle ground.

- **Urban Planners**: From years two and six, a higher amount of Urban Planner masters participated during their first year of the two-year program, 22 for the first year compared to 11 during the second year. However, the distribution between first and second year students changed from year to year, for instance during the second year the split was 5

(second-year) versus 3 (first-year), however during year six, where there were 10 total master's planners, 9 students were first-year with only 1 second-year. This difference can be accounted through a few different reasons, notably that there was a strong recruiting drive for incoming students. Second-year students also are dealing with more direct real-world preparation within the curriculum, such as internships and capstone client projects. Perhaps more practically, it represents the fact that students who were interested applied their first year and if they did not get in, re-applied.

- **Ph.D.**: The majority of Ph.D. students participated in UHI during their course work, which corresponded with the first, second, and third years of doctoral programs. Of this, the majority took it during their second year, with the next highest amount being the third year. Anecdotally, I know that students felt that it made sense to take UHI when they were finishing course work or preparing the dissertation proposal after coursework and exams were finished. The number of students who participated in the program after advancing to candidacy was less than five, one student in this category joined in order to add a different theoretical perspective (urban spatial studies) to their dissertation, while a second had applied earlier to the program and wasn't admitted and wanted to have the experience.

Other Compositional Issues

Because the following compositional topics were never directly self-reported, I will not use numerical reporting, but rather give a general impression of certain dynamics that can help fill in a qualitative impression.

Race and Ethnicity: I did not take data on race and ethnicity, and though I refrain from any specific estimation, my general impression of the demographics aligns with UCLA's as a whole, replicating certain demographic inequalities in the institution as a whole.[3]

Gender: Gender was not self-reported but based on my records and impression there were generally more female identifying students than male, with a rough ration of 2 to 1. This was true among the Ph.D. student population (more female than male), as well as among urban planning to a lesser extent. Architecture had a more even ratio of male versus female students.

International Students: About 15% to 20% of the students were international students representing around 15 countries of origin, which fits roughly with the demographics of international graduate students at UCLA as a whole (20%) according to *US News and World Report*.[4] One note on the issue of students from the respective countries being studied with being involved in the program, the majority of Chinese students who participated were from the architecture master's (which are generally populated heavily with this demographic), with only a few mainland Chinese doctoral students. Other Chinese-speaking doctoral students came from the greater Chinese world (Taiwan, Hong Kong), providing a unique positional perspective on mainland China (though one that was not wholly understood or addressed by the program as a whole). There were no Japanese national students in the program. I refrain to report on students

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[3] https://datausa.io/profile/university/university-of-california-los-angeles
[4] https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/university-of-california-los-angeles-1315

with Mexican national origins, due to the contested and fluid nature of the citizenship around the US-Mexico border.

Graduate Certificate Overview

The goal of the program was to receive a Graduate Certificate in Urban Humanities, which could be put on resumes and job applications. The graduate certificate consisted of finishing all coursework along with two elective courses that had been approved as involving content about urban or humanities issues. Every year there would be a list of courses and students could petition courses to count. In the earlier years this was a more rigorous process of approval, though this lessened as the years went on. By the end most courses were approved, and electives stopped being generated. The reality of this was that the majority of students completed the graduate certificate and "graduated" from the program, if they so desired.

The reality was that the graduate certificate itself does not appear on official UCLA transcripts, therefore giving it no direct and official signaling power to future employers, though this did not really matter as it was representative of a type of experience that was valuable and that could be signaled through other ways, including faculty letters or tacit knowledge. The point being here is that the network effect and self-representation of UHI participation created its own legitimacy, outside of any official certificates. I initially kept records on who graduated with the certificate but stopped after completion rate became effectively 100%, rendering it meaningless data, and other self- or faculty- signaled evidence of completion revealed itself to be far more important. Some students did not really care to officially get the certificate, as the experience either was not valuable or could be shown in other ways. However, others have utilized it as an important

part of their resume, listing it on official biographical information, as well as reporting that the certificate helped with job applications and for leveraging the UHI experience for future opportunities.

7.3 Overview of the Academic Year

The following diagram outlines a processual image of the curricular year of UHI, lasting from late August until the following June, with the framework of *learning-thinking-making* grafted roughly onto it. The point here is to illustrate the connected curricular year, with details to be filled in with the second chart below.
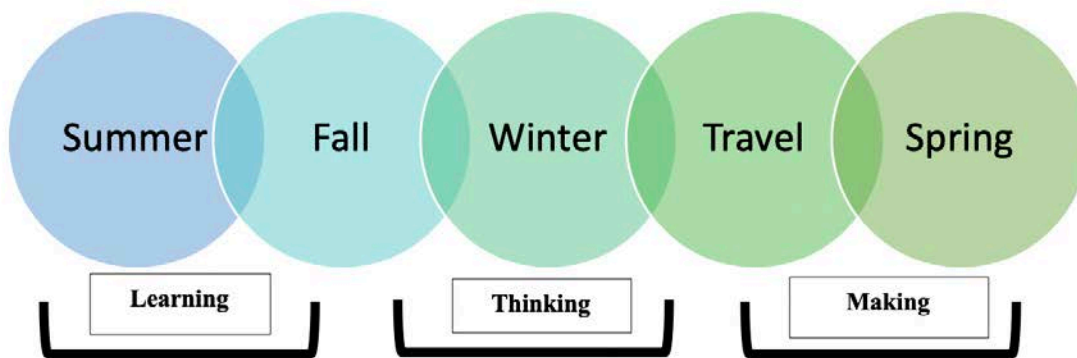
UHI Curricular Year

Filling in this diagram are descriptors and pedagogical goals, and where they correspond with the wider pedagogical themes and specific practices in each part of the year, is the following chart:

	Summer	**Fall**	**Winter**	**Spring Break**	**Spring**
Term	*Summer Institute*	*Topic Seminar*	*Research Seminar*	*Fieldwork Trip*	*Humanities Studio*
Description	Intensive 3-Week boot camp for learning about UH methods and practices	Conceptual seminar on topics related to theme of focus city	More specific seminar on themes and issues in city to be traveled to, leading to developing a fieldwork research project	Intensive 10-day trip to city in question	Capstone spring course with engaged scholarship urban project in Los Angeles
Projects	Students create three team-based projects: Film, Map, Capstone (e.g. counter-tour)	Small collaborative project or research paper	Research plan for fieldwork; collection of archives of materials related to project; public presentation of research plan	Exploration of city; collaborations with students at local university and other organizations; Data collection; mid-term review in city	Finish other city project; final project for year
Key Learning Goals	Student learn about collaboration and practice UHI style fieldwork; learn collaborative thinking and beginnings of making practices	Students begin to learn more historical, literary, filmic, architectural representations and issues of the city	Practice developing interdisciplinary research plans which will then be enacted in field; this requires critical collaborative thinking and research design	Being in an 'other' city and dealing with collecting fieldwork; collaborating with local students; and creating embodied research work in the field; culminates with on-site making project	Students apply practices developed in the other city for a final Los Angeles project; based on studio pedagogy; present work at symposium; making output of the whole year

Activities and Practices Via Term

This pedagogic cycle will be put into action and explained in ethnographic detail in the following

chapter, where it makes up a key part of the chapter structuring.

Program Years and Themes: Six Year Overview

UHI, Four Cities in Relation (created with stock images of each city)

This next section gives more specific overviews of the past six-year program structures thematically, while also providing overviews of key issues in each of the UHI cities that were studies. This table gives an idea of each program year with the official general theme presented. Los Angeles was always the main city and the focus city was put into relation with it. Themes were decided ahead of time and part of the promotional material, though they served as broad directions of inquiry, meaning they were not always strictly followed. In the table, blue represents the first funding cycle, where green represents the second.

Program Year	Focus City	General Thematic Overview of Year
2013-2014	Tokyo	Risk in the dense area of Shinjuku
2014-2015	Shanghai	Identity and contestation in Shanghai's rise to global city
2015-2016	Mexico City	Disaster & Spatial Justice
2016-2017	Tokyo	Peripheries, Olympics, & Ghosts
2017-2018	Mexico City	Borders & Commons
2018-2019	Shanghai	Shanghai Un/Expected

UHI Years and Thematic Content

From this chart, it can be seen that each other global city was focused on two times, but the order was not consistent, notably the second Mexico City appearing second in the second cycles order roster. This had to do with a number of factors, including financial, it is simply cheaper to travel to Mexico from L.A. in all aspects, on this note Tokyo is the most expensive with Shanghai in

between, faculty availability, and the importance of engaging with Mexico in 2017, as a response to the US administration's xenophobic border policy. As UHI moves into the future, Mexico becomes the comparative perspective that continues. Post-2019 the program had an additional Mexico City year that's travel was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2020-2021 version of the program will be located just in Los Angeles, focusing on the area of West Lake/MacArthur Park, an area with a large Latinx immigrant population.

Overview of Cities and Key Issues in Them

The following gives a basic overview of the key cities involved in UHI, briefly presenting a snapshot of important issues going on in the cities being studied and traveled to.

Los Angeles: L.A. as the home base of UHI has been generally introduced in the Preface and throughout, with long histories of spatial inequality present in the city (and continuing to grow). However, it is important to reiterate a few key trends within the time period of 2013-2019, for instance the "revitalization" of the downtown area, and adjacent areas such as the Arts District, was a major story, and provoked development and density within downtown, culminating in a large construction wave of luxury apartment and commercial buildings—buildings with origins in part in a corruption scandal based in City Hall, showing the contemporary resonances to L.A's film noir past are strong (Wagley, 2020).

In other parts of the city, tensions around gentrification, seen from rising housing prices and other changes in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown and the hipster enclaves of the "Eastside" (Silver Lake, Echo Park, which is not truly East). Notably, tensions spilled over about a wave of gentrification and "artwashing" in the neighborhood of Boyle Heights, which is directly

East of the L.A. River from downtown, with local activist groups protesting the influx of gallery spaces and coffee ships into what has been traditional an immigrant neighborhood, for the past hundred years, and a primarily Mexican-Latinx neighborhood for the past fifty (Miranda, 2018; Boom California, 2018). This was a tension that UHI directly encountered through projects in that neighborhood. In general, this is illustrative of the precarity of neighborhoods that have been traditionally sites of ethnic communities and global immigration being threatened by urban change, but also pushing back through organized activism (Adamian, 2020). During this time period there was also a strong increase in housing insecurity with the population growing in size (Chandler, 2020), as well as precarity of other vulnerable populations such as BIPOC and sexual minorities of color (Wendel, 2017). The creation of affordable housing within the Southland is a pressing and long-term policy issue, where decades old regional housing policy reinforces racial and economic disparities in the region (Ling, 2018). Other factors that exacerbate inequalities include, the awarding of the 2028 Olympics has also created pressures and change, with large-scale development and infrastructure projects, such as stadiums, transit lines, and other projects moving into South Los Angeles, provoking the possibility of further waves of gentrification in the coming years (Jennings, 2019), as well as further environmental hazards due to climate change and water insecurity (Gold, 2018).

Tokyo: The first UHI program to Tokyo took place just a few years after the 2011 Tōhuku earthquake, so questions of risk, disaster, and population density were major topics during this year of the program (Kawano, 2020). This first-year focused fieldwork solely in the Shinjuku district of the city. By 2017, the upcoming 2020 Olympics, now since canceled, became the focal point, looking back to previous Olympics in the city, including the canceled 1940 games and the

1964 Olympics that represented a key moment in the city's post WWII rebuilding. Thematically, the second program focused on themes of urban erasure unlocked by such mega projects that cause their own type of top-down destruction (Isozaki, 2007). This was picked up via a humanities conceptual framework that focused on "ghosts," a thematic that will be described in more depth in the following chapter. Academic guides such as *Tokyo Totem* by the Monnik Collective (2015) provided additional input for Tokyo based urban research.

Shanghai: The Shanghai program years primarily focused on issues of memory and city identity within a framework of post-socialism (McGrath, 2008). In Shanghai, the end of the communist state economy and heavy ideological controlled ushered into an unmoored era of capitalist accumulation in Chinese society, where Shanghai acts as a key economic hub and global entry point for the rest of the country. This is similar to the position it held in the first half of the 20th century, as the so-called modernist "Paris of the East," and the "return" to its global position, both China and Shanghai's, has been a major story of the first decades of the 21st century (Bergère, 2009; Wasserstrom, 2009; Schaefer, 2017; Zhou, 2017). Urban Humanities has looked at how individual and cultural identities have changed, in particularly contrasting different historical eras in a palimpsestic way (Li, 2015), and seeing how they imprint on the built environment, as well as different forms of consumer culture as they emerged in housing (Yang, 2020), globally themed housing developments like the famous Thames Town (Piazzoni, 2018), the art world (Davis, 2013), dance (Huang, 2016), film (Braester, 2010), and popular culture (Greenspan, 2014).

This has included investigations on buildings that have existed in different eras, taking on different functions in each era (Banfill, Lin, Robertson, 2015; Banfill, 2020), or attempts to document the specific social worlds of inner-city lane neighborhoods. Another key issue has been

the way that Shanghai, and China in general, is a powerful example of an imaginary of top-down controlled State urbanism, where cities support massive infrastructural urban plans and creation of buildings at a speed that is beyond that seen in the west, creating a powerful and sublime ideological spectacle (Easterling, 2016; Rizzardi & Zhang, 2019). This sense of awe and envy, which is at the same time mixed with fear, misperception, and anxieties about the future, became a theme during the second Shanghai program, which focused more on calibrating expectations and imaginaries of the Shanghai and China through the experience of travel and the unexpected encounters found therein. This was created in part in order to address growing tensions between the US and China over the time period, and the increasing power of the Chinese state globally.

Mexico City: The key organizing theme for the two Mexico City years of the program was spatial justice, but put within a trans-borderlands perspective, which imagined issues playing out in a continuum that stretched from Los Angeles to Mexico City, and back over the border. This combined a conceptual framing that drew equally from Anzaldua (1987) as Harvey and Soja, and contemporary border thinkers such as Cruz & Forman (2020). This accounted for an added travel trip/city as part of the program, with visits to Tijuana during the winter quarter, to look at cross-border life, identity, and activism (Rivera, 2019). It also accounted for the major thematic practice of socially engaged scholarship, where close reciprocal relationships were built with community and city actors, as part of the learning experience and project work (Helguera, 2011; Post et al., 2016; Beaulieu et al., 2018).

The majority of Urban Humanities projects in Mexico City investigated public spaces within the central area of the city, examining how spatial inequalities manifested in these places both historically and in the present. These included the modernist housing development of

Tlatelolco that became site of the October 1968 massacre of protesting students and was further destroyed by the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, now existing as a site of memory and activism (Becerra Garcia, 2019). Other sites of focus included gentrifying neighborhoods and a small plaza containing tensions between a street vendors union and the city. A secondary theme focused on the environmental stressors with such a large population, particularly around issues of earthquakes and water security, natural parallels to contemporary issues in Los Angeles.

The following chart details important place locations that UHI studied in each city:

Los Angeles	Tokyo	Shanghai	Mexico City
Downtown Los Angeles	Shinjuku	1933 Laochangfang	Tlatelolco
La Placita Olvera	Golden Gai	Tianzifang	Doctores
Chinatown	Yoyogi Park	The House on Xinhua Road	Mexico City Metro System
Boyle Heights	Tsukiji Market	French Concession: Huaihai Road & Maoming Road	Colonia Santa María la Ribera
Little Tokyo	Odaiba Island		
Sawtelle Japantown	Tokyo Station	M50 Moganshan Arts District	Santa Fe
West Adams	Imperial Palace Gardens		Vasconcelos Library
Westlake/MacArthur Park	Musashi-Koyama	Lujiazui/The Bund	Alameda Central
	Kokukigan		Plaza de la Santísma
	Nakagin Capsule Tower		

List of Key Sites and Landmarks for UHI by City

Issues Across Cities

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Based on these city overviews, one can see that there are common themes that exist between cities, including focuses on urban change and gentrification, urban identity and creativity, migration and enclaves of ethnic difference, the effects of environmental disasters and other catastrophes, the effects of mega-infrastructural projects, with the prevailing position of understanding all these phenomena from the human level, understood from the position of the lived and the everyday.

Diagram: Relationships between the Cities

Urban Humanities takes a specific view of comparative urbanism. The goal is not to have direct comparisons, which have in the past led to simplistic analysis that have been criticized by post-colonial scholars, for instance, saying the skyscrapers of Shanghai represents some sort of future for LA or in the reverse the slum areas of Mexico City. Instead a transnational perspective of loose comparison that focuses on "interdependences, movements, and flows across borders in regions and sub-regions [and that] understands urban settings and experiences as composed of multiple regional, ethnic or institutional identities and forces" and it considers "interweavings, intimacies, conflicts, collectivities and engagement among different people and their socio-spatial contexts (Cuff and Loukaitou-Sideris, p. 96-97).

The urban geographer Jennifer Robinson proposes a methodology of comparing cities as "thinking with elsewhere" (2016, p. 25), where the authoritative voice disappears and "conversations [are] opened up among the many subjects of urban theoretical endeavor in cities around the world" (p. 26). This is exactly what is happening in the way that the city comparisons are organized. UH always asks what can be learned through thinking about Los Angeles through a thinking with Tokyo or Mexico City, as well as the reverse question of what can be thought about

Tokyo via a thinking with Los Angeles or Mexico City. This is a dialogic process and subsequently is a process that can facilitate learning, where the relationships between two cities (or two disciplines, or two people) generates knowledge processes through comparative conversation.

The following diagram represents this dialogic and relational approach to comparative, or contrastive urbanism.
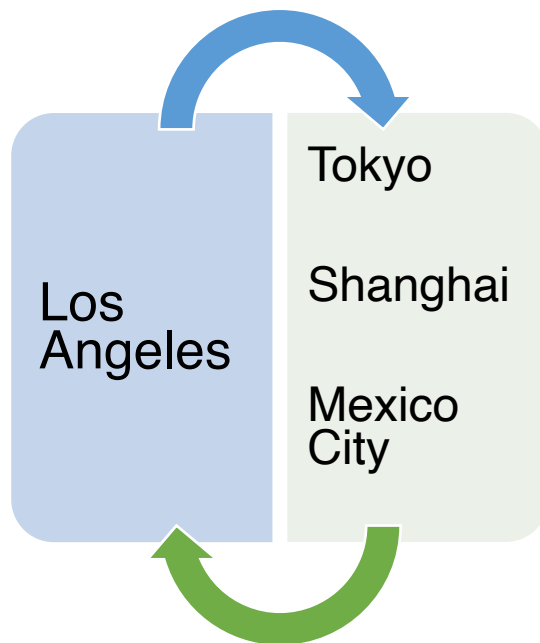
Theorizing Comparative Urbanism in UHI

Within this diagram, however, there is an important limitation, in the majority of cases and work produced, the comparative element was always a binary unit: LA + Shanghai or Mexico City or Tokyo, rather than thinking of all four cities in a multi-dimensional relation. This could be partially because there were very few people who traveled and studied multiple of the cities—myself, a few of the faculty—but it represents an important area for expanding the study of UHI. As it is set up,

the emphasis is still too strongly on Los Angeles, eliding other important and generative relationships, for instance what is the relationship between Shanghai and Mexico City (or Tijuana, where there is a commercial and manufacturing connection), or delving deeper into Tokyo's complicated relationship with China during its colonial empire and WWII (from 1937 onward Shanghai was a city occupied by the Japanese, see Ballard, 2005).

These other binaries, or multi-sited urban inquiries, could have the potential to produce what the anthropologist Michael M.J. Fischer (2018) calls "anthropology *in the meantime*" that can fill in gaps between registers of study (scientific, aesthetic, technological) not by "suturing" them but instead through "reflective play with the gaps as opportunistic heterotopia for realizing worlds differently, constructing alternative futures" (p. 3). The next step of UHI—which will never really happen now, as the international aspect of the program is gone—would be to create something like this, which could think through the way that these cities entangle with each other, but perhaps that is the job of those graduates who will carry it on.

7.4 Overview of International Fieldwork

Student Fieldwork in Shanghai alleyways

The fieldwork experience is an important part of the overall learning experience in UHI and occurs during the spring break (March) of each year. By this point students have known each other since the previous August and have spent three courses together, working on earlier projects and research proposals, so fieldwork and travel is a chance to deepen that experience. It is the signature moment of the UHI pedagogy, and notably what attracts the majority of students for joining the program.

Travel studios are a subgenre of studio pedagogy that combine traditional hallmarks of the studio process—problem-based, hands-on, an immersive, iterative process of critique, and orientated around a final project (Boling, 2016; Cennamo, 2016)—with elements of short-term study abroad. Defined as academic travel consisting of one to eight weeks in length, short term study abroad is often used to give students quickly gained global experience in complex real-world situations (Niendorf & Alberts, 2017; Mills et al., 2012). Sarah Pink and Jennie Morgan (2013) propose strategies to leverage the short-term intensity for research engagements that probe into specific places and theoretical questions, while at the same time opening up space for a researcher's reflection. Students are provided both practical and ethical training before leaving (Taranth, 2019); in fact, the whole year is a kind of practice up to this point, where different elements form working on teams to working with methods, are supposed to come together through collective travel to another city.

On the logistics end, preparation for the trip begins almost at the beginning of the program year, with collaborations beginning to be built with partners in the other city and more practical logistics like hotel bookings and plane bookings. This picks up speed in the winter quarter, as the trip sits at the end of finals week. Here, fieldwork projects are finalized, and itineraries are created.

In program years four, five, and six this involved collaborations with students in each other city, tied to local universities. This was to create a more two-way exchange of information and allow students to work on projects with peers, though this also made the process of organizing the fieldwork more complicated, as it required the harmonization of two groups of students. In the month or so before the trip, in one of my program roles, I would finalize the fieldwork schedule for all the students. This included the formal fieldwork where students were out working in the city, as well as check-in meetings with various faculty, the final project reviews, and various other meetings, including those with local organizations, and group dinners sponsored by the program.

The fieldwork experience is packed and intense, with a short amount of days to begin to learn the city, gather data, and also produce prototype versions of projects that can be workshopped with faculty and presented for public review. This is added with social elements of living in the same location, either a communal hotel or hostel, and working at a 24/7 level of intensity. While in the field, the entire group kept in touch via social messaging services such as Line (Tokyo), WeChat (Shanghai), and WhatsApp (Mexico City), adding a digital layer of communication to each field trip. An account of fieldwork will be presented in narrative form in the next chapter.

The figure on the following page illustrates a typical example of a fieldwork schedule, this one taken from the Shanghai II trip in 2019. This would be printed in a small guidebook that had information on sites in the city and contact info for the entire group.

UHI 上海: Fieldwork Schedule

	Monday (3/25)	Tuesday (3/26)	Wednesday (3/27)	Thursday (3/28)	Friday (3/29)
	City + Site Overview	*Fieldwork*	*Fieldwork*	*Production*	*Deployment*
Morning (9am) Before 9am Breakfast and morning Check-in Every day depart from hotel by 9am	Meeting with Tongji Students (9-9:30am) at Tongji: B407 Groups travel together to visit Shanghai Urban Planning Museum (10am-12pm)	Team by team checks-in 8:30-9:00 with YY/JB/MFP; assign faculty team member to group for the day Fieldwork from 9am	Team by team checks-in 8:30-9:00 with YY/JB/MFP; assign faculty for day Fieldwork from 9am	Final Fieldwork	Final Zine Review w/ faculty (9:30 to 11:30 am)
Afternoon	(12pm) Site visit + Fieldwork w/ Faculty Team Member	Fieldwork: Go Out into Shanghai	Fieldwork	Studio: Zine Production	Deployment of zines at fieldsite
Evening	All UHI + Tongji Dinner (7:30 pm)	Studio feedback with faculty at Tongji: 7pm-9pm; Zine production Classroom available until midnight	Studio feedback at Tongji + Desk Crits w/ Faculty (7pm—9 pm); Zine production Classroom available until midnight	Studio: Zine Printing + Assembly (finish by 12am)	Final Dinner (7:30)

Example of Fieldwork Schedule (Shanghai 2019)|

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Overview of Partnership Collaborations

UHI has worked with a variety of collaborators both inside and outside the university, and in both Los Angeles and in the other cities. These range from collaborations with student groups in Shanghai, Tokyo, and Mexico City as a way to develop international partnerships to engaged scholarship projects with partners in Los Angeles. This was part of the process of engaged scholarship and attempting for the projects to not just be academic exercises, abstract and useless in the real world, but rather have value to communities and organizations, but where at the same time this was not public service in the sense that it was not one way, learning and mutual benefit had to be built to create a reciprocal relationship for engagement.

Throughout the years of UHI various types of organizations were partnered with, including the generally academic, for instance university associated research centers, to the community organization built around social justice missions, to artistic oriented organizations that might combine aesthetic practice with their own social mission in the places they inhabit. This latter type of organization was popular, because they inherently already inhabit the combined aesthetic and activist practice that UHI valued and taught.

The below chart illustrates examples of collaborative partners from academic, community, and arts organizational backgrounds:

	Academic	Community/City	Arts
Los Angeles	UCLA Labor Center (2018) USC Neighborhood Academic Initiative-Foshay High School (2019) Million Dollar Hoods Project	Libros Schmibros East L.A Community Corporation Southern California Library From Lot to Spot Multicultural Communities for Mobility Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance	Self-Help Graphics Tierra de la Culebra Art Park Echo Park Film Center Velaslavasay Panorama
Tokyo	Waseda University: Architecture and School of Liberal Studies	Irregular Rhythm Asylum	Port B: Heterotopia Project A3BC: Anarchist Wood Block Collective (2017)
Shanghai	University of Hong Kong, Shanghai Study Centre (2015) Tongji University (2019)	None	None
Mexico City	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa (UAM-C) (2018)	Laboratorio Para la Ciudad	Casa Gallina Productora/Liga Space

UHI Partner Organizations by City

One can see that the majority of community and arts collaborations occurred in Los Angeles, this is mostly due to course structural and time issues, where the engaged scholarship project happens after the return to Los Angeles. There is simply not enough time to build effective partnerships over a week, unless it is pre-developed or very short term. The projects in Tokyo were like this, one offs that were set up through visits during the winter, or in the case of the woodblock collective, a quick workshop. The lack of either type of partnership in Shanghai points out the difficulty of such collaborations, due to the political structure of cities and lack of the type of organizations that may exist in other cities.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a variety of data and information about the UHI gathered from my fieldwork, presenting it as a comprehensive portrait of the program. The next chapter continues presenting information from my fieldwork on UHI, focusing on the media methods for project making that were used by the program, and examining some specific projects. This will be followed by a chapter that gives more directly an in- ethnographic narrative that illustrates one program year in action, animating some of these practices and issues so that they can be seen working together.

Chapter 8 A Compendium of UHI Practices and Project Media

Introduction

A key aspect of UHI is the using of different media forms to produce projects, which corresponds on the integration of materiality, media forms, digital environments and design processes in order to revitalize humanities or social scientific work, and vice versa, through the production of different forms scholarly products. It is also part of the educational process in skilling doctoral students in different approaches to making knowledge, rather than just producing singular monographs or research papers, a move that will be needed in changing "learning and thinking environments" of 21st Century doctoral education (Smith 2016, p. 111).

These are the "UHI methods," signature parts of UHI's pedagogy, and important for how they are talked about, e.g. "this project used "thick mapping" as a method." Conceptually, they act as hybrid methodologies, or perhaps project media or medium is a better way to think about it to limit the confusion with other uses of the word method, for creating work in the city and bring together, at least in theory, strategies and concepts from all the UHI disciplinary inputs. Within the parlance of the program and represent a key pedagogical organization point, as well as selling point of the program. Students want to learn how to use these methods, integrate it into their own work and teaching, and show of their ability to manifest the cutting-edge practices of the *new humanities*, on the academic or professional job market. In turn, the methods can be considered experimental sites designed to bring together multiple disciplinary inputs into synthesis with a particular media form.

For instance, film is not just about teaching narrative filmmaking or documentary filmmaking in the traditional sense, but instead includes strategies from video making from art, sensory forms of field engagement, and multimedia collage. It involves the critical interpretative aspects from the humanities but is also used as a tool for "sensing" the spaces of the city (including buildings, public spaces, and so on), where the individual holding the camera has an embodied role in the process of creating the filmed work. In this way, they are not, at least to start, wholly stable, but prone to iterative evolution and they represent different types of the "making" practices that catalyze new knowledge, as well as present a medium for engaging with a variety of public audiences outside the university.

This chapter after a conceptual framing, gives background on the major of these media (maps, film) used in UHI, and a few other lesser known ones more briefly, while giving examples of projects that used them and educational value.

8.1 Framing: Tensions Between Process and Product

To frame the discussion, I want to open-up a critical conversation on a central tension that exists within UHI, which is that between process and product. By this I mean that there has always been an open debate about what the most important part of the program was: Was it the educational aspects, where the process of educating students is the most important point of emphasis? Or was it about the products that were created, e.g. the research, the designed media artifacts, the engaged scholarship, and so on? These questions existed within the faculty, students, and the grant itself, and would come up in any discussion of pedagogical structure or evaluation. And they came out often within the course of developing and creating these creative media projects, which are a

signature item of UHI pedagogy, and where in theory the process of disciplinary hybridization was supposed to occur.

Of course, this is not really a binary dynamic as the actual result of UHI always vacillate between these poles, where both are happening at once. The end product is *both* the education that is produced *and* the research projects, yet there were always imbalances on what is emphasized and by who, as well as what this means from a particular disciplinary perspective. This perhaps gets to a comment on what disciplines were most valued within UHI at a particular time, or within a particular educational mode, with this value being manifested within what outputs were considered successful, either intentionally or unintentionally, explicitly or implicitly, in the language of how different practices are talked about and how they are evaluated. For instance, is it the final object itself that is most valued and judged? Or is it the process of collaboration that it took to get there that matters more?

There were many projects that were quite successful, particularly on the surface, but had less depth, feeling, and took less risks, than other products that were less successful as a final form, but scraped something of the ineffable that was in the end more compelling. I often wonder about how to produce projects that speak in this way, which have deep meanings in both the process experience, with a sense of experimentation, discovery, and limit-pushing, while at the same time guiding the project to maintain all those things in its final form.

My bias here is clear, as Education is fundamentally process oriented (though it is moving towards a goal of an educated subject, this should be seen an open-ended and lifelong process), whereas design disciplines (architecture) are product oriented, with the studio pedagogy always

pushing "the work" along to this end point.[1] It is doing this to model the real-world situation of design firms, commercial offices, or city government-based projects, where the meta-educational goals where thinking and valuing about process do not matter, yet because it is in the university it still does matter. This can cause a situation where a particular temporal endpoint is privileged, a rushing to get to the finished thing at all costs. In observation, there were countless moments, I felt, where in order to start working on something, short shrift to a deeper and more thought-out pedagogical structure was given. There was also an issue where the product is iterative until the final moment of review, but then is left behind or forgotten. In a more process-oriented situation, products may arrive at different junctures, with final products becoming learning objects of their own to be examined and critically discussed to further the goal of learning. The shortness and rigidity of the academic calendar, particular on the quarter system, does this no favors, highlighting a need for a different time scale in order to build a more process-based, open-ended pedagogy. However, at the same time, there is value into jumping into and getting your hands dirty and learning through a process of doing, as a good Deweyan would, it just has to be balanced with the necessary moments of stoppage for self-reflection and meta-disciplinary inquiry, which was sometimes left on the cutting room floor in the desire to get "good work."

Another tension that exists is between a project being judged as being aesthetic or didactic, and where the emphasis should be. Aesthetic refers to the artistic merit that a particular product has, whether it is designed well, or has a strong visual language or presents the concepts in a compelling manner. Of course, aesthetics can be subjective, tied to the person who is evaluating.

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[1] The term work is its own kind of short-had in *artspeak*, the discourse of terms used to evaluate final products in design and art fields, which gives it a somewhat pretentious connection to labor (deSouza, 2018, p. 262)

On the other hand, in art and design worlds, something being didactic is seen as a kind of lesser work, as it is too literal, clear, or simplistic, trying too hard to be educative, and in that way a bit gauche. However, clarity of concept should be valued, particularly when it something is trying to be taught and communicated

The following diagram tries to conceptualize some of these tensions:
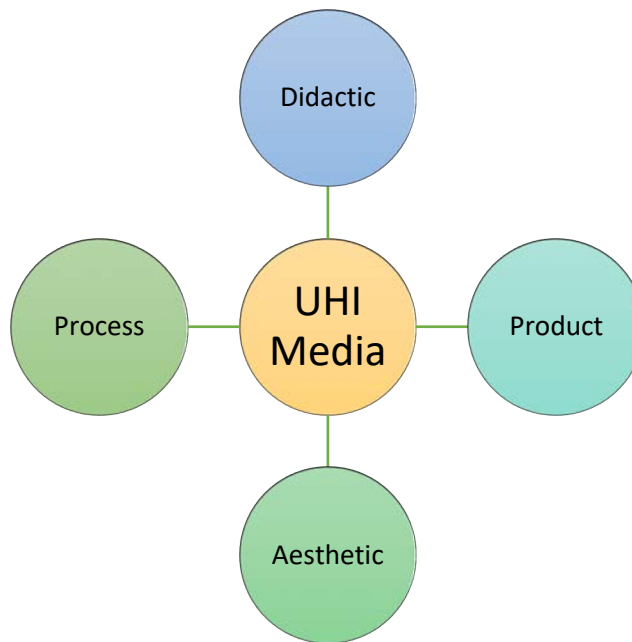
Key tensions within Production of UHI Projects

Still, these are not totalized trends, and rather I am trying to articulate important tendencies that exist and contribute in creating tensions that surround the making and discussing of course projects. The problem that emerges therefore is: How to do that within an interdisciplinary space? Where all of the students are not always on the same page, in terms of working theoretical definitions, conceptual approaches, and modes of practice. The point is that more is going on in

the UHI media forms and projects than the projects themselves, where they are balancing multiple tensions at once, framed around process and product.

8.2 Project Media

The following media constitute the most common forms that UHI projects would take, with projects sometimes using multiple media at once.

Mapping

Intersection Thick Map (2015)

Making maps is one of the signature methods of UHI, because they engage directly with space. There has been some form of mapmaking in every year of UHI and maps often appear in other media projects in some form. The primary mapping approach that exists in UHI is *Thick*

Mapping, a term developed by Presner et al. (2015) in the book *Hyper Cities: Thick Mapping in the Digital Humanities*. Thick Maps refers to multi-layered and open-ended maps that combine multiple scales of analysis by taking into account multiple forms of both macro and micro data and synthesizing them into a new representation. These data include quantitative data, ethnographic data, visual observation, archival sources, and artistic work. Thick maps are more than just piling different layers on top of each other and then representing them, instead they are also supposed to talk back to the viewer in some way, generating new sets of questions and issues which hopefully reveal a new understanding of place.

The above image, *Intersection*, is one example of a thick map coming from the first Shanghai program that presents an analytical reading of an intersection in Shanghai's French Concession. At each corner it presents a layer of history that intersects there, from the film history of the 1930s to creation of the city subway to the post-opening economic development and consumerism, which combine tell a more complex story of the site. This map was created in tandem with a film that discussed the same issues.

The next thick map *More than CHINAtown (*2018) was created during *The LAyer Deeper* project, illustrates the different languages found in signs and businesses within Chinatown. It combines spatial information of the street, with specific details of each business, and examples of signage in native languages, including mandarin (traditional and simplified), Vietnamese, and Thai, showing that the neighborhood is not solely homogenous but consists of waves of different immigrant groups from Asia. On top of that, small cut outs provide portraits of individual shop keepers, providing a micro-view through ethnography and interviews. The end goal is to challenge existing assumptions of what a Chinatown is and who populates it.
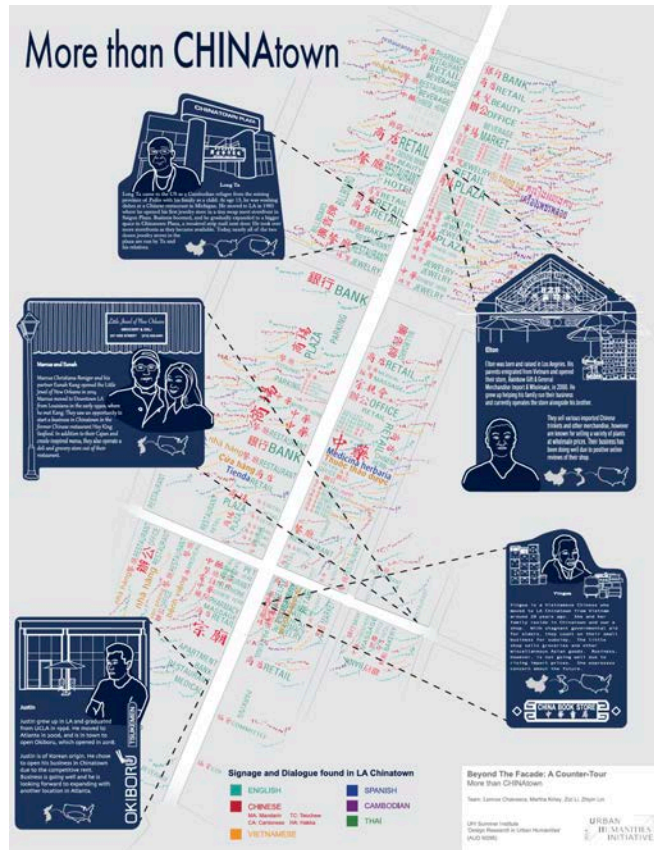
More than CHINAtown (2018)

This map was created on paper and hung up physical for review in a kind of small exhibition, like in the following image:

Thick Map Exhibition (2015)

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Thick maps can come in paper form, like the above, or can be hosted digitally (for instance a digital version of the Chinatown map could be accessed via a website), or as fully digital maps living in platforms such as Google Earth, which operate through the placement of different digital artifacts, such as images or other information like historical maps or embedded videos or sound files within the platform. Users can then navigate the city digitally, examining the different data that students curated within the digital map.

The following provides a top-down overview of one of these maps (the macro level):
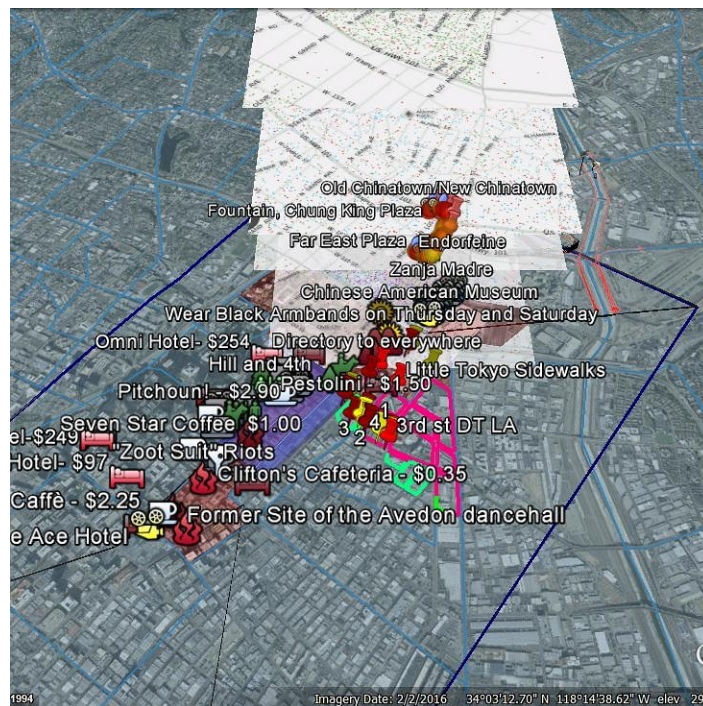
UHI Digital Mapping Project about downtown Los Angeles (2016)

Here, through the zoom function a viewer can burrow down to the micro level, where each entry provides its own level. Students can act as live narrators during presentations, or they can record a voice recording that narrates the different steps of the map. Another strategy for digital mapping involves the insertion of digital 3D objects into the map, as in the following image:

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UHI Digital Mapping Project, William Mead Homes (2016)

This project focused on mapping the William Mead Homes, a downtown Los Angeles adjacent low-income housing site built in the 1940s, which sits against a train yard on three sides, making it heavily inaccessible (and an almost forgotten part of the city). The project investigated lack of resources such as access to quality food and the fact that the homes abutted the L.A. County Men's Central Prison, an issue that contributed to the deficit narrative inherent in the housing. In the digital thick map, students used 3D objects to illustrate these issues in order to shine light on them, for instance using exaggerated prison bars to make this point or layering images of photographs taken of the murals in the neighborhood.

These different strategies allow students to play with perspective and allow them to create a kind of immersion for the viewer, which reflects the student's process of fieldwork and the position that they view the material. This gets to the pedagogical function of mapping, which allows for multiple types of data be organized around an object that allows for both spatial and humanistic forms of representation to intertwine.
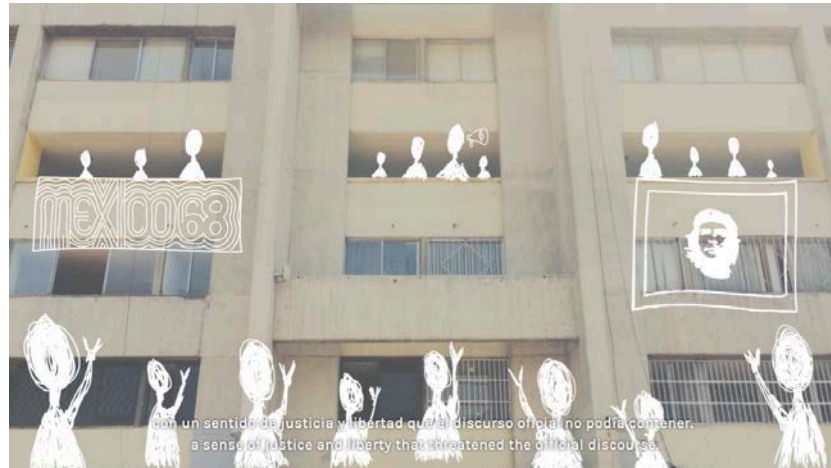
Tlatelolco 50 Years Later (2018)

Urban Humanities filmmaking has developed over the past six years through a series of institutes, courses, and field projects. The following traces out a brief history of how an Urban Humanist sensibility for filmmaking has been developed as a teaching and learning tool. Of key importance, is the 'amateur' nature of the filmmaking process. No students come with an explicit background in film and it is conceived as a medium that is open to all, and a way to think about and explore the city. It models the amateur sensibility that Andy Merrifield (2017) develops, where amateurism is a "yearning to live more broadly and interestingly, to be curious and inquisitive" pushing back against the stultifying regime of expertise (p. 15). This is not to say that expert knowledge does not enter the learning process, but instead the amateur spirit is one that unifies the experience. In turn, film is not just 'film' in its professional and technological sense, but also takes into account various low-fi documentary and self-produced video practices, created with personal digital devices (iPhones, etc.) and non-professional cameras.

Thinking about film and filmmaking starts during the first week of the summer institute and usually encompasses the first student group project, as it is a challenge that brings student

working groups together. Students spend a day looking at and discussing in seminar the history of city films. Students discuss different ways that Los Angeles has been represented and how that interacts or differs from their own sense of reality of the city.

This conceptual knowledge is soon put into practice through a two-day filmmaking workshop with a working filmmaker, which focuses on the basics of being in the city with a camera. In this case the cameras that are used are basic digital cameras with a filming function and student's phone. The method focuses on thinking about using the camera lens as a tool for investigating the city, framing and capturing different aspects through the lens, to unearth different issues beneath the surface, while at the same time becoming aware of one's own embodied position. In the past, the program has worked with an artist filmmaker, a variety of documentary filmmakers, and a Los Angeles based community film collective, who each provided unique perspectives to the filmmaking process from conceptual methods to technical methods such as editing in Adobe Premiere or Apple's iMovie, to the ethics of field practices and how to observe and think critically about the space. The visiting filmmaker instructors have led the students on a variety of on-campus exercises that focused on using the camera as a way to sense the city and to see it anew. For instance, students might be tasked with making a 1-minute film with six total shots, edited linearly on the phone only using a simple start/stop function within a camera's app. Another exercise might be sitting in one location for 30 minutes and simply observing the space, taking written notes while slowly developing a sense of the place before approaching it with the camera.

This connects to the important concept of *sensory ethnography*, as theorized Sarah Pink (2015) and defined as a form of visual ethnography that rather than purely observational is "a reflexive and experiential process through which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge is produced" (p. 4). From this a key term in Urban Humanities filmmaking is derived:

filmic sensing; that is, again, utilizing the medium of film to sense, interpret, uncover, and engage with the city in new ways.

For instance, in the film *Mist Opportunity* (2017), which examines the social issues heat waves and public space in Los Angeles, the filmmakers pushed an ice block around Echo Park and elicited responses from the public as the block melted.

Mist Opportunity (2017), illustrates the embodied practice of UHI filmmaking

In this image you can see, and viscerally feel, the student in the space, with the physicality of pushing this ice block through the hot afternoon in the crowded park, communicating more than a policy essay or scientific report about the effects of heat on urban bodies.

In terms of film training, faculty and visiting scholars led students to think about different film genres, challenging traditional notions of what, for instance, a documentary film is. Is a documentary something that is purely journalistic, or is it something closer to an art form that reaches for an artistic truth that is closer to narrative fiction, which uses the language of film to

explicate something new about the city? How does a documentary differ from an essay film, say the films of Chris Marker (*San Soleil*, 1983), or something that is observational, like J.P. Sniadecki and Libbie D. Cohn's *People's Park* (2012), which consists of a single, 90-minute, uninterrupted shot of a Sunday afternoon Chengdu's People's Park? These conversations both present models of types of films to follow but also encourage students to think about the process of film as a representational tool, where decisions about shot length, framing, color, sound design, and so on, all contribute to the texture that in turn provides meaning. The goal for the student coming from an academic background is to find ways to translate their knowledge, be it empirical or conceptual, into a visual form that can be communicated to the public in a different way.

The focus on learning the method and process of filmmaking, that is learning to think in a way that is true to the medium, which as one oft-quoted definition from David Lynch describes as "image and sound moving through time," is an important part of the pedagogical process. Trying to think within the media specificity of a particular media type is key and an important learning objective. Disciplinary self-awareness, as well as a general awareness for what the possibility for an academic output that is beyond a research paper, come into play here, with a challenge to think about how to integrate your own knowledge and specialization and communicate it through the confines of a new media.

Pedagogically teaching film or video aligns with observations by Shane Burley (2017) writes about the goal student filmmaking, "The challenge to educators is to then create a perspective in student filmmaking whereby they can analyze a real-world story, create a critical perspective that fleshes out their own values and social theory, and then pieces those elements together into a package that can be understood and experienced by a diverse audience" (p. 148). Burley continues by explaining how film can split the difference between education for artistic

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creation and practical skills that can be used for varied careers. In turn, he draws out the use of narrative as a way to tell stories of particular places, which can serve a critical pedagogic function where film educates the student but can also produce critical knowledge in the "service of larger social goals" that can then educate others (p. 177).

Film, video, or other media such as TV programs can also be a way to research and speculate on alternative urban futures, proposing "an alternative to academic narratives able to disseminate knowledge beyond the closed-off world of peer review" (Leclair-Paquet, 2014). For instance, the opening image to this section comes from the film *Tlatelolco, 50 Years Later* (2018), where students learned about the complicated history of the housing development in Mexico City, working with a UHI graduate from an earlier year who wrote her dissertation on the way that the 1968 student massacre there has been memorialized. They spent three days filming in the area, speaking to members of the public to learn more of the history, stories they then animated as a superimposed layer over the contemporary footage they shot, making a film that communicated the layered reverberations of history and memory and how they are still traced upon the present moment.

Collection of UHI Printed Publications

UHI has utilized a variety of different forms of small printed objects, which serve to collect textual and visual materials (small essays, images, maps, other), but also function as an object that can be reasonably mass produced (with print runs of 100 or 500) for distribution. These include zines, guidebooks for tours, and other small paper materials, such as fold out maps, and *fotonovelas*, a kind of activist graphic novel format theorized as a pedagogical tool for social justice in Latinx communities (Hidalgo, 2015). Generally, these are created with a DIY spirit, drawing from literature on zine-making that comes out of punk rock and other indie fandom scenes (Thomas, 2009). During the second Shanghai year, zines become a central method, which included a workshop with the L.A. Zine festival, who showed different ways that artists have created low-budget zines out of basic materials, but that can take on imaginative forms.

For instance, in the image below, the zine was created in Shanghai and was a project about the residents of an old neighborhood that was nearby the main tourist site of the Bund.

Shanghai, Encounters Between the Bund\Nanjing Road (2019)

Students investigated the invisible borders between tourist site and living site and how residents of the neighborhoods navigated those borders, for example they learned that residents could only fly kites in the Bund park from 6 to 8 am. In the zine students include a map of the area and interviews with residents, as well as illustrations of the neighborhood. More imaginatively, the zine contained instructions to be folded out and transformed into a kite that could be flown at the Bund Park. This was partially to highly one theme of the year, which was the public distribution of these zines in the actual spaces and places they were created, which was then documented through photos and a short video.

Other printed matter includes guidebooks for certain sites where a bigger project was created, for instance this map of a community art park called Tierra del Culebra in the neighborhood of Highland Park, where students worked with park organizers to reimagine the space in a new way. The small printed guidebook and map communicated their vision.
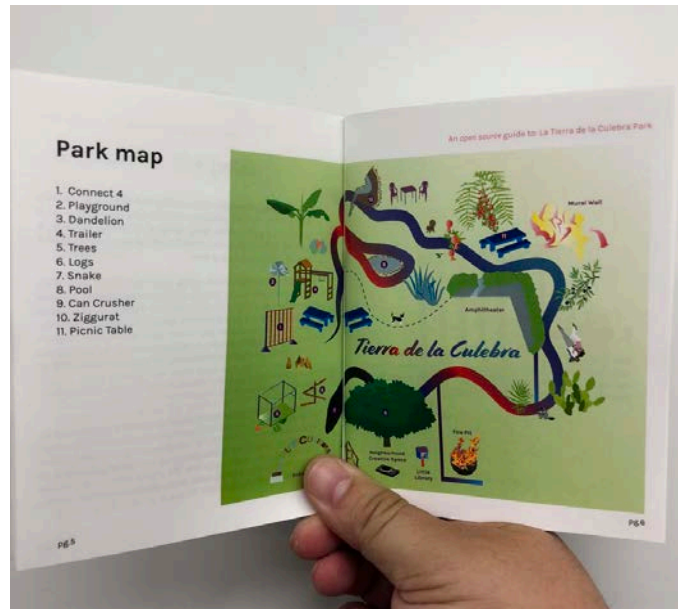
Park Map Tierra del Culebra (2018)

The Ghost Guides, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, are perhaps the best example of this type of printed project, as they act as individual projects that also had a collected printed dimension through a larger volume.

Pedagogically, the value of these printed projects is that they allow students to think about public presentation in a hands-on and self-produced way. In turn, they leave the student with a tangible object that can be carried into other situations, showcasing their work in a way that is not just a research paper, but that combines different mediums.

Los Angeles Freeway Park Model (2014)

Finding ways to adapt the building practices of architecture, for instance models and other designed objects, to humanist research concerns has been another methodological strategy of UHI and has manifested in a number of projects. In the in the above image, which was the culminating project of the 2014 Summer Institute, students were asked to create an imaginary model for a park that would cover a freeway that intersects downtown L.A. from the La Placita area, with each of the six student groups given a one block section to fill in with a variety of imagined museums, park spaces, and other ideas such as housing.

More successful are a series of engaged scholarship projects that used design practices to prototype objects that could be used by local organizations. This included *La Caja Magica* (2016), a "magic box" for literacy that held supplies for reading events for the Latinx communities of East Los Angeles, through the Boyle Heights based organization Libros Schmibros (see Becerra et al., 2016). Another project built a series of children's benches to be used for film showings by the

Echo Park Film Center's mobile screening vehicle (an augmented VW Bus that could set screenings on sidewalks and other neighborhood spaces). Finally, in the image below, students built a series of life size wooden cut-outs of bicyclers, in order to highlight cycling safety in communities of color, which are disproportionate to affluent and white neighborhoods, who use bikes as a primary form of transportation:

Bicycle Cut-Outs (2016)

These cut-outs were installed at a day of the dead festival near L.A. City Hall in November 2016, where the public could write on them with chalk important messages.

Peatañinos (2016)

Another kind of engaged installation were public events like the Peatañinos project in Mexico City, where students working with the Mexico City government urban think tank Laboratorio Para la Ciudad closed off a street in the working-class neighborhood of Doctores, to create a street for children's safe play. Here, the students curated a place-based public installation, providing play materials and other objects such as benches for the parents to sit on. A secondary goal of this was to collect data and opinions from the residents (both children and parents) in how to envision better street safety.
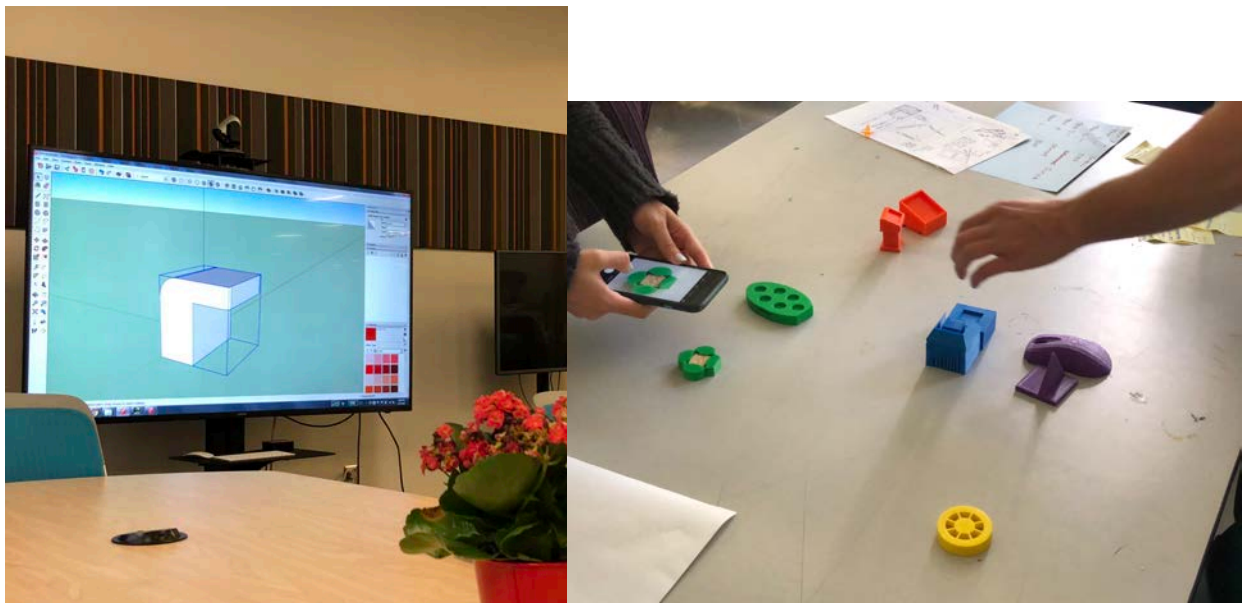
3D Objects Rendering and Final form for A LAyer Deeper (2018)

Finally, UHI has experimented with 3D object production, using resources from the UCLA library. This was most notably deployed in The LAyer Deeper project, where 3D objects representing the projects were deployed at sites on the tour and hosted laser-cut QR codes for accessing the multi-media elements.

Other Digital Projects
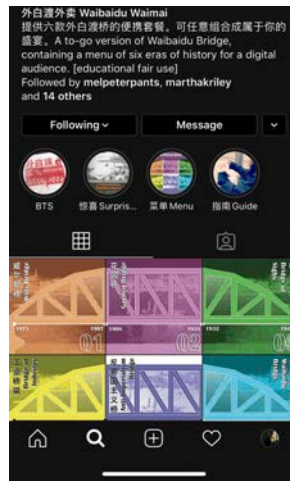
Waibaidu Wamai Instagram Account (2019)

There have been a number of projects hosted on digital media platforms, such as a series

of digital essays that included maps and films on the ESRI platform Storymaps:

Esri Storymaps

Storymaps Project (2017)

Students have also created different types of websites and used popular media platforms like

Instagram to showcase work. Instagram allows for both image and text, as well as geolocation and

cross-tagging to other accounts via hashtags, making it a flexible and free platform for use in urban

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projects and with urban wayfinding. The Instagram project above collected historical images of a famous bridge in Shanghai and allowed visitors to access that archive.

Sound Projects
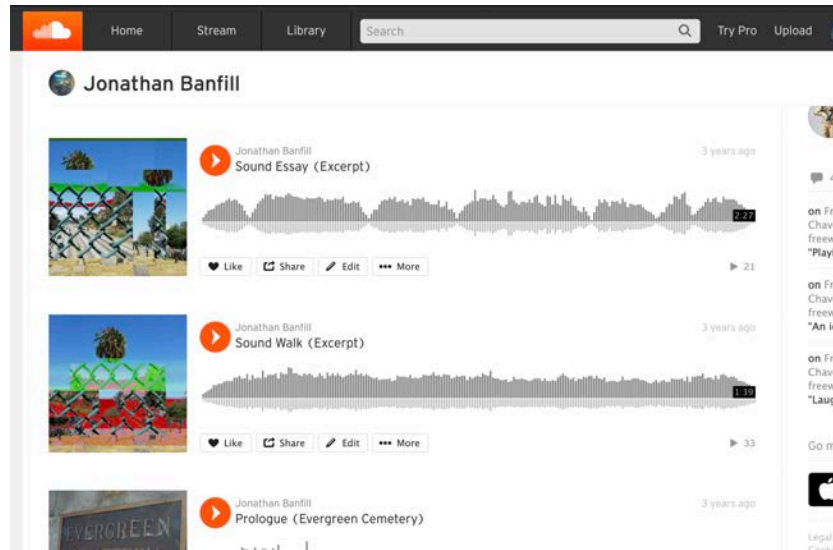
Sound Essay Files, From Brooklyn Ave to Cesar Chavez (2016)

Another burgeoning methodological area of UHI is using sound, collected through audio recordings in the field. Soundscapes have become parts of other projects, like film, but also their own medium, in the form of sound essays, sound archives of particular places, or podcasts. The above image comes from a UHI adjacent sound project that I completed that recorded sounds on a stretch of Cesar Chavez Avenue in Boyle Heights in May 2016, which corresponded with historical locations from when the street was named Brooklyn avenue and was a neighborhood of Jewish immigrants, among others. There is still a historical, non-functioning synagogue called the Breed Street Shul in Boyle Heights with a small museum and the famous West L.A. Jewish Deli

Canters originated there. Now the neighborhood is primarily Mexican and the "sound essays"—which curate both contemporary sounds from the walk and historical sources such as oral history recordings and other media.

More recently, Barrios & Wong (2020) have theorized the sound archive from an urban humanities perspective, analyzing a number of sound projects done with UHI alumni in downtown Los Angeles, where alumni read a series of descriptive poetic prose pieces that were written by the London based artist Laura Oldfield Ford on a visit to L.A. in the actual locations she described recreating it both in word and auditory record, and with high school students in South L.A., who recorded sounds from their own neighborhood as part of an exhibition/performance that contrasted a reading of the Charles Dickens novel *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) with the events of the 1992 L.A. uprising (both involve public urban disturbances). In summer of 2020, the UHI Alumni Salon group also hosted an online exhibition of podcasts and soundscapes created by alumni about the city during the pandemic.

Conclusion: An Archive of UHI Projects

The following table and chart provide a comprehensive data overview on all the UHI projects produced that were created between 2013-2019, including course projects and final projects, showcasing the variety of products and amount of public facing work. The first table gives the total amount of projects undertaken over the six years by medium.

Category	Total
Films	73
Maps (Digital)	19
Maps (Paper)	26
Zines/Pamphlet Publications	7
Ghost Guides	8
Digital Publication (Website Project)	14
Paper Guidebooks	3
Counter-Tours (performance)	1
Counter-Tours (physical)	1
Street Installations	3
Engaged Scholarship Projects	14
Prototypes/Object Making	3
3D Objects	12
Sound Projects	2
Exhibitions	2
Final Publications (Books/Magazines)	6

UHI Projects by Media

One can see that films were most prevalent, followed by maps and then different types of publications. Some of this has to do with consistency from year to year, where certain media like mapping became signature media to make projects with, meaning that it was expected that UHI would involve mapping, film, and some other final engaged scholarship project. In this way, certain media forms became codified as part of UHI, and once this happened, it was harder for others to break through. These were also the media that the original faculty members had experience with and had written about, so there became a kind of codified curriculum of the projects, as well as an already existing body of projects that could be referred to. I know that when I was teaching UHI in later years, I would refer to the precedent projects as ideals to copy, which created a kind of pedagogical ease but also, I think, limited the horizon of discovery—as a kind of isomorphism to the ideal form of a "thick map," for instance, took hold.

As experimentation transitioned into something closer to replication there was an internal shift that moves from a sense of discovery to a maintaining of a certain status quo. This seems to be part of the life of any institution or program. In my sense, within UHI, this shift happened sometime in year four (corresponding with a personnel change), where it became harder to integrate new methodologies that were outside the canon of what already existed (as it had, in a sense, became Platonized), and projects became a variation on existing forms rather than the discovery of new ones. There was a little bit of experimentation in my final year of teaching with the zine projects, but it was done in a way that was not fully unpacked for analysis, as well as was repeated a second time. This speaks to the fact that it is important to repeat these methods, as each time something new is learned and strategies for teaching and implementation develop. Sometimes new mediums were abandoned too quickly, if they did not work the first time, or did not fit the status quo view of what UHI did. Other times, specific projects were too hard to replicate a second

time because they took too much time or the skills of certain students. For instance, the table long model was never repeated because it relied too heavily on the already existing skills of architects, creating a disciplinary imbalance that created tensions in the interdisciplinary collaboration. Or with some of the engaged scholarship projects, the timescale of the project was too dependent on outside factors that did not align with the timing of an academic quarter.

These are some of the tensions that came up about using such different media projects as a key piece of the curriculum. When a project had pre-thought out how each disciplinary area can be integrated effectively, it worked best, as every discipline could feel they had an essential contribution to give. When one discipline took too much control, or another discipline felt their contribution was not valued, it caused the project to tank, though sometimes these projects could still look good visually—such is the trick of a good visual designer who can smooth over other faults[2]—but had incoherent or messy meanings underneath (or even worse: shallow meanings).

In these projects, aesthetics took over any deeper meanings, hiding them in something pretty or design-y, modes that could catch the praise of certain evaluators. Work will need to be done in future programs to keep projects fresh, at both the process and product end, so that students can feel invested in all parts of the project and have ownership of it. As mentioned above, sometimes the space to do this was not fully scaffolded in an open-ended and reflective way, as the move to create the product superseded the types of philosophical conversations that would allow for it to be a truly meta-disciplinary methodological space. Because of this, when projects were unbalanced or lacked a clear justification from all disciplinary perspectives, not to mention political commitments (an issue that became more pressing as well as divisive as UHI progress),

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[2] There was a pithy axiom that was sometimes said in UHI: "No more pretty maps."

students would feel disillusioned and alienated by the process of making work they were weren't invested in and the products would suffer. This is a chicken-egg issue, that any instructor must be aware of.

Though to be fair, in the inverse other projects could be tanked for being too didactic and literal, missing any aesthetic imagination, or sense of visual languages, pressing their educative or political point too strongly (without any poetic grace). This could become an issue, particularly with academics whose training is more data oriented and empirical, when urged to reach for something that was beyond just the articulation of a theory, data point, or conclusion. All this is to say that what constituted a "just right" in any UHI project, was often a careful navigation and balance of multi-dimensional requirements and tensions, to create a kind of X factor, some sort of magic (alchemy) that is able to take a project to another level. This next level is where something is said both aesthetically and critically, while at the same time teaching the viewer in a way that is not always obvious.

What I would look for in a project when evaluating it, more than anything else, was that it had a sense of investment by the makers, a deep sense of feeling, where their experience was grafted into the work in some sort of visceral, non-academic way. These projects were always better, and made the media more than a film, or a map, or an academic paper—though at the same time they were rare, one outside evaluator who attended some UHI reviews and who I interviewed, mentioned that they felt that many of the projects "lacked feeling." My sense is that this feeling, or here I will suggest that it is something that is not exactly humanities knowledge itself, but rather a broad urban-focused humanism, or in a phrase that the lead instructor and I came up with in during the sixth year summer institute, it needed to contain a "human moment," where through

following a lived, human story closely with care and feeling, a sense of the larger issue could be encountered.

Still, project making served a vital role in the curriculum—becoming vessels for learning, thinking, and making—because they gave a kind of third-space location and coherence to the academic year, a media place or object where different knowledge can come together. Therefore, in designing such projects in the future, I suggest that it important to understand these meta- and epistemological dimensions of each medium and integrate the teaching of how to think through mediums and how different disciplines use and practice them will be essential. But at the same time finding ways to scaffold and cultivate students to find constructive and imaginative ways to ingrain human moments and their sense of feelings into the project, is essential, otherwise it doesn't really mean anything.

UHI Projects 2013-2019	Tokyo (2013-2014)	Shanghai (2014-2015)	Mexico City (2015-2016)	Tokyo (2016-2017)	Mexico City (2017-2018)	Shanghai (2018-2019)
Summer Institute Projects	5 films 5 Google Earth 3D Narrative Maps	6 films in La Placita 6 maps in La Placita (paper) Collective Model	6 films in La Placita 6 maps in La Placita (paper) 6 EngagedDigital Platform	6 films about Sawtelle 6 Google Earth maps of DTLA 6 Performative Counter Tours	West Adams Storymaps 8 Films 8 Digital Maps Final story map	6 films of DTLA 6 maps of DTLA 12 3D Objects *A LAyer Deeper* Counter Tour
Fall + Winter	7 speculative films with Eric Cazdyn (Workshop)	8 films about Shanghai from L.A. • The House on Xinhua Lu	11 collaboratively written research papers Tijuana self-portraits	Japanese Story Box • 8 historical collage projects Ghost Stories of Little Tokyo (Performance)	8 Films about Borders and Commons in L.A. Tijuana Collages and Essays	Exhibition: Installation of Urban Forms of Los Angeles
Travel Project	*Shin-Shinjuku*: • Underutilized UnderBuilt • Sounds of Shinjuku • Akichi Undercommons • Resilient Kabuki-cho • Ecologies Uncertainties Futures • A Manual for Intimate Publics • Urban Nostalgia • Shinjuku Misguidance	*Nao-Shanghai* films: • Paris, Shanghai • Intersection • Shanghai Skyline • Shanghai Becoming • Shanghai Unscripted • The Cattle Slaughter's Daughter • Invisible Lujiazui • 1933: The Shanghai Projector	3 CDMX Partnerships Projects: • Liga/Productura: Urban Poesis • Laboratorio: Peataninos • Casa Gallina: Sense Question	*Tokyo Olympics Ghost Guides* • Ghosts of Emptiness • Ikku's Adventures along the Olympido • Ghosts of Ryogoku • The Kodamanist • Tsukiji in Motion • Tokyo Station 2020 • Land Liquification • The Community on Display • Re-Cycle Stool	*Urban Commons and Borders in Mexico City* Projects • Sueño de una tarde libre en la Alameda Central • Dancing Peripheries • Gentegrama • Better Left Said • Dos Méxicos a través de Regina • Tlatelolco, 50 years later	*Shanghai Un/Expected* Zines and Vlogs • This is not a screen • Shanghai Jazz • Shikutopia • Dashijie • Waibaidu Waimai • The Waitan Kite

Spring Studio	*Shin-Shinjuku: New Tokyo, Again* exhibition (Multi-media)	*Nao-Shanghai film festival* + Thick Diagrams accompanying each film	*FourEngaged Scholarship Projects* • Rasquache Urbanism (community green space) • Caja Magica (Magic Literacy Box) • Fotonovela (housing advocacy) • BH En Moviemiento (cycling advocacy)	Sanctuary Commons • KIWA (film) • Mist Opportunity (film) • Delirious Doors (Film) • EPFC Benches (prototype kit) • Southern California Library (Prototype Kit) • Library Project	Five Engaged Scholarship Projects on Commons • Storyboarding Ms. Burton • Re-envisioning Bail Reform • Tierra del Culebra • Oaxacalifornia • Rage Relief	2059 Touristic Guidebooks to downtown Los Angeles • Shifting Social Senses • The Evergreen Initiative • After the Revolution How Seattle was Claimed
Book Projects	*Shin-Shinjuku: New Tokyo, Again* book	*Urban China 72: Urban Humanities Producing Knowledge of the Megacity*	UHI in the Borderlands BOOM California 6.3: Urban Humanity	Final *Ghost Guides to Tokyo 2020* Tokyo Exhibition	*Cities in Common*	None (*beautiful burnout*)

All UHI Projects 2013-2019

Interlude: Two UHI Projects

This interlude consists of two short essays about UHI projects. These are projects that I was involved in from the inside, with direct experience in their conceptualization and making. They provide windows into this process and serve as illustrative guides that outline the process of creating projects from an urban humanities perspective. They both utilized the medium of film, but in slightly different ways, bridging documentary, essay film, art film, and memory pieces. The projects came from the second year of the program (Shanghai), with the first essay discussing a project from the summer institute in conversation with a film from final spring studio, constructed from fieldwork in Shanghai, and the second essay discussing a film created during the fall seminar.

Essay 1: Encountering the City through Film: Films from Los Angeles and Shanghai

Stills from *1933: The Shanghai Projector (2015)* from *Urban China 72*

The following essay presents two UHI film projects that say something about the transnational interconnections between Los Angeles and Shanghai and are exemplary of the types of films that the program gives room to create. [1] *en-Counter Chinatown* (2014) and *1933: The Shanghai Projector* (2015) both examine local sites where history, memories, and patterns of transnational colonization and migration collide. In turn, they also serve as texts that equally provide a meta-accounting of the variety of learning encounters that were gained through the process of investigation of urban sites and creation of meaning via film. I use the two films to examine how transdisciplinary pedagogy can produce a multi-leveled investigation of the diverse and transnational epistemologies that are present in global cities like Los Angeles and Shanghai.

Film 1: en-Counter Chinatown (2014)

An image of flowing water fills a screen, behind it the soundtrack of a temple bell rings in

a consistent rhythm. Soon after, an establishing shot juxtaposes the Los Angeles city skyline

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[1] A much longer version of this essay that engages more directly with themes of religion, belief, and their intersections with the urban locations of the films appears as "Encounters with Belief in the Global City," in Jun & Collin (2019).

with the roof of Chinatown's Thien Hau Temple, which serves immigrants from China, Vietnam, and Thailand. In consecutive scenes, the camera explores the temple and the people worshipping there, before heading out into the surrounding Chinatown neighborhood. A narrative is subtly built through subtitles, asking questions and making observations to create a poetic meditation on the temple's relationship with the city around it. Themes of migration, the transnational flow of cultural identity, and how old belief systems are established in new places emerge, building a moving portrait of a neighborhood in flux—between generations, traditions, forces of gentrification—within the global city.

Located between La Placita and the hills leading up to Chavez Ravine and Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles, Chinatown is an area with a long history. Chinese have been migrating to Los Angeles since the 1850s and the early history of Chinese people is marred by the 1871 Chinese Massacre, one of the bloodiest race riots in American history where a crowd of Angelenos lynched 18 Chinese men (Zesch, 2008). This occurred in and around the original location of Chinatown, much closer to La Placita, which was demolished in the 1930s to make way for Union Station. This "New Chinatown" was the brainchild of Christine Sterling, the civic leader who also re-made Olvera street into a model tourist zone of Mexican nostalgia, 'cleaning up' a dilapidated and dangerous part of the city. Centered around the orientalist movie sets of China City and New Chinatown, to bring in tourists via restaurants and curio shops, the new Chinatown was also able to seed a new sense of community growth (Gow, 2010).

Jan C. Lin (2008) gives a more comprehensive history of the area after this point, detailing periods of growth and decline that occurred, along with successive waves of immigration and

investment, first from southern China and then other parts of Asia, including Vietnam. Additionally, Lin details the growth of Chinese migration in the suburbs of the San Gabriel Valley through the 1970s and 1980s, before moving on to his main focus on the recent period of gentrification that Chinatown is currently undergoing. Lin writes, "In global cities like Los Angeles, ethnic sites are linked to strategies attracting global investment capital and immigrant labor" (p. 113). Starting in the 1990s, Los Angeles' Chinatown has started a redevelopment process that has led to gentrification, via such processes as art galleries taking over empty storefronts and other forms of development. The introduction of Metro's Gold Line in 2003, and more recently, the larger re-settlement and investment into Los Angeles' downtown during the past decade, have only heightened the process of change, with the construction of new apartment blocks aimed at young professionals. This has led to fears of displacement by residents, which echo those in the rest of the city (Chow, 2017). Thus, LA's Chinatown, in its current incarnation, is a place where changes are underway that cause tensions between generations of residents.

This is the environment that the UHI team, which consisted of two urban planners, two English scholars, and a sociologist, that created *en-Counter Chinatown* walked into.[2]

The film opens with water flowing across the screen, from bottom to top, and perhaps a shot of the nearby Los Angeles River. This choice immediately provides a strong framing of water representing flows (of people, ideas, time) and change (between generations, of the urban fabric). The looped sound of the temple bell and adjacent crowd noises plays in the background slowly, setting the temporal rhythm of the film. Shots are long, held in time, moving consecutively from the water to a Chinatown plaza to residents walking under a dragon arch to a panoramic shot of the Los Angeles skyline that pans down to the roof of the temple. To this point, nearly a minute

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[2] *en-Counter Chinatown* (6 minutes)*:* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aREUa4lhxTs&t=130s

has passed, with only these images and the sounds setting the scene. As Crisman (2015) writes, the film "asks us to slow down, to read between the lines. Is there another Chinatown present, one that we looked past before?" (p. 26).

The camera enters the temple. The narration begins, appearing only as subtitles at the bottom of the screen, taking on number of voices, asking questions, making statements, talking directly to the audience, and sometimes almost seeming to fall into observations of its own subjective experience. It represents another layer of meaning communicated visually, working both in harmony with, and against, the images on the screen. At certain points Chinese characters also appear, written in calligraphic script, untranslated as if to reiterate the point that we are dealing with multilingual spaces.

Dedicated to Mazu, the Daoist goddess of the sea and the patron saint of sailors, the Thien Hau temple, according to Michael Tiger (ND), was founded by members of the Chinese diaspora who had first come from Fujian, before moving south to Vietnam, and then were refugees (e.g. boat people) following the war. They arrived in Los Angeles and created the temple where "the feeling of love and gratitude is felt the instant one enters." In this way, Mazu symbolically references the transnational nature of the lived experience of the temple's members, who have taken their traditions to new places and built their identity, and the physical space of the temple building, in a new city.

The film continues, with a framed image of a member lighting incense at the altar. The narration asks: "To what extent is the temple the social anchor of the community?" This sociological question at first leads the viewer to an academic reading of the space, continuing with a line of questions that a new visitor might ask, such as: "What is the ethnic composition of the temple?" "What percentage are Vietnamese?" and "What kind of sociocultural communities

emerge from the religious site?" These questions are framed by shots of worship and other environmental shots of temple space, like golden decorations or lanterns swaying in the wind, and they lead the viewer to think about the way complex social relations that have emerged from this place of worship. The viewer sees elderly members holding incense sticks, they read about the temple's origins and key moments of festival (new moon, full moon), but it is still slightly removed, anthropological and documentarian.

Here though, something interesting happens. The narration begins to change tone, talking back to the audience. It first mentions that the temple has "open doors," before turning around and asking, "Where do you come from?" The audience is made aware that they are viewing this space as an outsider but also one who is welcome inside, another travel from the world at large, who can also inhabit this space. Classifications of demographics no longer matter because, "we don't think in those terms." Instead of being just a Chinese place or a Vietnamese place, the temple becomes, through its filmic presentation, a site that is open to all who are diasporic, and in fact this is the way that the temple is the social anchor of the community.

Where is Chinatown? (Film Still)

This moment is at the halfway point of the film, and the second half leaves the temple, venturing out into Chinatown, looking into a number of connected spaces and sites. Images of residents mix with multilingual signage, shots of elders sitting in the park or dancing, workers cooking food, other landmarks in a changing Chinatown, while more questions are asked, and other sounds enter the soundtrack. Yet, the sound of the bell remains consistent, blending in with these other sounds, continuing as the beating heart of the neighborhood. The final series of questions asked, read, "Who is Chinatown? How far can we go? How far can we see?" before ending on another shot of water, providing a return to the poetic evocation of the transnational flow of migration that the temple helps to anchor, while still allowing it to move forward into the future of a rapidly changing neighborhood.

Film 2: 1933: The Shanghai Projector (2015)

In Shanghai; Neon-lit skyscrapers are intercut with shots of the interior of a strange, labyrinth-like art-deco building. The camera observes the architecture of this building, stopping in different hallways, access ramps, and central atriums. A narration in the Shanghainese language tells the story of the building, now called 1933: Old Millfun and a prominent tourist landmark in the city for events, fashion shoots, and selfie-productions, from its origins as a British-built slaughterhouse in the colonial 1930s through its change to a factory during the Communist Era to its present incarnation as an event space and creative cultural hub in global, post-socialist Shanghai. Each use presents a layer of a differing identity of the city. Towards the end, the narration discusses how traditional beliefs of Chinese geomancy intersected with the foreign, modernist construction of 1933, telling how the souls of the deceased cattle would be released to the 'Western Heaven'

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through the geometric placement of the main windows, as if to say that in present-day

Shanghai old beliefs linger on, transformed into new contexts, just like the building itself.

Built in 1933 by the Shanghai Municipal Council using designs from the UK, a key colonial power in the city, the 1933 Slaughterhouse was to be the most modern and hygienic slaughterhouse in Asia, later becoming a medicine factory during the communist era and then falling into disrepair before being restored in the mid-2000s as part of a trendy urban strategy of turning old iconic industrial buildings into cultural creative parks. The building is a giant concrete edifice made in what has been called a "gothic, art-deco style" (Liau, 2017) and it has an air of mystery surrounding it, located in the middle of a formerly working-class neighborhood north of Shanghai's Bund.

One enters through a dark corridor and finds themselves looking upward to a crisscrossing concrete ramps suspended in the air, seemingly arriving out of an Escher painting, connecting four stories of ramps to a central "core." In the past, these ramps were used to pass cattle between the cattle pens and killing floor, specifically designed for maximum efficiency. Now they connect a series of dramatic vantage points that are occupied all day by tourists and fashion shoots, rapidly taking selfies. In the building itself there are scattered restaurants and design-studio offices, as well as a wedding photography business, which fits with the primary function of the top floor, which is an open, glass-floored event space for weddings and other luxury events.

From this initial description the complexity of this space is evident. It is architecturally striking but any surface level investigation unlocks its bloody history, which is incongruous with its present function, and in many ways the building seems haunted by its past, with a coldness emanating from the walls that renders the fashion spectacle phantasmagoric and sinister.

Inside 1933 (Film Still)

The film articulates the contradictory layers that exist here, trying to articulate through these layers the way that 1933, as a building, "collect[s] different fragments of the city. . . processing them into something new just at it had processed meat" (Banfill, Lin, Robertson, p. 66). To do this they drew from techniques from Chinese documentary film, for instance the concept of *xianchang*, which is the embracing of realistic encounter, where "rather than controlled direction, the unpredictable spontaneity of reality guides your inquiry" engaging with the reality of the space through wandering, talking to people, capturing felt senses via writing, and documenting other images (p. 66). There were no set storyboards planned, but rather the goal was to gather as much material as possible about different issues that emerged from research and that were then made more complex through fieldwork.

1933: The Shanghai Projector is made from the fragments encountered in the building itself, worked through a process of an unfolding meaning-making over the next ten weeks[3]. The

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[3] *1933: The Shanghai Projector* (17 minutes). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqrh9R2HkDE&t=818s

film is framed as an encounter with the building and its history, imagined through a "projection system," like an old film projector that could collect and curate these different histories and nostalgias together, superimposing and layering them to place moments of contradiction in conversation. Shots of ramps montage into the faces of those encountered (a director of a play being performed in an on-site gallery, a young student playing guitar one evening) and then the surrounding city, exploring the buildings relationship to the Shanghai beyond. Linking this together is a narration spoken in the Shanghainese language that was adapted from the building's promotional materials, including descriptions of different architectural elements such as the ramps, pillars, and ventilation systems.

This pamphlet's tone is slightly strange, weaving a mythology drawn from the building's actual history with almost propaganda-like advertising copy for the present incarnation, which replicates a dynamic seen in the city at large that Shanghai has put its bloody 20th Century behind it and is now open to the flow of global capital and culture. The entries provide the narrative structure for the film and one section stands out as the connection to a deeper encounter with religious belief systems in Shanghai.

About two thirds of the way through the film the narration begins to explain the construction process of 1933 and how special concrete was imported from Britain in order to effectively construct special windows for ventilation and air circulation. Meanwhile images of young women preening for the camera in front of these windows plays. The narration continues, explaining how the windows "face west, the direction of the perennial popular wind in Shanghai [providing] metempsychosis and exorcism for the slaughtered animals leading their way to the Western Heaven." What is interesting here is the way that religious belief systems from *Feng Shui* combined with the colonial construction of the building to make some sort of hybrid function that

was attuned to the desires of the colonial enterprise, e.g. food production, as well as the desire to not spiritually pollute the new building. In 2015, this strange mixing of practices, of modernity and traditional belief, becomes part of how the building is packaged and marketed (and mythologized) in the present-day.

The film itself ends on a somewhat ambivalent note, having passed through the above section of the film, itself visually presented as a kind of purifying ritual for the building and city and built from ghostly images of a dramatic performance piece that was underway during the visit. The narrator reflects on the natures of cities: about how we understand them and encounter them, imagining possible futures from the fragments of the past, and how these are always contested. The final line concludes: "The memory of the city will be projected into the city of the future," implying that whatever future Shanghai comes will always have to include pieces of its religious past.

Urban Humanities filmmaking is an open method for exploring many issues of the contemporary city, providing ways to encounter and research sites where everyday life is happening. It is pedagogically rich in the way that is open to many situations, developing through a sense of embodied exploration of a site, with topics developing from the ground up. In turn, filmmaking, as it is new to the majority of the students, allows a space for students to transcend their own disciplinary practices. Methods that are interdisciplinary, and through the process of creation transcend their disciplines and thus become transdisciplinary, allow us to be open to new knowledge and new possibilities.

Final Film Poster Diagram for 1933: The Shanghai Project (2015)

Essay 2: Urban Memory and History in Shanghai: The House on Xinhua Lu

Time layers of the Xinhua Road House (Banfill/Comandon)

The house sits off Xinhua Road (新华路), down a small lane, with other old houses on either side, remnants from a different era of Shanghai.[4] In the present, you walk down the lane and come to a gatehouse and a newly built black metal fence. You can see the house through the metal slats, gazing at it across a large yard. Behind, apartment blocks of contemporary Shanghai rise up into the sky, creating the sort of visual intersection of past and present that is so common here. The noise from the surrounding streets can be heard in the distance, but it seems strangely far away, as if the weight of the past 80 years is heavier here, giving the house with a certain silence that speaks its witness of a changing city.

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In March 2015, I stand in the lane pressing my face against the cold metal of the fence and gazing at the house through a small opening between panels. The house, a two-story Spanish style

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[4] A greatly abbreviated version of this essay appears in the UHI book.

mansion built in the mid-1930s, was where my maternal grandmother grew up as part of the city's Chinese elite. After the house was confiscated by the government it took on a variety of functions during the socialist period. Since China opened up in the late 1970s it has continued to change functions along with the growing economy and my family has regularly returned to the house, bearing witness to the ways that it has changed along with the city around it. We do not own it, yet it maintains itself as a central reference point of the city, a way to understand Shanghai and our connection to it.

I am here during the Urban Humanities fieldwork trip to Shanghai. My team has been working on another video project some distance away, but we take a break from our work to visit the house on Xinhua Road. They want to see the house that I have been talking about all year long in person. We arrive at the house in mid-morning. I lead them down the lane, with our cameras in hand in case something interesting happens.

On this early spring day, a still-cool wind is blowing through the city, and I focus my vision through the opening, trying to figure out what the house is now. Since I was last in Shanghai, a few years before, the function of the house has yet again changed, transforming from its then identity as WTO conference center, which had been responsible for restoring the house to its former grandeur, to something else that was less discernable. There was a name of a random state-owned company on the outside of the gate next to the historical preservation plaque, but it was unclear what exactly they did or how friendly they would be. As I gaze through the fence these questions are on my mind. In the distance, at the end of the concrete walkway that runs parallel to the grass lawn that sits between the gate and the house, I see movement: A man is walking along the side of the house.

I raise my hand and bang loudly on the gate to get his attention. The banging breaks the silence and I see the man turn and start walking forward towards the gate.

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During the 2014-2015 Urban Humanities year I created two linked collaborative digital video films about the house on Xinhua Road. The first was created from afar in Los Angeles during the fall term, was made out of archival materials, drawing from both primary sources from my family, including photos and Super 8 film footage of the house, and secondary materials of Shanghai.[5] The second was built out of live footage captured during the experience of returning to the house and the ensuing encounter detailed above. Together they constitute a portrayal of Shanghai's past century, with all of its layered histories, through the lens of a single location. They represent an attempt to express the range of complexities that can manifest in such a single place as a house, as literary scholar Jie Li (2015) argues that a single house can be a "palimpsest of inhabited spaces, material artifacts, and personal narratives that evolved over time," while at the same time universalizing it to comment on the larger city beyond (Li, p. 6).

The films two halves utilize different film-media strategies developed in the Urban Humanities: the archival essay film and the more immediate and embodied filmic sensing. The weaving in my own subjective experience in both films, through family memory and images, as well as direct experience, adds another dimension, where the memory experience of the house, as passed down through the family stories that were used to shape the narrative of the first film, come into tension with the real-time unfolding experience of the second. When combined, the first film's reflection on the past and imagined speculations about the future of Shanghai are grounded, and made complicated by, the difficulty of what is encountered in the present.

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[5] The project brief was to make a film about a specific location in Shanghai from afar using only archival video footage.

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What do we actually know historically about the house? Through researching for the films and combining it with knowledge of living family members memories, I constructed a brief history. The house was built in 1935 by Zhao Chen and Chen Zhi of The Allied Architects (located on Peking Road close to the Bund), members of the first generation of Chinese architects working in Shanghai, the house was constructed as a two-story Spanish Revival style mansion, itself with a weird parallel to Los Angeles, as Spanish Revival was a popular house style in the 1920s built of an imagined nostalgia for the colonial Spanish period, one can find similar houses across Los Angeles. It utilized green glazed roof tiles, steel doors, steel windows, and cement outer walls. The grounds covered 1500 square meters, with a residential area of 613 square meters.[6]

In the 1930s, Xinhua road was called Amherst Avenue. Later, in 1947, it was renamed Fahua Road. In 1965 it gained its current name: Xinhua Road, meaning New China. The area at the time was known as the "Western Suburbs," which the British Sci-Fi author J.G. Ballard (2013), who grew up on Amherst Avenue during the same time and described it in his memoir *Miracles of Life* as being "about eight hundred yards beyond the International Settlement, but within the larger area controlled by the Shanghai police" (p. 4). Each house in the development was built in a different western style, where, as Ballard continues, "the French built Provencal villas and art deco mansions, the Germans Bauhaus white boxes, the English their half-timbered fantasies of golf-club elegance, exercises in a partly bogus nostalgia that I recognized decades later when I visited Beverley Hills" (p.11).

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[6] For more information on early western trained Chinese architects in Shanghai, including more discussion of Zhao and Chen, see Vimalin Rujivacharakul's "Architects as Cultural Heroes" in *Cities in Motion: Interior, Coast, and Diaspora in Transnational China* (2007).

My great-grandfather D.S. Chen moved his family into the house, and they were its first residents. A prominent lawyer of the Republican Era (1912-1949), he had represented striking workers during the May 30th Movement (1925) and had sat as a Chinese representative to the colonial Shanghai Municipal Council. In what might be an apocryphal story, he is also said to have helped change the infamous and semi-mythic "No Dogs, No Chinese" sign at the Bund Park.[7] My grandmother grew up in the house, coming of age in a city occupied by the Japanese after 1937. After the war, she would marry in the yard of the house before leaving for America in 1946, never to return. The rest of the family would follow, settling in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the US.

After 1949 the house was left empty, taken over by the new communist government. In 1959 it ceased to be a private residence and was given to the Changning District Military Sports Commission and made into a gymnasium, falling into a kind of functional disrepair with the former green lawn concreted over into a basketball court. By the 1980s and 1990s it had become a government office and later a Japanese restaurant. During the 2000s it became the WTO conference center, which led to its restoration and historical protection, partaking in a process, where, as Shanghai urban theorist Ying Zhou (2017) argues, old houses in the western districts were "spared developmental destruction, partly because the modernity of their architecture could still accommodate contemporary functions, and largely because of their occupation by old and new elites became prized for their cultural value" (p. 149). This is part of the larger re-appropriation of Shanghai's old houses and other historic buildings happening in the process of re-globalization, where "Shanghai nostalgia has been strategically employed as a futuristic vision among political

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[7] For a full discussion on the contested history of the sign at the Bund Park, please see "Shanghai's 'Dogs and Chinese Not Admitted' Sign: Legend, History and Contemporary Symbol" by Bickers & Wasserstrom (1995).

leaders to turn this globalizing city into a leading commercial hub of East Asia" (Lagerkvist, p. 11).

Film Still from The House on Xinhua Road Part I

On the screen, a grainy image of a house appears, pulled from an indeterminate time in the past. It flickers with the pulsing light of Super 8 film stock. Two men stand in the foreground. A basketball hoop can be seen rising from the concrete ground to the left of the screen. The house looks old and used, almost a ruin. Previously, the viewer has been oriented with images and sounds of Shanghai: a shot of the city skyline, a map of the pre-1949 city, sound tracked by an old Chinese language jazz song. These shots, utilizing somewhat cliched signifiers of Shanghai, serve to familiarize and open a portal to the past, where period photographs are contrasted with the original architectural plans, contrasted with specific images of the features from the plans: a latticed window, the lion head fountain in the central court. A narrative appears via subtitle, telling the

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story of the family who lived here: they moved here in 1935, by 1949 they were gone, "Scattering memories and vacating the house's future."

In the film, the family are almost like ghosts, and their images bleed into those of the Super 8 footage, which moves through an emptied-out version of the house. The time contrast here is some 30 years, and ocean of time and trouble in Shanghai's history, with the footage taken after China's awakening from The Cultural Revolution. The film highlights visually this sense of temporal loss and estrangement, the distance from there to here. At this point the narrative voice, taking on something of my own, shifts slightly, no longer looking directly back to recount history but instead taking an investigatory tone, "I seek memories in empty rooms, to reconstruct what may have been. . . looking for connections."

The film then follows some of these connections, moving out into the city beyond, first encountering J.G. Ballard (and his particular take on the mechanized and alienating horrors of modernity, which had their origin in his childhood experience in war-torn Shanghai, later run through the post-war English London suburb of Shepperton), before moving to montages of the city transforming around the house are shown: apartment blocks rise behind the house, urban scenes of old Shanghai's neon lights are combined with the contemporary sci-fi skyline. Finally, in the films dénouement, the images of the family and the house re-appear collaged into the contemporary and future depictions of the city, concluding that the city is "a refuge of memories," where the house and family's history will be ingrained in any possible future of the city.

The family is present in the contemporary city (Banfill/Comandon)

The film is, in the theorization of Annette Kuhn (2010), a cinematic *memory text*, where, "acts of memory [are] performed *with* family photographs and family albums . . . as sites of construction and negotiation." It utilizes "a montage of vignettes, anecdotes, fragments, snapshots and flashes that can generate a feeling of synchrony" within a film, in order to stage a story of the interconnected histories of my family and the house (p. 2). Through film, defined as image and sound moving through time, different layers of history, different types of collected media (both personal and general), can be brought together in a way that both articulates the memory of the past while at the same time is open to thinking about what will become of the house in the future.
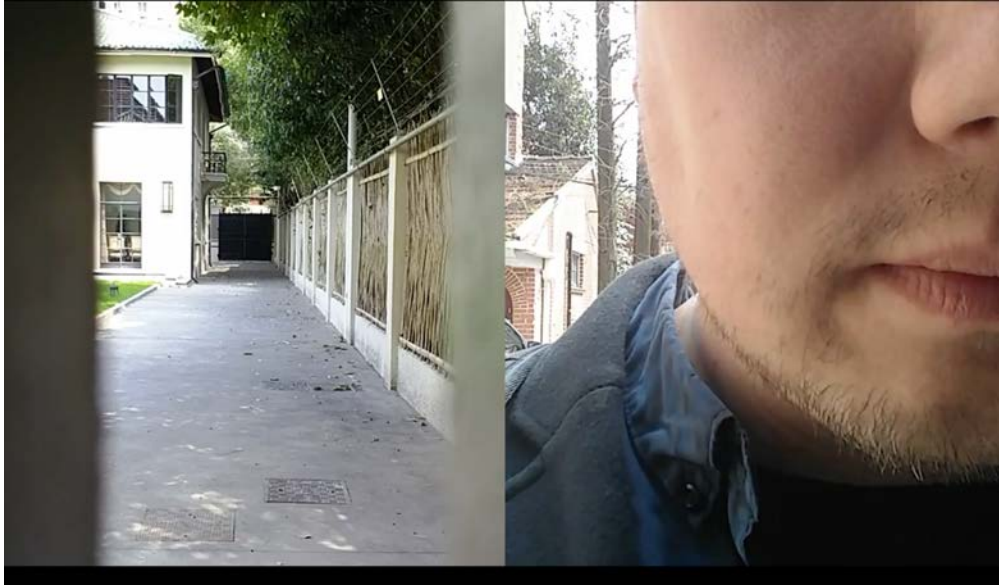
Facing the House (Split-Screen)

The second film starts in the moments before an encounter. The camera follows me walking down the lane to the house. I look around, peer through the fence, and the camera takes my perspective, looking at the house in the distance. The viewer catches the man at the side the house as he begins to walk to the front gate. The shot is sustained, slightly out of focus, moving closer and closer to the foreground. The film then cuts to the moment after the encounter, standing on the front of the gate, on the phone back home describing what has just happened. The encounter itself—the man coming out, me explaining my connection and asking to go in, the refusing and telling me to leave, and slamming the door in my face; over in just thirty seconds—is elided, best left off-screen. Instead, it is the emotional after-effects that become the subject of the film's remaining minutes, as the camera locks onto my face and feels my affect. The film continues with long point of view shots of the house through the fence, the distance now seemingly further. The image comes in and out of focus, as the distance now seems further, the wall between the past and present more solid and dividing. On the soundtrack there is simply wind and breathing. Near the end the camera perspective changes again, to an extreme close-up shot from a camera phone. Using a real-time

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Android camera effect that combines footage from both front and back-facing cameras, the film ends with a series of dual shots (a split-screen, a circular hole placed over my eye) that contrast my view of the house with the reactions on my face. The past is cut-off and inaccessible. I stare at the house and contort my face into different emotions: anger, grief, reflection, ambivalence, acceptance.

Whereas the first film was a carefully curated memory imagining of the past and future, this film is viscerally in the present, captured over no more than twenty embodied minutes. It was not planned and was reliant on the contingency of the moment. Of course, that contingency was informed by the past research and memory work that I had done, which served to already charge the site of the house with a particular set of meanings that could be opened up by a moment of real-time contestation. As an Urban Humanities film, it stands as an example of the practice of filmic sensing where prior research work allows for the development of the strategic tools, both in research and filmmaking, and a sensibility to read and meet moments of unexpected encounter and film it in an embodied way built from direct experience.

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In Shanghai, layers of history, of time and memory, exist everywhere, sometimes in harmony and sometimes in contestation, intersecting across generations of human lives. The two interlocked films that make up *The House on Xinhua Road* represent an attempt to express the range of complexities that can manifest in a single place within a city, while at the same time universalizing the experience in order to communicate something larger about Shanghai. While the first film stakes its claim on the past and future, the second claims the present, and only together can they provide a full portrait of the house. Without the first film, the second makes far less sense, and without the embodied present of the second grounding it, the first film perhaps drifts too deep

into the dangers Shanghai's magnetic pull of nostalgia. The productive friction of the Urban Humanities, and the medium of film which is open-ended enough to approach the same subject with differing strategies that can work in tandem, helped to facilitate the process.

What will become of the house in future? That I cannot say, but I do know that I will return to the house again and again as a reference point and continuing to read Shanghai's constant changes through its windows and walls, perhaps finding new ways to film and present it.

Chapter 9 Becoming Urban Humanists: An Ethnography of a Pedagogical Year

UHI Tokyo Logo Sticker (2016-2017)

"We love UHI, because we actually get to do things. We actually get to put our knowledge out into the world in meaningful, positive ways . . . [and] we get to do it together." -Spoken by a UHI Student at a public review session in April 2017

Introduction

This chapter gives a pedagogical-ethnographic account of a single year of UHI, following a cohort through the different curricular phases of the program, highlighting both in classroom and out of classroom activities. It draws from the 2016-2017 year of UHI that focused on Tokyo, which

represented, for me, a kind of a high point for the entire program, where everything seemed to fit together, and where the collective experiments had codified around a pedagogy that worked. The earlier years were exciting, but there was a sense that the program was still trying out new things, adding elements and augmenting others, still discovering what worked and what it was. While the later years ran into other problems, where certain practices became too codified and exhausted, or where the ideals of the program hit up against the realities of the real-world—by this mean the complicated pressures of the world post-2016 election and its reverberations within academia and the cities that UHI inhabited that came to take hold. The Tokyo year is what I think of when I think of what UHI is, always and forever, reverberating into the future.

Furthermore, this was the year where the in-group community seemed strongest, where there was a palpable sense of intellectual and social togetherness among the group, adding to the level of sociality—a phenomenon that I have great interest in. It is the year of felt togetherness and this sense of togetherness continues to this day with strong connections prevalent among a core group of members from this cohort still producing UHI themed projects on their own. Members of this cohort have also been instrumental in the formation and continued existence of the UHI Alumni Salon (see Chapter 11). This is not to discount similar intense connections between students in other years, but rather to highlight a particular manifestation of longitudinal connection that exists within this cohort that has also served to act as a central hub for a wider cross-year UHI network.

Finally, this was the year that I think I was most present as a participant observer in a way that fit my belief and excitement with Urban Humanities. It was the year where I was most balanced between having an agentive and creative role on the building of the role, working closely with faculty members, while at the same time developing a close and equitable relationship with

my fellow graduate student urban humanists. In other words, it was the year when my position was able to most effectively navigate the vertical and horizontal elements of fieldwork. It was the year when I was most invested, and therefore paying attention to everything in an aware and awake way, and this was an energy that I took with me into the initial proposal of this project. It was where I felt that the students were as excited about the pedagogy as I was, where the pedagogical horizon seemed endless.

In the following two years, which were my "official" fieldwork work years, the balance felt off for reasons that included taking on more of a vertical role as a teacher, removing me somewhat from the organic fray of the students. This was partially to fill the absence of other administrative and faculty roles who were no longer present, which caused a loss in the effective multi-level collaboration between different positional roles (faculty, TAs, students). In other words, I became more like management than a peer, and this was a position that I was less comfortable in because in a way it was more precarious—I was representing larger faculty decisions, and having to defend them, yet I also did not have the full influence to make decisions. At the same time, there was a marked shift, due in part to the wider political issues that I allude to above, which made the classroom space more politically contested, a contestation that I often found myself trying to mediate and often times unsuccessfully, trying to either build the sense of intellectual community and possibility that seemed present in other years (or lamenting why it should be there when it was not), and this slowly led to some disillusionment.

The following chapter will address some of these issues using direct student data, giving voice to both positive and negative findings from the student's perspective. However, with this chapter I want to focus on the positives, to give the reader a taste of what UHI was like, how it fit together, how it acted in its time. The Tokyo year appears in my memory-eye as a kind of ideal,

perhaps nostalgically so, but one that I want to resurrect in prose because it is also most representative of the positive pedagogical story that I am trying to tell through this research. So, I hold it up to view. In other ways, though, it is also representative of things that happened every year, in some form or another, and I don't want to give this impression that this year was better by significant degree but rather in smaller nuances and differences.

Chapter Framing

In this dissertation, I have been interested in moments of educational encounter and becoming, where through the educational process of different students inhabiting interdisciplinary spaces together and encountering each other's ideas and the world, new senses of identity within the university emerge. Earlier I have called this process *interdisciplinary togetherness*, theorizing it through the process of *learning*, *thinking* and *making*. Within each of the six years of UHI there were countless moments like this, with each cohort experiencing their own version, with different contexts and intensities. And these moments are illustrative of something rare in higher education, at least in my experience, and that is the point where our education becomes more than just individual, instead becoming something collective and meaningful. In an era of uncertainty and competition in higher education, the "doing things together that have a positive effect on the world," which the student from the above quote articulates, resonates as something particularly vital and rare.

There is also a key point about knowledge that exists embedded within the student's statement. It seems that the student posits that only in this situation is the knowledge that they have learned, the knowledge of a university education, is "put out into the world" and made into a material form that has a meaning that is more than just an academic paper or architectural sketch.

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As Urban Humanities is founded on a kind of projective praxis, it is very much concerned with finding ways to deploy created knowledge into the city in a positive way, while at the same time being self-reflexive about the ethical issues of such deployment. My pedagogical argument has been that the process creates a kind of *becoming*, where students take on, at least for a time, a collective identity as an Urban Humanist. But how does this happen? I argue that it is through a curated sequence of pedagogical events that bring the community together and which are then catalyzed through the act of making projects together. The aftereffects of this community, its sense of belonging and identity, may then only last for a short time afterward the year of participation, but perhaps it may also have a longer-term aftereffect, or afterlife, for those who carry it on to future work. This is where we will go after this chapter. But for this chapter, we follow a path through the 2016-2017 year, though we start in the middle of things at the review where the framing student quote came from, before then backtracking to follow the course of the year up to that point.

Throughout, I have three goals with the text: (1) to give narrative to the experiential aspects of what UHI was, to give a sense of it in action (2) highlight pedagogical practices and how they fit together across the curricular time-scale, and (3) give insight into a process of becoming an urban humanist for students, through the combination of intellectual/academic activities and social ones. It is written from my perspective as participant teaching assistant, who was present through the entire year, and shows the teaching and organizational labor involved from my end, again as I have theorized as kind of in-between position between full faculty and student. The point is to highlight all the small and large things that go into pedagogy, where making sure that things run and are organized—that the computers *work*, that the lunch arrives *on time*, that the space is cleaned up after as to not piss off the library staff—is just as, if not more, important as the content.

Not to mention the affective attention and care that is needed to foster cohort identity, belonging, and becoming, from the outside, where there is an art to managing this sort of classroom intersubjectivity.

Education means to *lead others into something*, as Ingold (2018) argues, fellow humans into some deeper sense of knowing and being, and this takes conscious curation on the part of an entire teaching team, across all levels, with the end result being that an intellectual working community is formed that can collaborate on deep and meaningful ideas together. This is even more important within interdisciplinary pedagogical spaces. This chapter gives one version of that story, which repeated some five times, and it is in my narrative voice as an ethnographer inside the thing, as well as outside it with a perspective on how subtle differences in years changed meanings and end-outcomes, the tenor and atmosphere of the whole educational endeavor.

On this note, through footnotes, I try to give some comparative perspective to other program years, as each had slightly different issues at play, their own highs and lows that deserve their own accounts, articles, or representations. However, the goal of this extra textual layer is to impart some larger pedagogical wisdom and advice for future best practices through comparison.

9.1 Opening Scene: UHI Review, April 2017

UHI Review, April 2017 (Photo: UHI)

We start in the middle of things, towards the end of the curricular year, at the event where the framing quote was spoken. The 2016-2017 UHI cohort has just returned from Tokyo and are in a two-hour long studio-review session of projects that had been created on the trip and pushed into final form since the return. The review takes place in a double-height review space in UCLA's robin's egg blue walled Perloff Hall, where review exhibition space is at the basement level, but the gallery extends to buildings first floor where it is open to the main hallway, meaning the public, primarily other architecture students at this hour, can peer in from above. There are a UHI students and faculty, a mix of faculty guests from around campus, and visiting students from previous years of UHI. The air is festive, with students setting up projects around the gallery space earlier in the

morning, preparing for the 11 a.m. start. A table of catered snacks and coffee has been set out in the hallway outside. Rows of chairs have been set up near the first project for reviewers. A phone on a tripod is prepared to livestream the event.

Flash back a few weeks to Tokyo: In Tokyo, the UHI group had spent a week exploring the city, wandering the city from Ginza to Shinjuku and beyond, collecting diverse types of data (historical, spatial, visual, ethnographic), and creating projects in small collaborative teams. The projects investigated urban sites that will be affected by the upcoming 2020 Olympics, documenting the impending urban changes. After returning to Los Angeles, the students crafted counter-guide book pamphlets, in the form of a self-printed anarchist zine, to eventually be distributed to visitors at Olympic sites, as well as fashioned multimedia presentations to present to their work to the public.

These presentations utilize maps, film, digital platforms, and material construction, such as models and physical installations, and are examples of the type of scholarship that Urban Humanities is trying to innovate: scholarly rigorous and built from an engaged experience with the city, hybrid in practice using a range of methods, approaches, and skills, experimenting with different forms of production and representation. They are also always created from a rich process of collaboration.

The exhibition unfolds in typical studio review fashion, utilizing the key pedagogical practice of architecture and the design arts, but undertaken by a group that includes both architects and non-architects. Each group, though still a bit jet lagged and caught between the two cities, presents their work for about ten minutes followed by comments and questions by the panel of faculty reviewers. The audience moves around the room, engaging with each piece of work.

Different comments and analysis are spoken into the room. The projects are measured and evaluated, praise and critique are given.

From *Ghosts of Emptiness* (Imperial Garden)

On one wall, a colorful painting of Tokyo's Imperial Garden hangs, divided into three panels inspired by traditional Japanese woodblock prints; while a student reads a literary story detailing the characters moving through the scene. On another, a video projector displays alternating images of an oceanside park with piles of trash from an adjacent landfill, a meditation on the incoming influx of trash that will come with megaevents; a small green stool plucked from a Tokyo recycle shop and carried over the ocean, stands in front of the screen as a ready-made.

Against a third wall, high wooden panels with laser-cut images and QR codes for an augmented reality phone app stand, ready for audience phones to scan them. A fourth project shows hundreds of black and white photographs captured in all parts of Tokyo Station, showing commuters, passersby, restaurants, infrastructure.

Tokyo Station Scenes

And in a back corner, a paper mâché forest has been installed along with a flowerbed of pinwheels, recreating an intervention from a park where a population of homeless is facing displacement, as Tokyo tries to 'clean-up' in preparation for the Olympics.
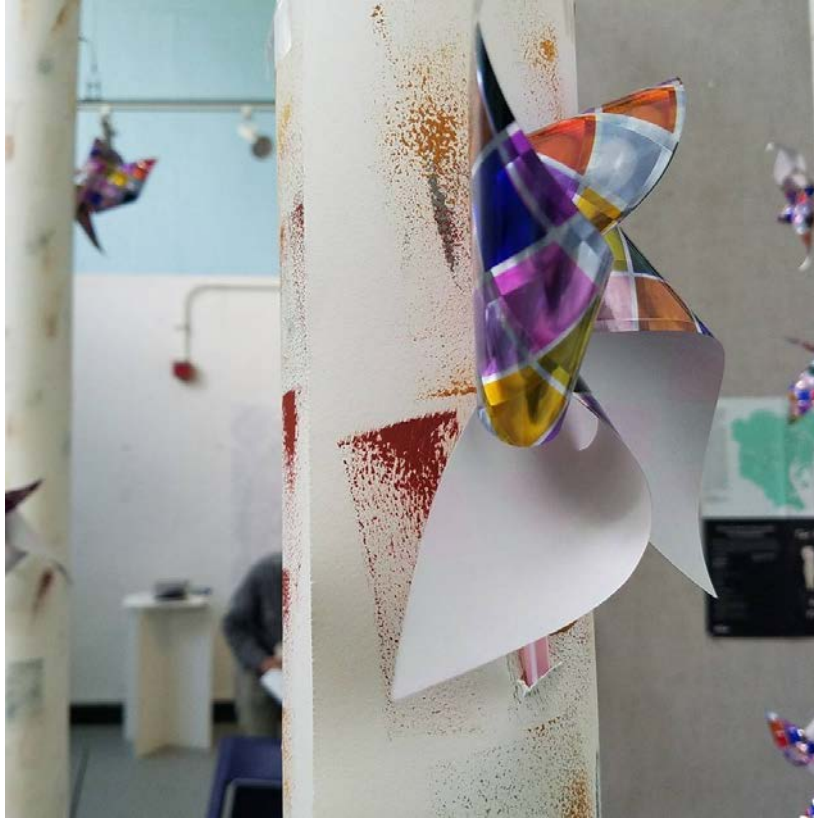
A flowerbed of Pinwheels

In total, there are nine projects. Each finds a unique way to express the experience of the city and the research problematic that helped generate it, through a made object. In turn, each project finds a different method for combining the individual member's disciplinary knowledge and skills, as well as their personal interests and commitments, to create something entirely new, something more than any individual could create alone.

By this point in the year, the students have been working together for nearly nine months, starting the previous summer with an intensive course centered on methodological explorations of Los Angeles, and followed by a series of linked courses that prepared for the trip to Tokyo. They have already completed other projects and worked in different combinations over this time and a powerful sense of community has been built; even stronger now having traveled together. After

the review, they will continue through the spring term finishing a final LA-based capstone scholarly engagement project that will conclude the year.

After all the projects have been presented, the conversation has turned to a more collective reflection on the recent weeks. The lead professor is moderating the discussion, zooming in on different topics such as the representational strategies presented in the work, the ethics of transnational fieldwork, and difficulties of teamwork. The conversation goes on for some time, moving through these different topics, but at the end settles on interrogating why the work was meaningful.

At first the students are quiet, perhaps still stuck in-between places, having not wholly processed the experience. People attempt to come up with articulations of what was meaningful to them. One discusses the quality of the research that they did, from pre-research to archive to fieldwork, and how the final product opened-up some areas for their future research. A second is excited about the activist connections they made and the possibility that the project will start the process of achieving something sustainable. A third explains how the collaboration with their peers the most important part was. A fourth how they were intrigued by the way the presentations took on a performative dimension and want to explore this more. Each of these answers is right in its own way and speak to various issues that have come up during the different years of the program, but each also individually fails on its own at getting to the comprehensive beating heart of what makes Urban Humanities tick.

It is here that the student from the opening quote speaks.

The words cause an intervention in the discourse of the room, changing the tenor of the conversation and taking the class one step closer to creating a collective meaning together, through reflection. Their words unified and granted consilience to the different strands floating about, in

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some ways simplifying, but also pulling out and highlighting what is important. This was a moment of reification, where the process of transforming experience into meaning occurs within a community and becomes something tangible, where what has been learned collectively takes shape. It was also a moment where the identity of the group, which had been growing and building over the course of an academic year, took on another shape, where the *becoming* that had been happening was catalyzed in a moment of collective meaning making. I mark this moment as when the group identity of being something called an urban humanist fully comes into view, built up from the experiences of the last months, threaded together into something substantial.

The next sections skip back to the beginning of the year, telling its story, to connect back up with this point.

9.2 Summer

Before

The year starts weeks before students arrive in the classroom. This is a transition period between two associate directors of the program, with one having left the month before and the new one coming after the institute has finished. Therefore, as a senior TA having also held the position the year before, I take on additionally planning and teaching roles. Over the summer, I have been working with the lead professor on getting the course ready, we revise the syllabus from the previous year, adding readings and changing projects, and setting up infrastructure such as the living Google document that holds the syllabus and all the links to materials and briefs of the project.

About two weeks before the summer institute starts, I send out a survey to the cohort, asking about their interests, expectations, and skills with different media, as well experiences with interdisciplinary spaces and collaboration (as well as other questions such as what is your favorite city or most recent read book). From these responses I built a profile of each student, each housed on a color-coded index card with student "stats," which I imagine as a kind of Urban Humanist baseball card. These are used to start building project teams, which I do with the other TAs on a table in the office, by collecting trying out different combinations.

This cohort has 25 students, roughly divided between Ph.D. and master's students, but looking at my index cards shows a greater set of individual nuances, which makes the process harder to organize but also makes the group more interesting, not conforming to top-down stereotypes. For instance, an architect may have more humanities experience from their previous education, or a Ph.D. student may have been an architect in a past life. There is always something unexpected and I relish the challenge of creating teams and trying to predict positive dynamics or matching potential synergies that might create surprises. More importantly, this pre-course intelligence helps me get to know the students better, where learning students becomes even more essential within interdisciplinary spaces. The other TAs and I spend an afternoon in August trying to come up with combinations and come up with five teams of five students each, created through a more organic process of trying to match skills and interests.[1]

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[1] Other years, due to different cohort size would have teams of three of four students. In my experience, four students I the ideal number, as three becomes too insular, and five is too many where someone ends up not participating. Four allows for both disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary overlap. It is the magic number.
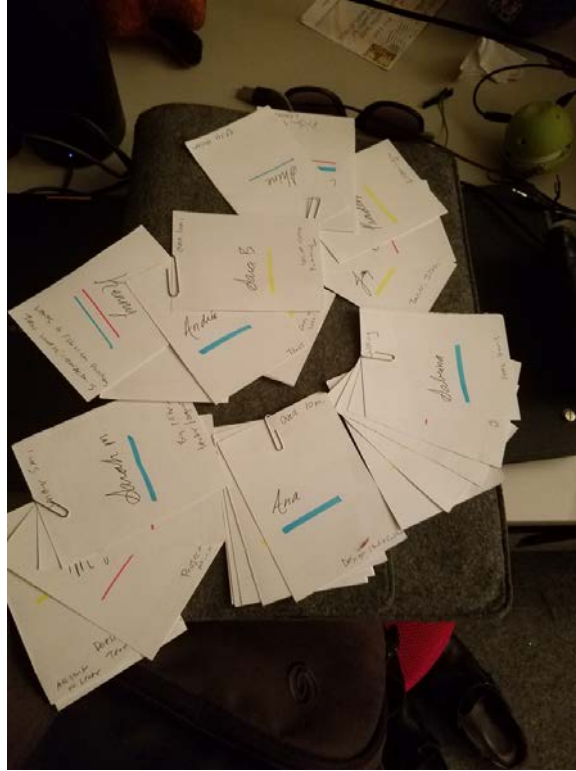
Student "Cards" for Sorting Interdisciplinary Groups

In the week before, I send out the syllabus and first set of readings. I arrange what are called "field notes" for the class, a collective and collaborative Google Doc where everyone can comment with thoughts and contributions. And most importantly, we arrange food for the three weeks of the institute, both lunches and coffee and snacks. Everything is prepared for the following Monday.

Summer Institute

The summer institute starts during the last week of August with students arriving in a second-floor classroom in the Young Research Library, which I see as a neutral interdisciplinary space.[2] The room has movable tables arranged in a semi-circle around a screen. On this morning,

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[2] In the last two years of the program the summer institute was moved into a classroom in the architecture building, which caused something to be lost because it seemed to privilege one disciplines space over another, which had an

various students come in and sit, as the TA I nervously prepare things in the room from snacks to the AV screen. Multiple of the core faculty come in. There is an anxious energy of beginnings and once everyone has arrived the morning starts. Faculty introduce Urban Humanities and give context of the year. Students go around and share their backgrounds and interests. For some, it is their first week in Los Angeles and of graduate school, having just arrived in a strange and unknown city. Others are native Angelenos, or already deep into their programs. But this difference of perspective and experience is valued. Before the class breaks for lunch, the working teams for the summer are revealed. They go to lunch together.

Lunch is important. Food in general is important for UHI, a formalized practice of informal bonding, where lunches, dinners, and other meals becoming ways to stitch together community, as well as to debrief. This starts from day one, with lunch being where the working groups begin to get to know each other, as well as a chance to build rapport with faculty. In this summer institute there is a catered lunch, usually from somewhere pretty good every day.[3] After lunch students return to the classroom and begin the first set of collaborative exercises, in this case mapping their understanding of Los Angeles and comparing spatial understandings of the city. The next few days will continue these exercises, shifting from different media and disciplinary strategies, both individually and in groups. For instance, working teams create a short city-fiction together. These activities are interspersed with seminars where key readings from the program and introduced and discussed. Readings include classic texts on urbanism and humanities (many already weaved into this current work), as well as UHI produced articles and projects. Students speak and write notes

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effect of limiting the leaving of all comfort zones (while increasing the discomfort of other students). Conclusion: space in interdisciplinary efforts matters.

[3] In later years, the years of UHI austerity, these would be cut down, with the net-result being something of the full sense of collegiality lost, as well as the sense it was a special and heightened location. There is something to be said about the repetition of events like this, where the point isn't the food so much as the time spent outside the classroom.

in the Google Doc fieldnotes, leaving a record of their thoughts and conversations, which will be added to throughout the year.

Projects: Filming and Fieldwork in Sawtelle

Each summer institute is divided into three projects, usually film, mapping, and a synthesis project. These are completed over each weekend, with a review showing on the Monday of the next week. For this summer institute, the students create a film project first working with a visiting visual artist from New York, who leads a workshop on embodied filmmaking practice. The artist leads students in a series of exercises that hone their observation skills, before getting them to think about their positionality in holding a (phone) camera, then creating short narrative pieces stitching together consecutive shots.

Embodied and Sensory Filmmaking Exercise

At the end of the week, is the first fieldwork day and students travel to the nearby neighborhood of Sawtelle, which has a historic Japanese American presence dating back to the 1920s, and today is an area filled with trendy Asian restaurants. It is about a 15-minute drive from campus and students spend a Friday afternoon developing projects that spatially investigate the "peripheries" neighborhood.

The students walk the main street of Sawtelle in different groups, sensing out different themes, talking to people in stores or on the street, filming different footage, making decisions about developing the projects in real time. One groups narrows in on migrant laborers from Central America at a construction site for a new luxury apartment, another group notices the prevalent gardening shops, holdovers from when the Japanese Americans were the primary gardeners for the wealth West side Angelenos, and begin to craft a film about gardens, a third group begins to capture the temporal shifts of the area as day turns into night and it becomes crowded with hungry restaurant goers. Throughout the day the students also check in with the artist, who workshops ideas with them. By the end of this Friday, every group has a concept and footage they will continue to build on over the weekend, with a final film of 4-6 minutes to be shown on Monday.

Work continues over the weekend, there is not a stop in the intensity, a point that is always a bit contentious and needs to be navigated by different groups, whose members have different time commitments and expectations of working on the weekend. UHI has an implicit assumption, which I tried to communicate more directly, of almost constant and intense work towards the project, with an almost moral judgement towards those that were not willing to commit the entire time of the three weeks to project. As a TA, I was often trying to help students navigate these commitments and guide them through the best way for all members to contribute, even with different time expectations. The worry is that, for instance, the student with technical skills (e.g.

the architect) would be left editing a film or producing a map visually. This was a tension that was never really resolved, as it is fundamentally based on disciplinary differences of both skill and time. The point here is that based on the pedagogical structure of summer institute—throwing students immediately into the fire of production—these tensions immediately come to a head, and inter-group conflict often appears over the weekend and must be resolved within the team with the pressure of a looming deadline

Here, I want to make a larger point of the need to scaffold expectations and have conversations about (inter)disciplinary timescales, practices, and expectations before they manifest in a 3am blow up on an early Sunday morning! But this is also the nature of the beast, balancing scaffolding with experience, structure with creativity. The films are all completed. They are shown to the faculty and the class, who give thoughts and critiques on Monday morning, before moving on to the content of the second week, which looks more directly at issues of spatial justice and the media method of mapping, this time in downtown Los Angeles, a common site of all UHI years.

Projects: Collaborative Mapping and Downtown Los Angeles Fieldwork

This unit on critical cartography is kicked off through a collective mapping exercise occurs to kick-off: the mapping of the 1871 Chinese Massacre. This exercise challenges students to think about a horribly violent moment in L.A.'s history, where 19 Chinese men were murdered in mob violence, through a spatial recreation of the event using a map that covers the floor of the classroom. Students read historical sources and try to visually and spatially represent it but are also allowed to come up with representational strategies that show wider interconnections (for instance tying it to contemporary police violence) and erasures (representing data that was not included in the

archive). This collective project challenges the students to work as an entire class to tell the story and represent the horror of the event in a way that uses both their minds and bodies, through the physical engagement with map itself.

Chinatown Massacre Mapping Project

Building from this exercise, the next set of fieldwork takes the students to the contemporary site of where the massacre happened, and students begin to build mapping projects. In previous years, paper maps have been the main medium, but this year students experiment with making projects in Google Earth, such as those presented in the previous chapter. The goal here is to figure out how to represent thickness of data and scale, encountered through engagement with real places and people, into a digital medium.

Students return travel to downtown Los Angeles for a full day of fieldwork. The morning is spent in La Placita Olvera, the plaza that is the founding location of the city, before each group heads off in a different direction, covering "zones" surrounding the plaza in each direction. Again,

the task is to find peripheral places or stories, in order to show unexpected, contested, or unknown elements of the urban fabric—those things existing underneath the surface.

UHI Students Meet for Fieldwork at La Placita Olvera, DTLA

The maps are framed as tours, with different stops, which reveal the contested histories. For instance, one project focuses on mapping the lines of government power that crisscross the area, including city, state, federal, and carceral. A second group heads north into an industrial area that sits next to the Los Angeles River and contains the William Mead homes from the previous chapter.
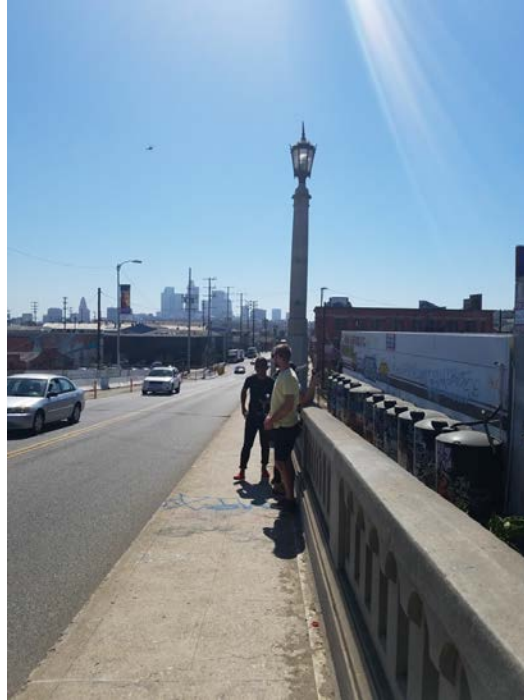
Fieldwork over the N. Main Street Bridge, DTLA in the Distance

A third group, examines gentrification in Chinatown connected to the arrival of hipster or foodie hotspots, centered around Far East Plaza. I spend my time moving between different groups, three in total over the afternoon, and spending about an hour each with them, walking through their chosen field sites and helping them think through their ideas and collect data, for instance taking photos or talking to people that we encounter.

After the day of data collection, students return to UCLA campus and sift through their data the following day. They are then put into Google Earth, after a workshop with geospatial library staff, who helps them add different kinds of material into the digital map. The projects presented the following Friday in an interim state, projected on a big screen in the library common space. They are interim because as they are meant to develop directly into a final project that takes the same topic and tour, but instead staged as a public performance to a wider campus audience.

Final Projects: Performative Counter-Tours

The third week of the course primarily focuses on a synthesis project that brings together themes from the first two weeks and presents them via a new, third medium to a public audience of university and out of university guests. In past years these have been architectural modeling projects and digital websites, but this year the goal is to produce a hybrid-performance that combines the digital tour with a live engagement of the audience. Each group comes up with different strategies for doing this. One group, working in Little Tokyo, takes a series of films that they plan to project on a multi-leveled screen made from different boxes, which would allow for multiple stories to be layered at once visually.

The Far East Plaza group create a digital model version of the Plaza, taking the audience through the restaurants and zooming out to examine global interconnections to the food through transnational migration. This group also creates a paper guidebook, in the form of a restaurant menu that they distribute to the audience, getting the audience to stand up and pretend to wait in line, mirroring the long lines of the restaurants in the Plaza. After each group presents, twenty minutes of public conversation ensues with the audience for each group, giving critical commentary. The reviews end and a big outside lunch occurs one last time, followed by the students returning for a group reflective conversation where the group thinks about where they have been over the summer, how they have come together as a group, and where they are going in the following quarter. This conversation concludes the three weeks of summer institute, at least officially, as students typically continue with some informal gatherings to mark the end. It is an intense opening to the year, but after three weeks there is already a deep sense of familiarity and camaraderie, which will continue into the fall as the university term starts, with many of the key relationships and pedagogical practices in place that will carry through the rest of the year.

Digital Far East Plaza

Stacked Film Boxes, Little Tokyo

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Distributing Menus to the audience

Summer Institute Final Review (2016)

9.3 Learning Tokyo from Los Angeles (Fall and Winter)

Fall Seminar

Fall shifts to a more academic register, with a seminar on Tokyo urban history led by two faculty members, one from architecture and the other from literature, as well as the newly joined associate director. [1] One week a class might be about the history of Tokyo from the Edo period (1603-1868) to WWII, while another might present Japanese woodblock art (*One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* by Hokusai, 1856-59). Other weeks might focus on reading literary works that describe the city, including Kawabata's *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* (1929) and Murakami's (2004), or films such as *Tokyo Story* (1953) by Ozu, which present windows into Tokyo at different time periods. Key thematic elements that will carry throughout the year are also introduced, including the Olympics as a form of city-changing mega-event, looking closely at the 1964 Olympics.

During the last half hour of class there was a weekly collaborative mapping project. On the back wall of the classroom a large map of Tokyo was hung on the wall and at the end of each session there was a mapping assignment to put something from that session onto the map, creating a multi-layered and multi-temporal way to familiarize the class with the city. These included placing woodblock images across the city, mapping the routes of characters in the novels, placing screenshots from films, and other landmarks. Students would place these images on the map and

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[1] This was the last year that the fall seminar was Other city focused, with the last two years shifting to an L.A. centered course on urbanism. Part of this was students desire to learn more about L.A., while other issues included never being able to properly find the right balance for learning the Other city: UHI faculty were non-experts, where guest faculty were "experts" but brought with them other issues (e.g. they knew too much disciplinarily and couldn't teach a view of their expertise that was accessible to all). In the end, a smaller scale, more directed focus on the Other city, framed around a comparative amateur investigation that focused on the dynamic between expected and unexpected understandings of cities was decided upon.

then everyone would have a final conversation about the view of the city from that particular vantage. In later weeks, inter-connections between different time periods and locations would appear, for instance that view of Edo was the site where Ozu's characters traveled, which was now a site of specific group of migrants to the city. This map provided a unique way to learn the city spatially from afar, as well as provide a collective record of where the course has been and the knowledge that has been accrued. In turn, through the act of standing up and placing objects on the map: a map in the back of the classroom, opposite the "normal" power orientation of the classroom, it continued the performative aspects of the course, creating a different way to present and communicate knowledge in the seminar classroom, as there were no presentations or ppts.

Maps of Tokyo, after Week 2

During the second half of the course map began to take on more specific content related to the Olympics of 1964, with students building final projects that investigated the history of individual sporting sites of those games, and other key infrastructure of Tokyo that was built during that time period of rapid economic growth like the subway and rail system. In groups, students

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created paper collage projects, influenced by woodblocks and other traditional media but presented in a new form, which were placed on the final wall map. By the end of the quarter the walls are thick with layers and images of Tokyo; an imagined version of the city exists in the minds of all the students. Later these projects were taken down and placed in a designed wooden box that collected them as kind of magical collected art-object that presented curated remnants of the city.

Student Tokyo Collages

In the winter, the seminar class continued, deepening the conceptual apparatus of "ghosts," used in order to create "ghost guides," a kind of haunted guidebook that will reveal the ghostly or apparitional aspects of place. In Tokyo, the goal will be to produce. this collection of "Ghost Guides," small news printed zines that would tell the urban history of places that would be changed, and possibly erased, by the development unleashed via the coming 2020 Olympics.[1] Inspired equally in parts by Yūrei ghost stories, Derrida's hauntology, heterotopic micro-memory broadcasts of the artist collective Port B, and the experimental architecture of the Metabolist movement, these guides present intertwined narratives using maps, archival images, photographs and interviews from the fieldwork, excerpts of literary sources, and the student's creative imaginations.

The poet Keijiro Suga arrives in Los Angeles from Tokyo, who works with Port B on their Heterotopia project, which investigates sites of difference and lost memory in Tokyo and around the world. To quote Suga-Sensei, these are the "concrete, physical, historical, nameable spots(s) in the urban space. . . where a group (ethnic, immigrant, micro-political) has been deleted from the official history." The project captures these micro-memories, constructing narratives that remember the traces that are left behind, which are presented as a guidebook and short-wave radio recordings that are accessible when in those places.

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[1] It is a bit strange to reflect that as I am writing this in 2020 the Tokyo Olympics are now a "ghost" due to Covid-19.

Poet Keijiro Suga leads a Workshop in Little Tokyo

A ghost is something that wants to be "remembered," a "perceptive effect of the place that voicelessly addresses" you. In Suga's workshop, the class travels to L.A.'s Little Tokyo in preparation for the coming trip to "Big Tokyo," in order to practice this method of ghostly conjuring, finding sites that addressed similar concern.

Here the internment of Japanese Americans in early 1942 became a key "ghost," as well as the Black population who lived in the area during the war when it was called Bronzeville. More contemporarily, students looked at the way this neighborhood is facing the future, where changes due to redevelopment in downtown L.A. have put pressure on its identity as an ethnic enclave that stores Japanese American historical memory. Over a day of fieldwork, each group of students found a site in Little Tokyo and created a ghost story, which was then performed as part of a performative "ghost stories" event at UCLA in late February, where UHI dimmed the lights in the architecture departments exhibition/lecture space, lit it with candles, put the ghost film *Kwaidan* (1964) on in the background screen and served lots of Sake and Sapporo beer, and students performed their stories.

Ghostly Performance by Hideo Furikawa (February, 2017)

As part of this night, the novelist Hideo Furikawa gave a wild performance of the classic ghost

tale "Hoichi the Earless," capping the night with a literary mania that was perhaps the most

affectively intense moment within the entire multi-year UHI experience.

After this performative interlude, the winter seminar ends with four weeks of preparing for

Tokyo. New working teams are assigned. They begin to fashion research proposals for their Tokyo

Ghost Guides. The project brief read as follows:

"For six days, we will search for Tokyo's Olympic ghosts: the purpose is to find,

depict, and seek resolution for urban erasures. . . To do so, we borrow

metaphorically from the supernatural to undertake what Frederic Jameson called

"archaeologies of the future," where past events, current situations, as well as

prospective futures will be present in the work. Each student-team will start with a site where the upcoming Olympics will produce a ghost. Teams will study, document, and speculate about the urban space." (UHI Syllabus "Ghost Guides to Tokyo," Winter 2017)

The project is not just interested in the ghosts of the past, but the ghosts that will come, and research proposals are developed from adjacent sites to 2020 Olympics construction, with background research done on what might potentially be displaced.

Transnational Collaborations

During this time connections were also made with Waseda University, where a partnership was made with two student groups: one a graduate architecture studio (led by a young Japanese architecture professor) and the second a group of undergraduates in the School of International Liberal Studies (SILS) studying an urban studies curriculum (and led by professor of German origin).[2] This partnership was developed to deal with an issue that had come up in previous years, where the direction of study was uni-directional: L.A., or the US studying another place from a position of privilege and power of an elite global university. Working with students from the other city would, in theory, help to even out this collaboration, as it would create a kind of global two-way collaborative circuit built around a kind of university-centered cosmopolitanism. This was a secondary international education element that became a key feature of the last three years of UHI,

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[2] While the architecture studio was primarily Japanese students in composition, SILS was a mix of Japanese, foreign-born Japanese who had returned for college, and international students.

starting with Tokyo, but one that began to have increased value to the program.[3] In the weeks before travel, students link via email and then the LINE app, passing pack and forth research proposals and fieldwork plans. The quarter comes to an end and the fieldwork trip, the culminating event of the academic year, is ready to commence.

9.4 Tokyo

Subway Olympics 2020 Poster

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[3] The first Tokyo collaboration was generally the most successful of the three years, because the students were the most parallel in terms of affluence and cosmopolitanism (e.g. the Japanese architecture studio students were not the stereotypical Japanese student and they had traveled widely, whereas the SILS student were already global elites). Still there were some power asymmetries and cultural misunderstandings, as well as the worry that the local students were being used solely as something like a translator. On the flipside of this, it was sometimes hard to get other students to feel like they were two-way co-collaborators, despite the best efforts of the UHI students, who were already trained in this sort of exchange. These issues were exacerbated in later years, where power asymmetries were stronger (Mexico City), or the education systems and expectations were harder to align (Shanghai). Counterpart instructors also weren't trained in interdisciplinary pedagogy and replicated some power dynamics that UHI was trying to collapse. In the future, students as well as faculty in the other country will need to be trained in the same pedagogy that UHI students were (through deeper multi-sited planning), otherwise miscommunications occur. This will be theorized and discussed in a future paper.

Arrivals

I arrive in Tokyo a few days before the students and faculty, with UHI's associate director. We have meetings at Waseda University to talk with supervising faculty to set up the week's plan, organizing the classroom that will be used as the studio space, get to know a few of the students, and set up other important logistical requirements. The students will stay in a hostel in neighborhood of Asakusa, an old eating and entertainment district where we had read a novel set there in the 1920s.[4] Accommodations had set up months before, but we have to figure out the fastest way to get students to the Waseda campus via multiple subway lines. Faculty members stay at a small Japanese style inn in the same neighborhood, a few blocks away

The students arrive on a Saturday night from Los Angeles, taking the train into Tokyo and arriving in the still cold late March air. I meet them at the subway station, and we walk through the Asakusa neighborhood after dark, winding our way through the small streets to the hostel. I count to make sure everyone has arrived and tell them that we will leave for Waseda at 8:30 am the following morning to meet the Japanese students and kick off the first day of fieldwork, sending a reminder via the group chat messaging group. There is only enough time for students to get settled and to walk out for a quick dinner, before retiring to prepare for the first day.

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[4] Similar accommodation exists in each other UHI city. In Tokyo it is hard to book for such a big group, and this was the only hostel allowed for such size. In Mexico City, UHI has used a local family run hostel. In Shanghai two different hotels were used. It is mostly about price, but also about having some communal spaces for students to gather, such as a breakfast area.

A Sunday Morning in Tokyo: Waseda University and Fieldwork

We travel across the city on a cold rainy Sunday morning, moving underground via subway lines to one of Waseda University's three campuses north of Shinjuku. The faculty arrive via taxicab a few minutes later. This campus sits over the subway station and holds the engineering faculties and architecture, and we lead the students to a studio space where the Waseda students are meeting. In total, there are 15 students from Waseda and two faculty members, and the UHI students quickly find their counterpart team members that they have been communicating with from afar, joining them at a series of big worktables. It is an exciting moment of meeting and the quiet room soon fills with noisy chatter as everyone introduces themselves.

After about 10 minutes of this initial meet and greet the faculty members call attention. Standing together at the front of the room, the Waseda and UHI faculty welcome everyone and give an overview of the plan for the week, discussing the importance of this academic connection and the world that students will do together over the coming days. After the students go around the room and introduce themselves, we discuss some basic logistics for day. At this point, the associate director and I distribute information packets to all the students, which include the fieldwork schedule and important check-ins and contact info, and I talk briefly about the plan for the day: students will workshop their projects with faculty for one hour before going out to their project sites for the day, with each group being accompanied by faculty members who will distribute themselves across the groups. In the early evening, groups will reconvene at an arts space near Shinjuku Station where they will have a workshop in woodblock printing.

The hour of discussion passes, with students reviewing their projects and planning out the day.

Groups Working on Day One of Tokyo

One by one the groups leave the classroom and venture out into the city, using Tokyo's massive metro rail system to spread across to the far corners of the city. The nine groups, with two to three UHI students and one to two Waseda students go to areas such as the Odaiba Island, the Tokyo Station, Yoyogi Park, and the neighborhood of Koenji, which is full of record stores and second-hand shops (and appears prominently in a Murakami novel, adding that much literary cache to the area).

Shotengai Arcade in Musashi Koyama

I follow a group to a southwestern part of the city, to Musashi Koyama, site of an old-style shopping arcade (*shotengai*) and small restaurants that are evocative of the Shōwa era (1926-1989) that encompassed both WWII and the post-war reconstruction and economic boom. For this reason, the area has a certain amount of nostalgia and has been marketed as a possible tourist sight for 2020, where Olympics visitors would be able to travel and get a taste of Old Tokyo, as well as a site to develop accommodations such as small hotels, which would paradoxically disrupt the local character of the area. From L.A., students had uncovered a series of articles on this process and this is why the neighborhood was chosen.

It takes about 45 minutes on the train to arrive. Once we do, I walk with the students through the arcade and surrounding neighborhood. We visit a Buddhist temple. We go inside stores. We visit a park and take notes. Throughout we take pictures. The Japanese students approach people and ask them some questions, taking notes. This first stage of fieldwork is about getting a sense of place, experiencing it and feeling it out, gathering enough information to make sense of later, as well as setting up ideas for follow up visits over the next days. This project will later evolve into an evocative series of postcards sketches, image plus experiential vignette mapped into a layout of locations, which highlight the local character of the neighborhood that might be erased via Olympic development.

After a check-in conversation at a local pub where I help the group to sharpen their ideas, we head back into the center of Tokyo to attend the workshop that will close out the first day of fieldwork.

Woodblock Print in Process: Kodamanist

Irregular Rhythym Asylum is an anarchist bookshop and event space in a building on the third floor of an office building about a fifteen minute walk from Shinjuku. They sell DIY books, punk zines, stickers, buttons, and other activist materials, as well as serve as a kind of club house for other connected groups. A3BC is one of these, which stands for "Anti-War, Anti-Nuclear, and Arts of Block-Pring Collective," and they are leading a workshop in making their woodblocks—hand cut blocks that are covered with ink and printed into activist murals.[5] Working this group, which was connected to UHI through a graduate student from year one of the program who is writing their dissertation about activism in Tokyo, fits a desire in UHI to work with arts and activist

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[5] https://a3bcollective.org/ & https://www.instagram.com/a3bcollective/?hl=en, "Holding a Knife Against a World of Darkness!"

collectives who are advocating for direct change around issues in the city. It also represents a form of traditional making-practices, the Japanese woodblocks that were studied in the fall, but re-cast to fit contemporary issues, using old styles in new ways.

The workshop consists of each group translating something they encountered in the field, an object, an idea, or a concept, into woodblock form, and starting to work on this woodblock as a kind of thematic symbol which will be directly printed as the cover of their Ghost Guide. The first day of the workshop is to learn techniques and sketch out ideas, while a second session on a later day finalizes these designs. Finally, at the end of the week, students come back and pring the final woodblock. The following image shows the final designs for each group.
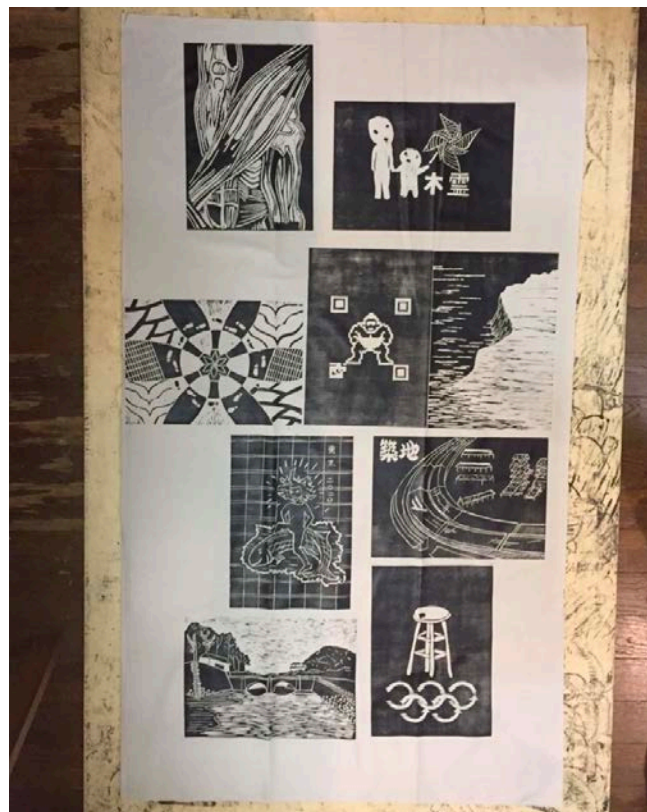
Final Woodblock Designs

With the woodblocks finished, the students are done in their official capacity for the day, able to finally see the city on their own terms, not guided by the fieldwork. At this point, they have been in Tokyo for only a little more than 24-hours, yet they have already engaged with place in an immersive way. They are jet-lagged and a bit exhausted, but the adrenaline of travel and working in such a way—thrown into the fire—allows for a certain sense of purpose and vividness.

Traveling fieldwork itself is a further bonding experience. Up until this point, students had worked on fieldwork projects, like in the summer institute, but never in this 24/7 situation, living and working together, as well as navigating a different city. It is no wonder that the fieldwork trip often fully catalyzes the sense of belonging and togetherness within the group, something that is reflected in data that will appear in the next chapter.

Reflecting on this moment in the fieldwork process, I remember from my own experience the first hours working in a new city as being incredibly vivid and immersive. After all, it is a city that you have been studying from afar for some time, as it is akin to the feeling of being thrown into a kind of deep ocean of sensory experience, where the mind must balance impressions with pre-existing knowledge, re-writing and recreating a sense from the dialectic between the known and unknown, the expected and unexpected. This is the gift and pleasure of an education like UHI's, which leaves the knowledge of just books and classroom talk behind to confront contingency of the city.

Vignette from the Field: Tsukiji Fish Market, Tokyo

On the second day I venture out into the field with another group, taking a ferry from Asakusa on the Sumida River to Tokyo Bay, the primary site of the new 2020 locations. The islands in Tokyo Bay had been invested with real estate during the 1980s boom years, but this had

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been put in hold with the economic recession. The Olympics, as they are often advertised to do, was a way to re-jump start these investments, and the group I am with is investigating this issue. I spend the morning with them, but then circle back into the city later in the afternoon, corresponding with a group via Line who is working in the Tsukiji Fish Market area, where the following vignette is situated:

I am standing with students on the streets of the famous Tsukiji Fish Market at the end of fish-sellers day, as the small shops are beginning to close. For the past two days, these students have been conducting fieldwork in the market, waking up before dawn and staying throughout the day. They are trying to understand how this historic place, existing since the Edo period, is now under threat of being moved, with the current site being replaced by a newly built expressway that will connect the main city to manmade islands in Tokyo Bay. This has been a major infrastructure project provoked by city policy that is being pushed as part of the upcoming 2020 Olympics. The "new" market location would be less accessible, housed in a sterile warehouse, and not tied to the deep history of Tsukiji, which was built along the riverbank among a series of ancient temples. To understand the possible changes, the students have been collecting ethnographic notes, taken pictures and filmed videos, and conducted interviews with local shop owners, workers, and an area historian. They have collected a lot of data, but they are still trying to make sense of it.

I walk with the students for a while and ask questions about what they have found. We take a break and start a group conversation to collectively think about what they have experienced and how they might go about interpreting it. This is a challenging task, as there is so much going on, historical facts, individual's memories, spatial realities, and future development, all combining in complex ways that are hard to unwind. How to make sense of all these? How to critically interpret the reality that is being presented? This is the learning challenge of the moment. Here, the city

presents a complicated problem, one that is not easily reducible, but one that student's must engage with using all their intellectual and critical capacities. As we talk, I see them starting this process of making sense of the reality that they have encountered, comparing it to the pre-research that they had done before coming to Tokyo, and beginning to piece together some understandings and theorizing about what is going on. New thoughts appear. New conclusions. New avenues for further research.

We are learning the city in real time.

Asking the students what stands out, as different or unexpected, the students decide to settle their focus on "the small vendors that make up the majority of the non-seafood market stall: a cigarette venders, a coffee shop, a dry goods store [where] the crevices hold evidence of the way vendors shaped the space to fit their needs over time," all which will be gone in the new space. This is collectively articulated, between both the students from UHI and Waseda who now seem like a fully functioning unit after just two days field. They are already thinking together, theorizing about the place. For instance, "alleyways lead to the front doors of residence. . . potted plants sit next to washing machines [and] makeshift bridges link second floor-storage spaces." The students argue that these create the "connective tissue between the public persona of Tsukiji," a tissue that will be destroyed when the market moves, as it represents all those extra parts, and hidden parts, that make a place besides just its tourist function.

Later, when the students make their Ghost Guide, they create a map that illustrates a typology of different "Ghosts" of the market: Disappearing Ghosts, Remaining Ghosts, and Changing Ghosts, each being tied to real physical locations, which, as I write in 2020 are now gone even though the Olympics never actually happened (all quotes from Ghost Guide, "Tsukiji in Motion").

Analysis: Learning the City from within the City

A few remarks on learning in the field: In this moment, something is happening, which I can only articulate as akin to a pedagogical process that educator Paulo Freire (1983) describes in his essay on *The Importance of the Act of Reading*, where the word (*theory*) and the world (*practice*) collide in dialectical ways to create a new "critical reading of reality." As we sit and reflect, the students are collectively reading the reality of the city, this one corner of Tokyo and they are piecing it together in a critical way. They are seeing things they couldn't see before having been on-site, subsumed in the world of the place. But at the same time, they are creating a vocabulary of the place, drawing data from experiences, from the words of those they have interviewed or from those painted on the sides of buildings, which in turn is helping them to better "read" the place. This ability to read city and place is a signature pedagogical element of UHI and a key part of the learning process.

What does it mean to read a city and how is this different from reading, for instance, a book? Is it because more of their senses are present, in terms of a visceral, physical experience? Or does it come from the pre-research that they brought into the situation with them, research done on a place from afar, consisting of its own form of 'word,' that is then put into contact with the reality of world, in its complexity and messiness, in the difference from what is just pictured in the mind? This reading happens not only in the present, but also stretches back to the past and forward to the future, into all the versions of what Tsukiji was, is, and will be. It also happens in the reading of the multiple political and economic forces that intersect here, and on the flipside, the ground-up positions of those individuals who are caught in-between. The city becomes a mediating text

for creating a critical reading, with for existential awareness. In this, there is also a comparison of cities, between the one experienced and the one that is one's home.

It works through my own mind as an instructor as I watched and participated in this educational process unfold. I am intrigued in the way that the city, and the specificity of certain sites within it in their ability to capture, integrate, layer multiple layers of meaning, can become a text that can be read critically as to raise greater consciousness of both the city and the subjects place within it; opening-up a series of interconnected dialogues between the students, the world around them, and each other. I am also interested in the way that localities in the city—those layered with history, memory—arranged around such projects, can serve as springboards for a certain type of urban-emplaced micro-participatory action research project, which is a first step for opening up a more sustained, long-term type of project. Later, they will piece together this learning and city thinking through making to create a new vision of what is possible in that space: writing a new possible future through imaginative practices.

This is an example of a moment where the city, or a thinking that develops between people in cities, provides itself as a rich text for critical consciousness and a rich site of pedagogical learning. Each Ghost Guide has a piece of this learning embedded in it. Together, as a volume of nine Ghost Guides, they constitute a collection of deep learnings of the city.

Late Nights in the Studio

Fieldwork lasts through day three and a half days of the fieldwork, shifting on the day and a half before the mid-term review, the culminating group event that is usually on the Thursday or Friday of the travel week in order to give a few "free" days for students to enjoy the city (while at

the same time gathering last bits of data for continuing the projects from L.A.).[6] On a rainy Wednesday night all the students gather in the studio spots. Bags of snacks are bought by Moe, the Waseda class monitor, from the *Don Quijote* store across the street, groups dig in for a night of mocking up provisional examples of their Ghost Guides in preparation for the next day. I make the rounds looking to projects, listening to presentations, and asking questions about projects, in a way doing a kind of coaching for the review tomorrow. But I'm also always interested in the process, how the students are understanding Tokyo, what they are getting from the experience.

There is always a moment during these working nights where I look across the studio space at all the groups working and think this is what makes it all worth it, all the preparation and planning, because this is a kind of travel with purpose and a learning in real time. I listen to the hum of the rum, and try to sense it, feeling projects come into being through collective effort. I always feel that magical alchemy in these late-night moments, as projects take shape, as the experiences of the last few days come into a new focus. It is a special kind of camaraderie, which leaves an imprint in the collective memory of a group. I think back to my own parallel version of this night, in Shanghai, working with a close team on a film that we would show the next day—in a similar space owned by the University of Hong Kong that's windows framed the neon-lit skyscrapers of Pudong, street food bought from stalls of Qipu Road, now demolished for urban progress, steaming from each table. By this point in the process almost communicating non-verbally. Those moments were the most meaningful of my own graduate education experience and I want others to feel the same way, so I try to put in the work to make it happen. In later years, except for another similarly rainy night in Shanghai, there are less of these moments, everyone

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[6] This is the general structure that all the UHI years have followed, immediate fieldwork with a mid-week culminating review and then a few free days for exploration (and additional data collection).

together in the same classroom space working on separate projects, which thread and weave together to paint a larger picture of interdisciplinary experience.[7]

I stick around until around 10 pm, aware of Tokyo's last metro train of the night, needing to get back to Asakusa. By this time about half the groups have headed back home, projects ready, though a few groups still struggle on, trying to find the right shape, images, and words for their projects. Tomorrow, I'll learn that one group spends the night in the studio, arguing and revising until the dawn. This, unfortunately, is also part of this process, where there is always a team that takes longer to figure out what they are saying, or where the personalities clash (often due to competing perfectionisms), but then again, these projects are sometimes stronger and more daring than the ones that are completed by an easy bed time. It is a constant tension and balance that must be struck.

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[7] Later year students were more insular, often leaving to work somewhere off on their own. This happened in the following year in Mexico City and to a point in Shanghai the next. Some of this I attribute to early on practices in the summer institute that encouraged being in the same space, which lessened when the classroom left the library. Point being: togetherness can be structured from the very beginning in a way that pays of months later down the road.
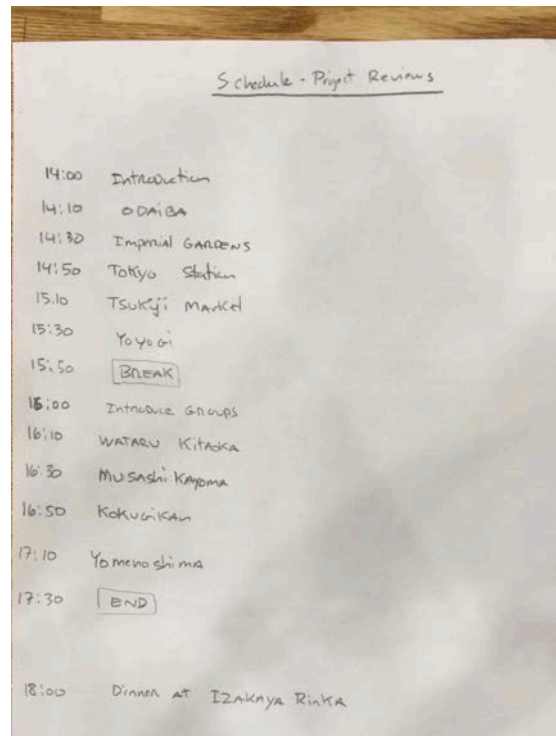
Schedule of Presentations

At the public review various professors from Waseda come, in a way it is an international education networking event, more about building relationships between the two institutions or departments. This is another aspect of these collaborations, a kind of department level international networking and reciprocity building, where UCLA's name invokes future collaborations. Often UHI works with junior scholars, who are part of, at least in Asia, a wider departmental patronage system with a bigger name professor, who might only appear at a review like this. All this is to say, that reviews in international spaces sometimes have an air of performance to them, with larger implications than just the educational program. Guests from Port B and other connections made in Tokyo come, as well.

As the below image shows, which was sent out into the LINE group for both the UHI and Waseda students, the review is a full house.

Full House Waseda

Students give presentations of mockup versions of their Ghost Guides, eliciting feedback from the audience, which is used to help them continue a more informal fieldwork process over the final days of the trip (there will be no more faculty check-ins), as well as to start the process of preparing for the next review that will be in approximately two weeks in Los Angeles. At that review, projects will have continued to be worked on and developed.

The review ends and everyone travels to a dinner, where there is celebration followed by a night out in Shinjuku, which includes a karaoke session of the entire group. This has become a UHI tradition, started two years before in Shanghai, serving as a kind of collective stress release and final moment of communal experience.

UHI and Waseda Students Pose in Shinjuku

After that, students wander out into the night—to the small bars of Golden Gai, the jazz bar the Old Blind Cat where Murakami used to tend bar in a sub-basement near Shinjuku Station—and the formal part of the program. The last days are spent wandering the city, alone or in groups, falling into the more normal rhythms of travel for a few days, the purpose completed. At the end of the week everyone boards the plane at Narita and travels back across the Pacific to Los Angeles.

9.5 Spring: Back in Los Angeles
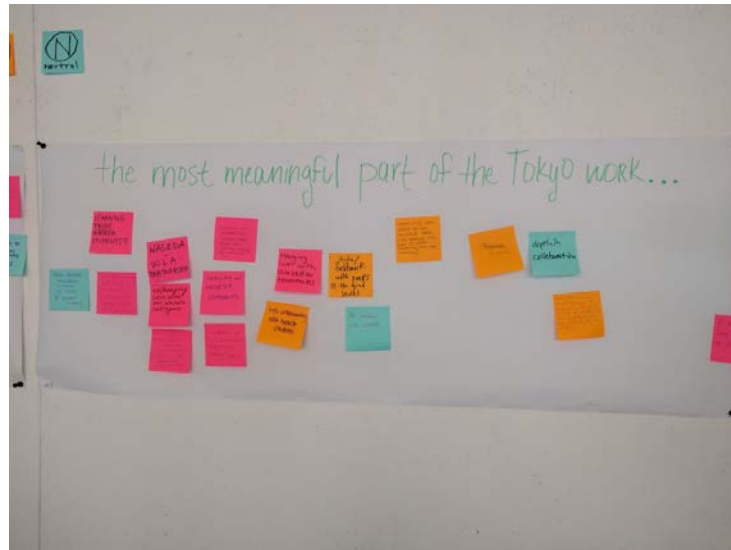
Reflection Session post-Tokyo

The first two weeks are spent closing up the Tokyo projects, building off the feedback from the Tokyo review. The projects take final form as an exhibition that is schedule for week two, the scene that opened up this account. I put that scene at the front because it gave articulation through the student's words of the where the students were as a group, signifying the end of that shift that had been slowly occurring over the course of the year to becoming urban humanists. It still stands as a powerful moment where everything seemed to come together in word.

The spring term is its own intense experience, packed with a wide range of events that start up directly upon return. At this point the course shifts into the "Humanities Studio," which is focused on fully developing projects out of the experience in Tokyo and from further fieldwork in Los Angeles.

The goal is to, over a ten-week quarter:

- Finish the Tokyo projects as an exhibition (Week Two)

- Make final printed fold-out newsprint versions of the Ghost Guides, including images, maps, and essays, that will be collected as a single package and sent to Tokyo later in the summer for Waseda's final exhibition, later to be distributed at places like IRA, and hopefully, the Olympic sites (Week Six)

- Host the students from Waseda who will come to Los Angeles for a week to complete a parallel Ghost Guide project about the upcoming 2028 Olympics (Week Five)

- Create "Engaged Scholarship" projects in L.A., which find common sanctuary spaces within the city[8] (Week Ten)

This is probably the most packed spring quarter in UHI history, and where the quirks of the university schedule—a spring term that starts immediately after a short break and is a ten-week race to the summer—does programs like UHI no favors, as there is simply not enough time to fully close and develop the Tokyo projects, while at the same time developing these L.A. based capstone project, and speaks to a larger point that graduate and interdisciplinary work do not always easily conform to a university time schedule that is organized around time and credit hour requirements for undergraduates.[9]

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[8] There is a reason for this shift in theme, which has to do with faculty deciding they wanted to respond to the political moment of the Trump administrations immigration policy—well-intentioned but a conceptual 180 that did not have enough pre-work built into it to be successful—and thus it was a kind of ghost appendage that was never fully born (and therefore I spend less time analyzing this part).

[9] Making the spring term work has been a constant struggle within UHI, partially due to the fact that post-trip there is less incentive to put in extra work at home, as well as other factors such as general exhaustion from a long-slog of a school year and major disciplinary projects scheduled at the end of the academic calendar, such as dissertation proposal defenses or studio projects. I would say that only the springs of the first three years were truly successful, each for different reasons: the first through perhaps a push by the faculty to show off an end project, the second via intensive focus on perfecting the films that were made in Shanghai, and the third year, a well-organized foray into engaged scholarship, which was curated from the top. In later years, there was less energy to ensure these activities working.

In turn, something like UHI should be able to occur off this normalized calendar, with both shorter and longer terms or modules that fit specific activities, rather than conforming to these set time scales. For instance, the summer institute is an example of a short-term intense period of learning, while seminars could be stretched out to shorter or longer units, depending on what makes sense: a four-week history of Tokyo, a three-week project in Little Tokyo, a twelve-week studio at the end.

Still, the challenge is to try, and with the momentum from the sense of community that has been gained through the Tokyo experience, carries the group through the gauntlet of activities, and the spring is packed with rich moments. These include a workshop on analog filmmaking with the Echo Park Film Center, a number of successful film and kit-of-part projects, and most importantly the visit from the Waseda students, which allows UHI to reciprocate the role of host and home-city expert. During their week-long visit, which. I coordinate, the Waseda students investigate sites from L.A.'s past two Olympics, visiting where the Olympic Village was, as well as where the new Olympics will arrive—crafting their own Ghost Guides for an exhibition in Tokyo that summer (that I will attend as a kind of coda to the year) .

Hiromi Beauty Salon, Crenshaw, Los Angeles

One particular moment stands out, thought, where they arrange an interview with a Japanese American woman living in the Crenshaw neighborhood, once the location of a large Japanese American population (but no longer, another erasure of time), who attended the 1932 Olympics as a child, and was later interned at Manzanar. Here a century of Japanese American history in L.A. was encountered only through the Japanese students, closing a strange transnational circuit; a last bit of UHI magic.

This UHI-Waseda partnership became one of the most meaningful educational moments within the six years of UHI, where reciprocal learning between two places occurred. Students reported the immense value working with their "Tokyo Counterparts" meant and how important it was for both feeling that they understood something about Tokyo and that they approached the city in an ethical manner, which at least tried to not make assumptions from the outside. For me, as an educator who is invested in International Education and finding better ways to structure travel

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and exchange, it presented a model that could be further developed around shared exploration and reciprocity of ideas.

Final Ghost Guides

Final *Ghost Guides Hanging on the Wall for Review*

The final ghost guides are beautiful things, nine pamphlets that are packaged together in cellophane wrapping, a title card printed on card stock in both English and Japanese. They are imagined to be guidebooks that can be given to tourists, at the Olympics that was to come, and now has not come, which can reveal something of the city that *was* and the city that *is* hidden. They can haunt the reader and get to them to see things newly, which is the end goal of UHI—to see the city in a slightly different way from how you did before. In this way, they have a teaching function, serving as a way to educate.

Ghost Guide Title	Location in Tokyo	Description
Tsukiji in Motion	Tsukiji Fish Market	Informal vendors of the soon-to-be-gone fish market
The Community on Display	Musashi Koyama	Changing neighborhoods of nostalgia
Tokyo Station 2020: Symbolic Space, Functional Movement	Tokyo Station	History of trains and modernity at Tokyo Station
The Kodamanist Guide to Tokyo 2020	Yoyogi Park	Spatial dimensions of homelessness near Olympic site
Ikku's Adventure Along the Olympido	Kachidoki	A multi-temporal tour of an Edo resident in the present
The Old Chair in the City	Koenji/Dream Island	Recycling, waste, and incinerating infrastructure
Ghosts of Emptiness	Imperial Palace	A bicycle race in the Imperial Palace filled with many characters
Land Liquification	Odaiba Island	Land use in islands of Tokyo Bay
Ghosts of Ryogoku	Kokugikan	History of Sumo wrestling

"These nine pamphlets offer an alternative reading of nine sites in Tokyo, so that those who come in 2020 will see beyond the Olympic spectacle to its ghosts and monsters. Each site invokes a careful study of history, a contemporary cultural analysis, and speculations about possible futures"—from Ghost Guide description (2017)

Descriptions of the Ghost Guides

Most importantly is the fact that in their final form they represent the collective knowledge that only something like UHI, in its most transdisciplinary and utopian manifestation can manage: opening up windows into complex multi-layered (thick) worlds, and. that communicates something unique of that place, person, or experience, and which when they are collected together, say something even more. The UHI projects that work best do exactly this. They resonate with many voices at once, they gesture to what plural knowledge can be. They don't rely on one discipline or one person's brilliance, but rather through a collective form that mirrors the collective community that is built in the classroom. They create a becoming through the process of making that collaborative thing, teaching and changing us from the act of work and discovery, and which

comes into being through the course of a year of close work, saying more than any of our individual work ever could alone because it was learned, thought, and made together.

Conclusion: Becoming Urban Humanists

Urban Humanist[10]

This chapter has given a portrait of a UHI curricular year in action, focusing on the process of how students become Urban Humanists. Through a sequence of pedagogical events and practices, where through the collective experience of these, the students form a working intellectual community.

What does it mean to become an Urban Humanist? This is a central concept and key part of the conceptual ground that I seek to explicate, and it will be unraveled in what is to come, but

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[10] This image is of the yearly Urban Humanities t-shirts, modeled by the author, given out at the final review party with announcing the collective sobriquet "Urban Humanist," announcing at least in terms of fashion, the final becoming. One interlocutor labeled the shirts as making everyone look like a "sports team."

briefly I will say that it is a critical disposition and sensibility for understanding the contemporary city, creating knowledge about the city within universities—one that is collective, collaborative, intellectually and methodologically promiscuous—and, then, practicing it in a way that is applied, engaged, and public. For instance, urban humanists are deeply invested in positively changing the "urban imaginaries" of the city through such critical practices, and perhaps we could tentatively call an urban humanist a practitioner and poet of the urban imaginary, someone who is able engage and create both *poesis* and *praxis* in the urban on multiple levels (Lidner and Meissner, 2019).[11] In other words, an urban humanist is someone who has integrated the sensibilities given by UHI back into their own scholarship and professional lives and identities in a reciprocal and generative way, where, through their own synthetic assemblage of their learning, they extend the practice of urban humanities into the future. But does so knowing that there is a networked community of fellow scholars, with similar orientations, to rely on.

This shift from participating in *urban humanities* to becoming an *urban humanist* illustrates a key part of the *becoming;* what once was a disparate group of individuals and disciplinary identities has now coalesced in a community of like-minded thinkers organized around a set of scholarly practices. I argue that this shift is produced, in part, by the (inter)disciplinary pedagogical structure that coordinates learning between disciplinary ideas, people, places, and so on, to create communities of practice, which has been illustrated ethnographically above. The result of this is the creation of something like *interdisciplinary togetherness*, which creates meaning through collective engagement.

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[11] Lindner and Meissner write, "urban imaginaries play an equally defining role for city space. Urban imaginaries meaningfully interlink different structures and signs, minds and bodies, facts and subjectivities, actualities and virtualities, economies and ecologies of urban social space" (p. 6)

The *becoming* of an urban humanist is by no means a comprehensive or across the board process—existing more as a continuum of possible outcomes. There were plenty of student participants who, for whatever reason, would not self-identify as such, and some have outright rejected their experience of the program. Others, were only moderately influenced, simply enjoying the experience and integrating some parts, but not at the level of being life, or at least scholarly or professional orientation, changing. Both of these views are important and part of the educational story. However, there are enough students that have taken on the identity of being an urban humanist and have carried it into their future lives, creating unique and meaningful assemblages with their existing interests, practices, and commitments.

Next, when I talk about the disciplinary/interdisciplinary afterlives of urban humanities, as it is embodied in the students who now call themselves urban humanists, this is what I mean. Many of these students have now left the university for careers. These include positions within academia as teaching and research faculty, as well in professional careers outside the university in city planning, architectural firms, consulting, and public research. In these different capacities the students are now in positions where they are influencing the future of cities, whether through teaching, research, or commercial work. As the program has acted as meeting area for different ways of thinking about and engaging with the city, it has influenced and augmented the later trajectories of students and an important part of this project is to document some of these trajectories. This sets up the content of the final chapters.

Program UHI Alumni Salon 01

What comes after an intense educational experience? Particularly one like UHI that has an intensity of interdisciplinary contact, collaboration, travel, and project making. These final chapters take up questions related to the "afterlives" of UHI. By afterlives, avoiding morbid connotations, I simply mean trying to think through the reverberations that meaningful educational experiences have after they have finished, but where other education and experiences of course go on. To put it another way, how has UHI been understood by its participants in the time since it finished, and how has it been integrated into their lives and work? The next chapters draw on empirical data from surveys and interviews to document and engage with some of these questions.

Chapter 10 Overview of Empirical Data and Analysis (Quantitative and Qualitative)

Introduction

This chapter presents data from the comprehensive UHI alumni survey that I sent out in November and December 2018, consisting of 30 respondents from four cohorts of the program. The goal of the chapter is to showcase (1) what UHI students learned from and found useful about the program in their own words, (2) how they have made sense of that learning experience in comparison to their disciplinary training, and (3) what they think has done, or failed to do, justice to their expectation of an interdisciplinary project. More than an evaluative account of the UHI program per se, I seek through analysis of these empirical experiences to understand what makes an interdisciplinary program a valuable alternative space to department-based graduate education, as well as the programmatic organizing and logistic complications on the ground.

To better understand these questions through the student's experience of the program, the chapter uses direct data elicited from an anonymous selection of students to get a better sense of how the students have contextualized the program within their scholarly and/or professional work in the time since participation. It is the first of two chapters that try to dig down deeply into understanding the students' experience of UHI through their own words and inputs. The chapter addresses many of the themes and issues that have appeared in the previous chapters but flips the script to present them within the students' voices, rather than my analysis as a researcher and observer.

In this way, all of the dissertation's key research questions are addressed in some fashion: experience in new humanities programs, the educational and pedagogical function of them, the

focus on learning the city. I wanted to know how UHI alumni were making sense of their experiences in the program, understood its meaning within their lives, and have carried it on, or not. Within the survey I used a variety of questions to generate data about the following areas:

- Overall experience with the program

- Rankings of different program aspects, from specific course parts to methods

- Experience with interdisciplinarity and interdisciplinary spaces

- Experience with social aspects of the program (collaboration, community)

- What students learned from cities: Los Angeles and the other city, and the relationship between them

- Uses after program: for jobs, scholarships/fellowships, in teaching, or other practice

- Reflections, critiques, and suggestions

This chapter is divided into two halves, dealing with quantitative (I) and qualitative (II) analysis of this data. The quantitative data is presented first, as it provides a more surface overview and primarily focuses on comparing the experiences of doctoral (Ph.D.) students versus master's (MA) students. The qualitative data is more robust and goes deeper, with coded quotes being presented and analyzed clustered around key themes and topic areas.

Overview of Data Sources

The following two sections provide a presentation and analysis of the empirical results from the alumni survey. As mentioned in the methods chapter, I did not send the survey to the first Tokyo program year, because I did not have direct contact with that group, and also did not have the full cohort contact info, instead deciding to focus specifically on students whom I knew. Despite the data being anonymous, I was familiar with the courses and events that they would be

writing about, which allowed for easier interpretation and analysis. The sixth year of the program, Shanghai II, was currently underway so they were not included in this survey. Later, I conducted a separate survey with that group of students, with a smaller question set. That data was not integrated into this data, as it had slightly differently phrased questions that dealt with specific issues that came up in that program year and will be used for a future article that focuses more directly on the Shanghai experience.

The main goal of the survey was to acquire qualitative data via long-form textual survey answers, the survey was weighted heavily in this direction, though I also used the opportunity to gather some basic numerical data, primarily ratings on different aspects of the program (presented in the survey as a scale of fillable star icons). This chapter provides analysis for each area, with a conclusion that provides some broad trends and findings from the data. The idea is that this anonymous data from the survey provides some insights into a broad picture view of the program. Students were freer to speak their opinions and criticisms, than perhaps within the interviews that I was completed during the same period did. The survey answers are more focused. In contrast, the interviews acted more problem-posing conversations that opened up a reflection on complicated practices, rather than having the goal of creating focused sound-bite quotes, where the survey medium produces more legible and concrete distillations of student's thoughts. The chapter works in tandem with the following chapter that focuses directly on data gathered from interviews and other events with UHI students, presenting direct case studies of student afterlives.

Because of the focus on a long time to answer qualitative questions, I was not expecting a very large return rate on the survey, so I was happy with the return of 30 completed surveys for the 99 total students (30%) that I sent the survey out to. It would have been nice to have more data for quantitative purposes; however, this was not the primary goal and the surface numerical

analysis is enough to point out some important descriptive trends, in which the qualitative data will add more depth and nuance. The detail within the amount of qualitative data that was gathered from the survey is much greater and takes up the majority of the chapter length.

The data collected from the survey is split evenly between Ph.D. students and master's students. The following two tables illustrate the year spread of the responses and the disciplinary spread of the responses.

Responses by Year

	Total	*Shanghai*	*CDMX I*	*Tokyo*	*CDMX II*
Ph.D.	**15**	3	6	3	2
MA	**15**	3	4	3	5
Total	**30**	**6**	**10**	**6**	**7**

Responses by Discipline

	Humanities	*Social Sciences*	*Urban Planning*	*Architecture*	*Dual*
Ph.D.	7	5	2	1	0
MA	0	0	9	5	1
Total	**7**	**5**	**11**	**6**	**1**

From these tables, it can be seen that students from every year surveyed and every representative discipline of the program responded to the survey and aligns with my sense of the larger population breakdown of all UHI students across the six years. It also fits with my understanding and experience of the ease to get different disciplinary groups to do things, or at least falls into the stereotypes that I have of the disciplinary working styles, e.g. planners respond to things quickly and promptly (particularly surveys) and architecture students are hard to track down because they are eternally overworked!

10.1 Quantitative Findings from Survey

Overview

The quantitative questions were front-loaded in the survey, as a way to quickly rate different aspects of the program and general experience. They were organized in a few key clusters, which focused on the following areas:

- A cluster of questions about the overall experience in UHI and experience with interdisciplinarity and interdisciplinary spaces, rated on a 1-10 scale (Table 10-1);

- A cluster of questions that asked students to rate different curricular periods of the program (e.g. summer, winter, spring, etc.), this was on a 1-5 scale of stars (graphic within the survey platform), called "1-5 Cluster A" below (Table 10-2);

- A cluster of questions that asked students to rate different pedagogical practices of UHI (e.g. mapping, engaged scholarship), this was on the same 1-5 scale of stars, called "1-5 Cluster B" below (Table 10-3);

- A final cluster of questions used True/False binary choices to ask about whether students have used these practices in their post-program work (Table 10-4).

The tables of these question clusters will be presented in full below.

A Note on Statistical Work

Because quantitative analysis is not my methodological specialty, I consulted for help with the statistical data in the following section, collaborating in UHI-interdisciplinary-fashion with an agricultural scientist who is versed in statistics and R for guidance in framing and presenting the statistical parts of the data in the following section. We talked through the data and I shared my impressions of what I thought might be found, and we set up a few key areas of analysis and comparison, which were worth presenting here. Primarily these focused on setting up a comparison between the two main populations of students, to try to shake out some differences in how Ph.D. students and masters might be experiencing the program differently. However, the interpretations and write-up are purely my own.

This led to the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis

Quantitative responses were statistically analyzed for potential differences between MA (n=15) and Ph.D. students (n=15). It was hypothesized that certain responses, especially those related to scholarly versus professional outcomes, for instance, the specific value of different

program aspects towards things like careers, future research, and technical skills, may differ by level of the graduate program.

Thus, the null hypothesis was:

H_0: MA and Ph.D. have no significant differences in responses to questions about the program.

A significant level was set to $\alpha = 0.1$ to avoid a Type II error, which is the rejection of an alternative hypothesis when the null hypothesis is false. This decision was made given the lack of power of the non-parametric test (described below) as compared to a one-way anova.

Methodology

A program survey was conducted of Ph.D. (n=15) and MA (n=15) students using the Typeform survey platform.[12] Results were recorded in Microsoft Excel and stored on a secure computer.

The survey consisted of three types of questions. Questions 1-4 solicited on a (1-4) and questions 5-30 on a (1-5) scale. Questions 31-45 were binary questions that solicited true/false answers. Approximately 20 questions solicited free-form qualitative responses, which were spread out through the survey.

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[12] www.typeform.com. Typeform was selected because it is optimized for quick flow between questions, it also looks design-y fitting the UHI audience.

Descriptive statistics were calculated and examined using R version 3.6.1 in RStudio (R Core Team, 2019). R is a robust open-source statistical platform and RStudio provides a convenient interface for the organization, visualization, and management of data (RStudio Team, 2020).

For ordinal data, the median is typically reported as a measure of a data set's central tendency, while the interquartile range (IQR) provides a measure of dispersion. The median is defined as the middle number of a data set. The IQR is defined as the amount of spread in the middle 50% of the data set. A lower IQR indicates relative consensus within a question, while a higher IQR indicates a larger variability among responses (Agresti, 2017). Mean and standard deviations are typically not appropriate for ordinal data.

The "summary ()" and "IQR ()" functions of the base R package were employed, respectively. Additionally, the "skim ()" function of the skimr package was employed to graphically explore and examine responses in simple bar graphs (Quinn et al., 2019). This allowed for the rapid visual identification of potentially salient responses. Visualizations are not presented here.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to examine questions to compare responses from MA and Ph.D. students. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric rank-sum test suitable for use with ordinal data (Ostertagova, Ostertag, & Kováč, 2014; Kruskal and Wallis, 1952).

Where results of the Kruskal-Wallis test were statistically significant, medians were calculated separately for MA and Ph.D. and presented for comparison with an equal, greater than, or less than sign.

For true/false questions, the "summary ()" function was employed to tabulate counts. Additionally, a Fisher's exact test was used to determine statistical significance between MA and Ph.D. students due to the small sample size of n<1000 (McDonald, 2019; Fisher, 1922).

Results are presented below and organized by question type with the tables presented first, followed by statistical analysis. In the tables, "not significant" is abbreviated to "NS." Following that, as there were limited statistical results, a final section will interpret some of the survey numerical results more descriptively in a general, rather than comparative sense—as some of the answers in their aggregate of both Ph.D. and MA can be interpreted for some insight added insight.

Summary of Questions and Data

Table 10-1 provides a summary of (1-10) questions

No.	Question	Median	IQR	p=	MA Median		Ph.D. Median
1	Please rate your overall experience in Urban Humanities:	9	1.75	NS			
2	Please rate your overall educational experience in Urban Humanities:	8	2.75	NS			
3	Where would you rank your work on a disciplinary/interdisciplinary spectrum	8	2	NS			
4	How important do you think it is to have spaces for interdisciplinary meetings and collaboration like UHI in the university?	10	0	NS			

Table 10-2 provides a summary of (1-5 questions, Cluster A)

No.	Question	Median	IQR	p=	MA Median		Ph.D. Median
5	Summer Institute	4	2	NS			
6	Fall Seminar	4	1.75	NS			
7	Winter Seminar	4	2	NS			
8	Fieldwork Trip Abroad	5	1	NS			
9	Spring Studio	3	1.75	NS			
10	The interdisciplinary learning space	5	1	NS			
11	Exposure to different disciplines and ideas	5	1	0.07162	5	=	5
12	Exposure to faculty	4	1	NS			
13	Sense of learning community with faculty and other students	5	1	NS			
14	Teamwork and Collaboration	5	1	NS			
15	Spatial Justice focus	4	1	NS			
16	Project work	4	1	NS			

Table 10-3 provides a summary of (1-5 questions, Cluster B)

No.	Question	Median	IQR	p=	MA Median		Ph.D. Median
17	Exposure to new technologies and methods	4	2	NS			
18	Exposure to film (filmic sensing) as a method	4	2	NS			
19	Exposure to (Thick) mapping as a method	4	2	NS			
20	Studio/Design Component (with people from other backgrounds, e.g. Humanities)	4	2	0.04654	5	>	4
21	Fieldwork in Los Angeles	5	1.75	NS			
22	Travel to, and fieldwork in, the other city	5	0	0.04972	5	=	5
23	Engaged Scholarship	5	1	NS			
24	Collaborations with local partners in LA	4	2	0.06722	3	<	4
25	Collaborations with student partners and organizations abroad	5	2	NS			
26	Before UHI, how would you rate your level of comfortability with interdisciplinary work?	4	2	0.09411	4	>	3
27	How would you rate it post-UHI?	5	0	NS			
28	What was your knowledge/comfortability of the other represented disciplines, and their conceptual/theoretical positions?	3	1	0.05025	3	=	3
29	What is your knowledge/comfortability now?	4	1	NS			
30	How often do you use skills, knowledge, or methods learned in UHI in your work now?	4	1	NS			

Table 10-4 provides a summary of (true/false)

No.	Question		MA	Ph.D.	p=
26	Before UHI, had you participated in any other interdisciplinary programs?	TRUE	9	7	NS
		FALSE	6	8	
34	Have you used/did you use ideas or methods from UHI in other academic projects in your program (studio, thesis, client project, etc.) work?	TRUE	10	11	NS
		FALSE	5	4	
35	Has your experience in UHI helped you better collaborate with others on projects?	TRUE	13	14	NS
		FALSE	2	1	
36	Have you used ideas or methods from UHI in non-academic projects?	TRUE	12	3	NS
		FALSE	11	4	
37	Did you have previous experience in the city you traveled to as part of UHI?	TRUE	2	8	**0.0501**
		FALSE	13	7	
38	Was UHI successful in teaching about, and thinking through, Asia Pacific megacities?	TRUE	12	11	NS
		FALSE	3	4	
39	Have you integrated any content from the other city into your work or research since UHI?	TRUE	6	11	NS
		FALSE	9	4	
40	Would you have still participated in UHI if there had not been an international travel component?	TRUE	9	9	NS

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		FALSE	6	6	
43	Have you recommended UHI to other students?	TRUE	14	13	NS
		FALSE	1	2	
44	Do you think your experience in UHI has helped you successfully obtain a job/fellowship/grant/etc.?	TRUE	10	10	Ns
		FALSE	5	5	
45	Did UHI expand your network of resources at UCLA?	TRUE	12	15	NS
		FALSE	3	0	
46	Have you asked a fellow UHI student for academic or professional advice?	TRUE	11	11	NS
		FALSE	4	4	
47	Have you asked a UHI faculty member for academic or professional advice?	TRUE	10	14	NS
		FALSE	5	1	
48	Have you asked for a letter of recommendation from a UHI faculty member?	TRUE	5	8	NS
		FALSE	10	7	
52	Were you an international student when participating in UHI?	TRUE	1	4	NS
		FALSE	14	11	

Overview of Statistical Results and Analysis

Table 10-1 provides a summary of (1-10) questions. Questions 1-4 ask students to rate on a scale of 1-10 their overall experience with UHI, their overall educational experience of UHI, their level of self-identified interdisciplinary ability in their work, and the importance of spaces like UHI in the university. These were asked via a 1-10 scale to get a possible higher spread and nuance of responses, in contrast to the shorter 1-5 rating scale that was designed to get quick ratings (almost Yelp style). Or in other words, I asked with a wider scale because I thought the questions were more centrally important. However, there were no significant differences between MA and Ph.D. students for all questions.

Table 10-2 provides a summary of the first cluster of 1-5 questions, while table 10-3 provides a summary of the second cluster of 1-5 questions.

In terms of the value of interactions with scholars from other backgrounds (Question 20), the median response of MA students was significantly higher than Ph.D. students (5>4, p=0.04654). Interestingly, MA students indicated a higher median response to Ph.D. students (5>4, p=0.09411) for previous experience with interdisciplinarity project work before UHI (Question 16). This likely reflects that their MA programs (urban planning, architectural design) are already find themselves within fields that have interdisciplinary integration in their programs, particularly at the professional level where projects are already framed as being interdisciplinary (and where the goal is the real-world efficacy of the project rather than maintaining institutional knowledge borders). Therefore, their interest may be less the project work itself, but rather the exposure to people from the humanities. Ph.D. students perhaps have less total exposure to interdisciplinary work, as they are focused much more on their disciplinary training, so benefit from project work and technical training (but also find it more alien and difficult). These points confirm tensions

within the curriculum between scholarly and professional students and how they have different experiences and orientations towards interdisciplinary work and collaboration that need to be scaffolded around pedagogically when planning. Understanding these issues before designing a program, so that students are aware that teachers understand where they are coming from with intentionality to balance the needs of different experience levels of students is a necessity.

Ph.D. students provided a higher median response to the question about collaboration with local partners in LA (question 24) as compared to MA students (4>3, p=0.06722). This can be attributed to the fact that Ph.D. students already had projects that worked with local partners, or the fact that the time horizon for Ph.D. students is longer and allows for the building of these relationships from an academic position (rather than later on when in a professional setting for MA students). Again, this response points out important issues about the time horizons of different types of students and what sorts of partnerships can be built over that time. It also could point out that MA students, except for urban planning students within their final capstone projects, sometimes have little choice of who they are working with as projects are arranged by the studio, or other, faculty.

The inclusion within UHI of Ph.D. students from social sciences, particularly from ethnic studies, education, or gender studies, with the focus on community-engaged dissertation projects may have also influenced the response, as these disciplines have developed deep critical and ethical approaches for engaging with local places and communities perhaps more reflexively than, for instance, architecture a discipline that is still steeped in a modernist, and racialized sense of aesthetics (Cheng et al., 2020; for similar conversations in professional design fields, including architecture and urban planning see Roy, 2017). I call this dynamic out because it was one that

was discussed by certain student voices, who claimed that they often felt that they had to educated architects about racial and ethical frameworks (see next section for further discussion).

These tensions can also be seen in some of the qualitative responses below, where students criticized the program's approach to dealing with local partners in Los Angeles and engaging with specific types of places. In particular, these were low-income communities of color, and respective organizations in those communities, where certain students from social sciences and ethnic studies questioned the modes of engagement and power asymmetries of UHI's position within a privileged university. Issues included helicoptering in for only a short-term time scale and failing to build longer-term commitments after the program was over and UHI had moved on to another city and topic.

Table 10-4 provides a summary of binary (true/false) responses, which were designed to gauge some basic data about prior experiences before UHI and what students have done with it after. For the majority of questions, there was no significant difference between MA and Ph.D. students. Question 36 relating to previous experience in UHI travel city, the Ph.D. cohort had significantly more international experience in the country or city that the year focused on than the MA cohort (p=0.0501). This confirms my sense that more MA students are choosing to be in the program, regardless of where it travels. It's not that they do not have preferences, but it is less important to something like a larger research platform. For Ph.D. students, committing to a year of UHI makes more sense if you are already working on issues that engage the other city in question. This makes it more justifiable, for instance to doctoral advisors and committee members, who can see it as a kind of double-dipping of interests, which will reinforce doctoral work.

Of the three cities, this was the trend of Ph.D.'s who were already working on the city in question was most clear with Mexico City, with students from both Chicana/o studies and Spanish

Portuguese literature students joining the program because of their research on Mexico. Additionally, because they had already research interest in the other city, there was a higher chance they had already traveled there previously via, for instance, summer research grants, something that I know of in at least four occasions with students in Mexico City years. This prior ground-level knowledge could be quite valuable, resulting in some of the strongest projects. Later one of the Mexico City graduates returned as a TA/co-instructor in the second Mexico City year and led a student team to research a project that intersected with her dissertation work on Tlatelolco and created one of the strongest UHI projects.

Speaking about the first Mexico City year, in an interview, one student respondent gave some commentary on this:

> But it felt like, at least the majority of the people that I interacted with in the projects and UHI, were passionate about what they wanted to do would put a little bit more work than other classes, like we said, because they wanted it to be something that was long lasting, or something that really made a statement. So, it was because their personal background, either their heritage to Mexico City, which was my case, you know, being Mexican, being an immigrant and being for like, 1.5 generation, I was very sort of aware of like, Mexico City's social and cultural climate. But there were people in the cohort for example, you with a background in China/Chinese American, who like were, you know, navigating the border back and forth, or more familiar with the border and the intimate way. And so that was really special, I think, because you had both insider and outsiders [in the group who could learn from each other].

This is often a fine balance to strike. In order for this to work, it required a certain amount of generosity in sharing knowledge between insiders and outsiders who knew less about the places in question. It could be a burden for those with specific experience or skills related to a city, for instance, those who spoke Spanish or Chinese, who had to act as translators for the experiences of others. The same student in an interview recounted:

[In Mexico City] like everybody was sick, because our bodies were definitely invested. And I I've been to Mexico, not just the first half of my life, but I've been there multiple times before, and nothing had really made me sick like that. But I ended up getting a throat infection. And so, I couldn't speak for the last two days of our trip, I was really sick. And I think what brought that on was that I was one of the few Spanish speakers in my group. And you know, there were people in my group who were not even Spanish speaking. We had to translate these really intense conversations between two parties. And I ended up doing the bulk of the translation. And when I say translate, I don't just mean say what the other person said in another language. I mean, trying to say it in a way that doesn't sound combative to the other party. So, it was mediation, and translation. And so that was what I think, what got me sick.

Some students noted that this put them in a kind of subservient role within the group, as well as adding to their emotional labor. Aligning the asymmetries between knowledge, between amateur and expert positions, was also a constant difficulty, but a key part of educational encounters that

need to be carefully thought through. I noticed far too many times, both from students and faculty, a kind of essentialized notion that because one was from a certain place or a cultural background that they knew something about that place, e.g. you are Chinese so you must be an expert on Shanghai. Therefore, an important need within programs like UHI is to find ways to avoid such microaggressions and create a more scaffolded framework to understand how both knowledge (disciplinary) and cultural (ethnic-national) positions intersect within interdisciplinary spaces, as well as with how these become exacerbated when adding international travel.

Other Descriptive Observations and Interpretations

The statistical analysis was a bit thin in results with any significance due to the small sample size and issues related to my design. However, a lack of major differences between MA and Ph.D. students perhaps indicates that students had a similar experience throughout the program and can be discussed together. This can be a positive and in ways aligns with my belief that a good interdisciplinary space ends up becoming more transdisciplinary or post-disciplinary at the end, where the divisions that were there at the outset that were imposed through institutional positions end up disappearing as the sense of group togetherness grows. I want the distinctions between disciplines to disappear, and of student status, and the prevalence of NS within the questions points towards this with all students experiencing something similar. Then, looking at the information from the whole group, additional observations can be made.

I end the quantitative half of the chapter with some more descriptive observations based on the questions from the four tables. My goal here is to use the data to point out observations, issues, and interesting points that I see within the responses. This acts as a bridge to the presentation of qualitative data in the next section.

<u>Observations Interpretations of Table 10-1 Responses</u>

- Based on question 1, students generally seemed satisfied with the whole UHI program experience (median 9).

- Bringing in question 2, the rating for the overall experience was higher than the educational experience, which could mean that students were considering outside of the classroom experiences to constitute the added meaning. Though one student wrote back via email that they were confused about what I meant by educational, showing perhaps my own disciplinary bias in how I framed the questions

- Students generally viewed their work as being interdisciplinary (question 3), on the interdisciplinary side of the disciplinary-interdisciplinary continuum, though caveats exist in two areas: (1) they completed the survey post-engagement with the program, and (2) the program, I think, naturally drew in people who were interested in interdisciplinarity, so there is a level of confirmation bias from self-selection.

- Question 4 had the highest median result of any 10-point question, with unanimous agreement that there needed to be programs of interdisciplinary nature within the university, though I'm sure there are disagreements of what this looked like and whether UHI lived up to the billing.

<u>Observations and Interpretations of Table 10-2</u>

- Students rated the travel experience most highly. This makes sense as this is the most "exciting" part of the year and the element that seems most extra to the typical school experience, after all the program pays for travel and accommodation. The travel trips, give or take two or three instances, were positive experiences, and filled with the group excitement

and bonding that I illustrated in the previous chapter. Later in the T/F questions, it was interesting to see that a majority of students would still participate in UHI even if there was no travel component, but it is impossible to tell whether the choice would have been made at the time of application (perhaps they gained something from the experience more than travel).

- In contrast, students rated the Spring Studio lowest (median of 3), which speaks to a couple of issues. The spring studio was generally the most inconsistent quarter of UHI, with, in my opinion, one was incredibly successful, two were good experiences but a mixed bag of projects, and two were closer to failures. One issue was that each year tried to do something different, to varying effects—some themes worked, others did not. Generally, all spring studios suffered from an attempt to do too much, with the post-2015 springs trying to deal with wrapping up the travel experience and complete a project in Los Angeles, within only 10-weeks. This is an impossible task.

- Second, and perhaps *the* major issue was that post-trip there was little excitement or incentive for students to continue working hard on projects, creating a certain level of "phoning it in" that was exacerbated by the general busy tenor of the spring quarter. Students were often exhausted and checked-out, particularly of projects that were not exciting or that did not align with their specific political commitments. I also noticed that is was more difficult for students to buy in and work hard within studio courses not taught by the main faculty (junior faculty or teaching assistants instead), who did not have the level of power and gravitas for pushing projects to be successful. The main finding here is that UHI never really managed to figure out a sustainable conceptual endgame, and this led to the spring studio being a somewhat weaker experience.

- Students also seemed to value the collaborative work and exposure to other students, which is a theme that constantly came up with in my interviews and other conversations, where the community of collaboration, and chance to work with students from other parts of the university, was valued more than any specific project. I think the ratings reflect this.

Observations and Interpretations of Table 10-3

- Questions 28 and 29 show that students did learn something about the other disciplinary backgrounds through the process of UHI, with the knowledge and comfortability of the other discipline raising from a median of 3 at the beginning to 4 at the end. I think this seems a genuine reflection of how much knowledge of other areas is gained. It is not expertise, e.g. you do not learn to design like an architect or theorize as a humanist, as much as you may want, but rather there is conceptual learning of how other disciplines think, practice, and speak about their work. Students learn the languages of each other areas and can translate in between them, to a point, though the training aspect of this could be made more explicit (as it happened, it was more an informal accretion due to time spent in each other's company, or arguing around the project-making table).

- It looks like students valued the out of the classroom aspects, e.g. generally doing fieldwork regardless of city, rather than learning the UHI suite of methods (thick mapping, filmic sensing). I would agree that this is true, with students voicing some critical suspicion of the UHI methods and exactly how novel they were, but I never heard a complaint about leaving the university to work on projects outside. Except for two cases where fieldwork happened in neighborhoods of color, where the presence of privileged academics from the university was deemed problematic by members of the cohort (this was a critique of how the fieldwork was

being done, and the underlying ethics of where it was being done, and by who, rather than a critique of the need for outside work).

- On this issue of engaged scholarship, I realized after the survey was sent out that this was a terminology that was introduced only within year three. A student from year two wrote to me and was confused about the term. I recount this to show that the program actively changed course from year to year, making some inconsistency between years, where students from different years may be responding to different versions of what UHI was.

Observations and Interpretations of Table 10-4

From the true/false questions some conclusions can be made, with answers generally falling similarly between the two student groups (except for the questions discussed above):

- On the strongly true end, the responses provide some confirmation of what UHI has done well, with strongly positive ratings for skills for collaboration (27/30) and expanding the network of resources at the university (27/30), with all 15 Ph.D. students reporting that it did. Students also reported a high level of recommending the program to other students (27/30), which has kept the program going with fresh students (though anecdotally in conversations with students from the later years of the program these recommendations did not continue with the same force).

- 22 students had asked other students for advice on projects after the end of the program, which I read as a very positive sign of the formation of an interdisciplinary scholarly network that lives beyond the program. Anecdotally, I know that this continues to occur within both formal networks of alumni (Alumni Salon) and informal ones. Within my own experience as a UHI

alum, I rely on my network of UHI colleagues to brainstorm ideas for teaching or writing, collaborate on papers and presentations, and generally continue to talk about the themes.

- The answers also show a close connection with faculty, with 24/30 students reporting that they had asked a member of the UHI faculty for academic or professional advice. Less highly reported was asking a faculty member for a letter of recommendation, with only 13 of 30 reporting that they had asked, but this is still positive because it shows a deep enough relationship present with a faculty member for this ask (often someone outside of their discipline or direct mentorship).

- Perhaps the most highly important value of participation, from a purely economic or career perspective, 20 students reported that they felt the experience has helped them obtain fellowships or jobs. Anecdotally, in the time since the survey was sent out, this number might be higher, with first-hand knowledge of at least four program Ph.D. graduates who have obtained academic jobs where their interdisciplinary experience was highly valued in the job interview process (including myself).

This concludes quantitative findings from the Alumni survey. These finds will be deepened by the corresponding qualitative answers, which give voice to the direct experience of the students in the same words, which is where we turn to next.

10.2 Qualitative Findings from Survey

The voices that follow are the real result of this dissertation project, the true beating heart of it. You have now reached the center of the maze. Everything that has come before is set-up so that these voices, of my comrades, can be contextualized and understood, and be spoken on their

own. These voices are the true product of UHI, I truly believe this, as they reflect the aggregated experience of the program; the thing that, in the end, mattered the most. Their wisdom transcends any project, book, grant report, website, newspaper feature, omnium convening, faculty position, academic award, or whatever. It goes out into the world, reverberates and resonates through time, across places, cities, other people. Hopefully, it teaches other people via the spirit of the educational event in the future. That is the long-term outcome of any education and a spirit that I see reflected in the responses, where I see the learning flowering; mainly positives but also some deeply considered negatives.

For this reason, in what follows, I mostly get out of the way and let the text ring out without too much deeper contextualization, because they know what's up and say it clearer than I ever could. They prove that they understood what was happening in UHI, inside and outside, often better than the teachers themselves, and they can speak the truth of it, so I let them speak.

I have put some organization into the order, roughly following the flow of questions as framed above. Questions were clustered in topic areas, with open-ended spaces for responses. Respondents were free to respond as long or as little as they wanted. Again, the responses were anonymous, and I went a step further when coding the responses to build a firewall between that would remove any other identifiers that could be figured out through the full survey. I did this by clustering responses via topic and dis-aggregating them from everything besides their Ph.D./master's status. Because disciplines are even a potential give away, I did not include them. However, in some of the response's participants give details that perhaps give themselves away—but they were aware of this. That being said, I have changed a few details and wordings designated by [ ], when necessary. I only include background discipline when it is in a question that matters or gives particular emphasis to that student's point.

There are two phases to the presentation of student responses. The majority is presented as pure student response, with quotes listed in bullet form, only divided by general topic headers (overall experience, interdisciplinarity, etc.), though I give commentary on a few key areas and do additional analysis with particular quotes. Student's words are presented in *italics*. At a few points I also integrate data from interviews I completed with students where applicable.

Without further ado.

Educational Experience in UHI: Interdisciplinarity, Collaboration, & Critical Tensions

<u>Overall Experience</u>

- *UHI was a powerful and challenging experience. The academic, ethical, and practical struggles we worked through as a group have impacted me greatly as a student and human being. I cherish the community and friendships formed in UHI.*

- *It was a truly transformative experience... my research has developed towards urbanity profoundly. Apart from shifting my interests towards the urban and the human in academic life, UHI also made me curious about getting involved in the immediate urban life around me. Given my engagement in the community, I was recently elected as Graduate Student Representative on the North Westwood Neighborhood Council, where I will be applying my UHI knowledge in a practical way. (Ph.D. student)*

- *Conducting field work and real interventions were an incredible experience. You can spend your life studying about these issues behind books and computer screens, but truly immersing yourself in the real urban fabric and experiencing the environment and all of*

its successes and imperfections is such an impactful way to activate the research and apply it toward the speculation of the future.

- *It was an opportunity to access a different type of production and interpretations in understanding "the city." I don't think it passes as an academic discipline by any means or held us to very rigorous standards, but that was the fun and opportunity in it.*

- *I got exposure to many creative solutions for communication on the Urban scale and communicative policy initiatives. In particular the work el Laboratorio para La Ciudad in Mexico City and Antanas Mockus in Bogota.*

- *It is a big add to my grad school program. I think about cities much differently than my non-UHI colleagues, even when taking into account that Luskin [Urban Planning] has a reputation for being "too theoretical." Had I gone elsewhere my education would have been much plainer and more technically focused.*

- *I became aware of social and cultural happenings of the world and other points of view exist besides that of the architect, meaning that not everyone looks at a building and wonders how the column grid is arranged*

- *It was productive to have UHI fall in my last year. It helps to tie up many loose ends and catalyzed my involvement with the Sustainable Grand Challenge which has deeply informed the way I understand my potential for agency in my professional and creative lives.*

- *UHI is a lens. It taught me that planning should not be a technical discipline, but one that is imbued with stories, human experiences, and complex narratives across time and space.*

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In addition to providing me with a toolkit of thoughtful methods of representation and community engagement, UHI principles are ideals I aspire to bring into my work. I even keep a few mementos from the class by my desk :)

Experience with Interdisciplinarity

- *Key to my UHI experience was having this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work with methods that are for the most part outside of my discipline and practice as an urban planner. Filmic sensing and thick mapping opened up new ways of thinking about space, and while I may not be able to employ those methods in my professional practice as such, I will hold on to the kinds of lessons they taught me about what to look for, what to consider that might be hidden, when intervening in physical space.*

- *I found that whatever disciplines came to the table, finding a common project to work on with some sort of visually captivating output can help to galvanize interests and bring out creative thinking.*

- *The ability to communicate urban matters through film and ethnography, the open discussions, the intimate engagement of two cities' history, and current situation…*

- *The working process in CDMX. I've never experienced group synergy like that before.*

- *It was helpful to be introduced to "border" scholarship from the perspective of the built environment, urban planning, arch, etc. I also learned valuable skills about*

communicating across disciplines and the new vocabulary that comes with those types of
collaborations

- *I enjoyed the process of collaboration a lot, and I still think our projects were interesting experiments. The process to wander and explore without a clear answer was definitely a cool experience and I was fortunate to have great travel mates. Sometimes I think maybe it worth making a longer version of the documentary to record the whole process.*

UHI as an Alternative Space

As I have theorized, UHI created an alternative space within the university for students to meet and engage with each other. The following quote expresses what this space was like:

Collaborative writing, collaborative workflows, a space in which to work with issues larger than what we may have had the experience or understanding to get our heads around or deal with effectively in writing. By taking on really big topics with many tools at our disposal it created a space in which to grow organically and quickly through experimentation.

Other students spoke to the experience of what I have called becoming urban humanists, using words like "immersion" and "exposure." This student's responses attest to the theory that UHI functions as a quality and alternative learning space. This space is a constructed one that entails collaborative experience in sorting out "academic, ethical, and practical struggles" at once, and

allows for intimate bonds, which cause different kinds of knowledge to be produced, as in the following:

> *The bonds of intimacy we developed in our collaborative efforts laid the foundations for productive tensions to arise between students. It was often only when we ceased to be civil and embraced the risk of conflict that we arrived at our most promising, our most exciting breakthroughs. There was no space for safety in these projects, and we thrived when we settled into this precarious learning environment [and quoting Robin Kelley, from Boston Review] "in the university but not of the university."*

Difficulties of Interdisciplinary Collaboration within the Program

Students also reported on interdisciplinary tensions that would appear within the classroom, where collaboration was not always an easy process.

- *It was VERY difficult working with people in UHI - and I have a lot of prior experience working in teams. I think some of it had to do with the transdisciplinary nature, but some also had to do with cultural issues stemming in part from the different faculty and department expectations/norms. Paradoxically I learned a lot about working in transdisciplinary teams but I'm also more scared to do it now from having such a traumatic experience.*

- *Many architecture students use their drawings or projects to express ideas. They are less eloquent than humanities students. I suppose Ph.D. who have colloquial [competence] would do better. UP students do better writing, too. I feel [it] challenging to participate in discussion especially when it's fast-paced.*

Part of the problem here is that collaboration is too often assumed to be the job of students and not a required, consistent partnership between students and the faculty. As a student reflected on her UHI year:

> *It's incredibly hard to assess our year because there were so many conflicting intentions and miscommunications that occurred from the off[set]. I think this program has an amazing potential, but I think co-creation needs to occur from the beginning, as a foundation, rather than in a reactive capacity. I was happy to hear there were a lot of changes for this year… Again, our year was contentious. I'd tell [new students] to speak to the faculty about HOW co-creation occurs. (original emphasis)*

This term "co-creation" plays a foundational role in ensuring the operation of an interdisciplinary space and not just when tasks are assigned, and projects need to be completed. Interpreted and practiced in the narrow sense of getting things done and getting credited, "co-creation" loses the ground to accommodate the answers to the call of the interdisciplinary program; it betrays the hopes with which individual students come forward to a less compartmentalized cause of knowledge production.

Essential within this is the "human" aspect of co-creation and interdisciplinarity, where the effort needed to attend to the pedagogical growth of a specialized interdisciplinary educational space takes more time and effort than the usual graduate-level course, (and this needs to be integrated into the time commitments, funding, and institutional support) as the cultivation of human-elements is what made each iteration of UHI a living space that cannot be reduced to a flat and abstract measurement of progress. Multiple students reported that faculty failed to plan proactively, and instead remained in their comfort zone of teaching knowledge, not venturing out much beyond their training (wearing the "totalized hat" of architect, humanist, urban planner).

In one of the interviews, a student also remarked at length about how they were ostracized by faculty for giving critical comments about the program, and its intentions and background, within what they thought was a safe classroom discussion. Other students within interviews have remarked about other moments of where they felt the program did not match its promise of being a truly interdisciplinary space—they learned that there were still hierarchies of knowledge enforced by who was in the room—and were turned off by what they sensed as being hypocritical positions of those in power.

The following quote by a Ph.D. student gives voice to some tensions about creation inherent in the classroom, shaking out some further issues from above.

The summer was great - we did projects rapidly, everything was applied, learned great skills; also the catering was important for getting to know each other. I think the biggest thing lacking throughout was someone on the faculty with a planning perspective. Besides that - some of the guest lectures were boring although those that were great seemed sadly abbreviated due to UHI faculty taking most of the

class time on lecture and introduction. I think the teamwork projects would have

benefited from some kind of workshop or education on how best to communicate

and work with others in that type of environment - all from such different

backgrounds and with very different ideas, it was much more challenging than

working in a group made up of all people from my discipline.

This quote speaks to an increased need in programs like UHI to develop clear-cut pedagogical

practices and training, for both faculty and students. There was often the impression from students

that faculty were unwilling, or maybe unable because of their already disciplinary entrenchment

and existing position of power and privilege within the academy, to equally participate in the

interdisciplinary experiment of UHI as equals, at least in the possibility of it changing their own

knowledge practices (giving up some of the authority of disciplinary positionality). This gets back

to the process-product tension and what the main point of classroom and pedagogical emphasis,

not that one cannot do both, but they take careful calibration, which takes true meta-disciplinary

awareness and experimentation at all levels. Students felt this was important because they were

being forced to change their knowledge practices and deal with the un-comfortability that occurs

when that happens.

Reflections on the Balances and Tensions Between Home Discipline and UHI

Interdisciplinary spaces create tensions between students, between students and faculty,

and between students and their home disciplines, either through advisors or studio instructors. The

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following responses address some of these tensions, reflecting on the complicated relationships and self-awareness that emerge from participation in interdisciplinarity.

- *My home department of Urban Planning greatly supported my participation in UHI. The only minor complications came from having to balance the course requirements with those of my professional degree program, but for the most part, the certificate curriculum was nicely complimented by the graduate program.*

- *Not personal tensions, but I have become more critical of popular urbanist discourse and practices.*

- *I think others in the profession don't understand what's the added value. They might not be dismissive or hostile. The value is having an expanded concept of "what is a planner" or "what do planners do?" Ideally, planners need to constantly expand our intellectual and professional territory (to use a loaded metaphor). In professional settings, there's always turf wars but planning has always been a generalist and interdisciplinary field.*

- *For fellow professional master's students, I tell them to consider very carefully how much of their limited time will be taken up by UHI. For such a short program, UHI does take up a lot of elective credits. Those looking to enrich their academic and theoretical experience will likely get more out of UHI than those looking for technical, professional development opportunities.*

- *Definitely, it was a strain on time and the worth of commitment was often questioned. My own work probably suffered and what I was doing was probably not taken seriously, but (hopefully) it was rewarding enough to make up for those things.*

- *Fuck yes, [my architecture studio instructor] told me UHI isn't relevant and yelled at me publicly at length about this.*

These responses run the gamut from positive to severely negative tensions with home disciplines. The Urban Planning school seemed much more supportive of students being present in the program. The last two comments aligning with a larger tension in the architecture school about the time commitment for the UHI program that was seen as secondary to the goal of producing architects. UHI also was an incubating space for conversations about power and privilege within architecture practice and was not appreciated by certain instructors who only emphasized the aesthetic and apolitical. On this note, architecture schools seem to be having a reckoning about race, privilege, and abusive pedagogical practices within 2020's wider social discussions, and the above tension may have anticipated this. I am not an expert on this area but talked to enough UHI architecture grads while this was happening, and continue to, to get a sense of contextualization for these institutional tensions.

Lacking from the above accounts are voices from doctoral students, who perhaps accounting from their independent nature of scholars, experienced less direct tension with their home program. This might be in part just not reflected in the students who responded to the survey, as within my interviews and conversations with graduate's specific tensions for doctoral students did appear. Most notable was a student that said the program put them behind one year in their program, due to the time commitment required that took them away from studying for exams.

Another doctoral student called the program a "trauma," though this had more to do with tensions involved in collaboration, what sort of work was valued, for instance how theoretically correct it was, and the timescale that value was acknowledged as they argued that a humanist has to do more research and thinking work to make something substantial, rather than flashy (and they were dismissive of flashy things that received quick praise). Both of these students had what I would also label as a strong disciplinary identification with their home disciplines, perhaps making interdisciplinarity more difficult as they were less willing to compromise ingrained disciplinary values at the expense of a quick product.

Another area of disciplinary tension between the UHI space and home disciplines is something that will appear in other responses below and has to do with the tensions around positionality, ethics, and what constitutes just and conscious approaches to the city. As can be seen through some of the responses above, UHI represented a more political and critical space from the mainstream of the architecture and urban planning professional programs, yet at the same time, it appeared more conservative, entangled with privilege and power, etc., from other disciplinary perspectives (e.g. ethnic studies, other areas of the humanities), created a two-sided tension that changed based on an individual's position within the wider discourse. The next set of questions addresses these issues of positionality.

Reflecting on Positionality with Home Discipline/Field

Conversations about positionality and ethics often took hold in UHI conversations, where students reflected on larger issues within their disciplines, for instance, the ethical practice of an urban planner or an architect, as well as how they would engage with the city together as a group. The following responses address some of those issues.

- *How critical it is to confront issues of positionality. That fun and creative work should also be grounded in ethical reflection.*

- *UHI today means to me, a continued questioning of conventional ways of thinking about how to engage meaningfully in the world as someone who has become an urban humanist.*

- *I learned to think broadly and across disciplines in an intensely collaborative setting. It taught me how to have patience and think through my own positionality as it relates to the people and places where we are creating critical scholarship and urban intervention.*

- *It inspired me to think of myself, my role as beyond what I bring to the table as simply an "urban planning professional," but rather as someone who is able to think through issues that cut across planning, urban design, politics, history, and culture.*

- *Architecture students surely have many choices after graduation. I would reconsider to go in a more critical/theoretical way instead of doing design all the way down.*

These responses show that UHI was at times able to create a space where some difficult conversations were able to occur, allowing students to critically re-think their disciplinary orientations and future career paths. This allowed for meta-disciplinary conversations that provoked self-reflection about not only knowledge but how that knowledge was enacted in the world.

However, this was not the case for all students. One doctoral student from a social sciences background had extremely critical comments about conversations regarding race within UHI, and how those conversations existed within the classroom space. When asked what they learned from MA students, the respondent said:

They hardly engage in conversations of racial justice. M.Arch students are stuck in the past when it comes to methods in which they design buildings considering last how and what they mean for people.

Another student divided the classroom community between those who were allies and those who were not, between:

People who got it, those seeking a place to talk about these issues because they couldn't in their own departments, and those that made me feel used or were to afraid and ashamed to make public their own ignorance.

On the flip side, students reported that they felt alienated from divisions like this, which occurred primarily within one cohort group where pedagogical mistakes were made on the teaching end from the very beginning. In this case, a new instructor came into the classroom with a "Eurocentric" urban theory background, using terminology that was deemed inappropriate by some students. From my vantage, this had more to do with the (non-American) instructor not fully understanding the nuances of American academia's racial discourse, and that particular faculty member got much better as they learned, though trust was lost within members. A general tension with Eurocentric theory and its background in particular disciplines was a constant critique, leveled at the reading materials, theories, and teaching practices, which were said to replicate "White" views of the city and logics of urban development. These echo wider discussion currently underway in the academy

A final set of points comes from a longer interview that I conducted about this topic with a graduate from a Latinx background, who commented on the ease that faculty could make claims about the city from an unquestioned sense of privilege. The student could see how UHI had tried to build practices to better deal with this, such as "engaged scholarship," but that it still had not gone far enough or was enough directly above the surface within the pedagogy. Our interview concluded that there was still further work to be done in this regard.

In another interview, one student from that year recounted how this created a sense of antagonism from the very beginning, which was not addressed until the end of the course. This student lamented that because of this issue, and their perceived position being from an urban-centered discipline, and therefore part of the problem, that they "*missed out on relationships with some [their] colleagues*" and that they "*did not feel comfortable talking or making for a long time [after the first course] and that was frustrating. [I feel] there was a lot to learn*" from the critical students after they closed ranks, but it wasn't possible.

This student attributed the problems to pedagogical failures that occurred the beginning—really the first day of the course, with the one faculty members language and another faculty members presentation, and then the inability to directly address that in the following weeks due to desire to impress the core faculty members with work—and to this, I would agree, at some level, though I was also privy to upper-level tensions in this situation. I am also critical of the above-quoted students seemingly inability to engage in the deeper exercise of co-learning within UHI, however I do understand and am sympathetic the burden of having to teach "ignorant" and "privileged" people about race and the racial politics of urban areas, but a space like UHI is inherently a middle ground where you cannot assume that everyone knows or can act or understand

in the same way, so it always flummoxed me why students like the above joined UHI in the first place.

Perhaps it comes down to, as with most things, the pre-history of a student's expectations and what they come into a pedagogical space with, concerning their own positionality coming in and expectations. Whether an educational space works or gives you what you need, depends on perspective, and position and UHI opened up a kind of critical thinking practice about space and the city for enough of its graduates.

Other Key Tensions

From my position as a "middle person" or a mediator, I had a sensitivity and empathetic response to the existing and potential unevenness in the distribution and contribution of emotional and social labor. I was constantly aware of (1) students' discomfort or struggle within larger structures of the university, (2) how these tensions would enter in the UHI space, (3) how someone in a teaching position is to learn about, but also with, their way of making sense of this alternative educational space, and (4) how that kind of teaching is leading.

Therefore, tensions about issues such as the uneven distribution and contribution of emotional and social labor—between students, between faculty and students, between what was taught and what was being made—became another important theme of inquiry:

- *I think there was a lot of labor regarding creating ethic[al] and just dynamics within the cohort that was left up to the humanities students. For the most part, I think the rest of the cohort was open to hearing, learning and shifting, but the disproportion of (emotional/social) labor felt tense at times.*

- *I disengaged from collaboration with certain scholars due to discrepant research methodologies and intellectual mismatch.*

- *Balance of camaraderie and tensions. Tensions not always addressed as well as should be. Some of the boundaries (faculty / student, disciplinary) remained salient and were activated (i.e. a source of division) at times.*

- *The projects themselves, while exciting and fun (for lack of better word), have been less impactful. I understand what the seminars were trying to achieve, but the material (both reading and lecture) often failed to connect with my project and often came off as peripheral to the overall project.*

- *It was challenging and unhelpful at times to have such short deadlines and often unhelpful oversight from faculty who seemed very focused on output over quality.*

Learning About Cities

Learning about Los Angeles

In these responses, I wanted to know what students learned about Los Angeles.

- *I learned about the spatial complexity of Los Angeles. I learned to read and navigate it across multiple experiences and medias. I learned to think in terms of Los Angeles and then connect that out to the rest of the world.*

- *I got to know neighborhoods that I would not have thought about visiting prior to UHI (e.g. Boyle Heights). The curiosity that UHI awakened stayed, as I continue to explore, especially the 'problematic' neighborhoods (Skid Row).*

- *As a foreigner, Los Angeles poses an immense challenge. It is not easy to visualize LA. I became enmeshed with the city and fell in love with its history thanks to UHI. Unintentionally, by providing a different outlook on the city, UHI gave me a different perspective of my region, Latin America. The "positionality" of LA is unique, as is the intelligence of the city. There I realized that the US is part of Latin America and that Latin America is part of the US. Even though tensions have existed over the border, the shared palimpsest is deep and serves as a powerful joint between north and south.*

- *I learned that LA is not good at memorializing its history. Having spaces like UHI and cityLAB help us uncover a lot of histories that government and private institutions make no//little effort to preserve. I also learned a lot about how LA's urban infrastructure is being massively re-developed in response to the arrival of the tech industry.*

- *LA has some fucked up history. Also, there were small jazz bars in Little Tokyo back in the 80's.*

- *I think it was interesting to learn L.A.'s history immediately after arriving. Later, I found out that many of my friends don't not know Olvera Street even they have lived in L.A. for several years. Originally, I didn't have too much expectation about urban studies.*

- *I grew up in [LA], but I didn't know much about the LA region until I joined the program.*

- *A surprise, and one component that I frequently use, was the work on Los Angeles. The approach to LA's history has informed my understanding of the city and continues to influence how I think about it.*

- *It helped me rediscover L.A. I've been here forever, but [things I learned in UHI] have come up in conversation. Like the research project I had done [for summer institute] had taught me Chinatown, and when I went with my family to Dim Sum, I was able to walk them around and show them history as well as street vendors.*

- *Having to do projects and spend focused amounts of time thinking in different parts of the city has built my familiarity with them and an appreciation for its diverse and varied aspects.*

- *Having never lived in Los Angeles before, I learned a great deal about the city's history and current politics through UHI. Our engagement with community partners deepened my understanding of current issues facing the city and the network of actors that are affecting change.*

- *That we should not work in brown and black neighborhoods without reason.*

Based on these responses, students did generally gain a multi-layered sensibility for Los Angeles, which was "thick" and dug beneath fantasy tropes about the city. It is the sense of L.A. that I hoped was being taught and reflects different pedagogies for learning the city.

The final comment speaks to a primary tension of urban studies and UHI, which is where can a program like this study and how to do it in a way that is not just parachuting in. Within UHI, there were many conversations about this, but they were also not consistent from year to year, or

group to group. In L.A., due to the focus on spatial (in)justice, the program gravitated to areas that were undergoing changes and tensions, for instance with gentrification or development, yet the student's comment about "reason" resonates as something that always needs to be developed from the ground up.

One mistake that I think was made was that though the work was put in to create a ground-up reason in one year (e.g. in year three that specifically focused on spatial injustice), it did not carry over to another year, at least in the views of the students. This was a mistake that I was guilty of as a teacher, thinking that because something worked before, or was virtuous, it would work again with a new group of students. But each group has its dynamics, commitments, and issues, and the space of trust must be built on its own every time.

Learning about Tokyo, Shanghai, & Mexico City

The following responses focus on what students learned from the other city they traveled to with UHI, divided by city of focus.

Shanghai

- *I knew Shanghai fairly well, but UHI allowed me a kind of praxis of that knowledge in a way that I hadn't quite had before, and that had to do with being in the other city with other people and thinking it at the same time, and filtering that through our skills, to make something new and tangible. It utilized my knowledge in a way that was deeply meaningful and satisfying.*

- *Shanghai/China is not as scary as mainstream media makes it sound.*

- *Everything. From art to cinema, music, architecture, urban development, cultural dynamics, and even many personal histories within and of Shanghai.*

- *My experience about Shanghai was quite complex. On the one hand, I could serve as a translator and a bridge to the local people. On the other hand, I also felt being totally a tourist to this city. It seemed that I could "understand" but also sensed unfamiliarity at the same time. Comparing to other Chinese students, actually I didn't feel the authority to explain the country, especially for the recent fifty to seventy years.*

Mexico City

- *How vibrant and different Mexico City is, while still being so familiar. The enormous socio-economic gap that spans from First to Third World countries was entirely unfamiliar to me, being from Europe. But, it was also 'more LA' than LA in its eclecticism, and I had my moments of familiarity given the pieces of European architecture resulting from Mexico City's colonial history.*

- *Mexico City functions better than anyone would have ever otherwise led me to expect. I had this brief belief that most "Third World" cities were fairly navigable and safe and full of interesting surprises. Maybe Mexico City is more of a "North American" city, but visiting an Indonesian metropolis, I learned not to be so pollyanna-ish about urbanism in the quote-unquote developing world. UHI could never do in Jakarta or Manila or Bangkok what it has achieved in these other three cities, which is each a lot more like L.A. than like cities in these more troubled, more impoverished parts of the world.*

- *Mexico City was interesting, in that I have never studied something so intensely without having some kind of material relationship to it.*

- *That 16,000 people work as trash pickers at the dump, traffic is bad, it's quite corrupt, and it is an awesome city that I love.*

- *I'm from Mexico City, so UHI expanded my existing knowledge, taught me much more about its history, and helped me to see different sides and aspects of the city than I had before.*

- *I learned a great deal about Mexico City's history and culture. The spring trip also afforded me the opportunity to return to Mexico City the following summer to continue our project on play streets.*

- *I got an in-depth understanding of a single street in a hyper touristy area of the city that I had written off as uninteresting and over developed for tourism. Spending an entire week walking back and forth across a single street can reveal profound hidden histories, economies and social dynamics. I learned that collaborating with other university students who are local to a region is vital to the ethnics and execution of the project.*

- *[All the students] bodies were so invested in this field work like. Mexico City is a city that never stops. It feels worse than New York. It feels more intense than New York. It's very jungle like, so you feel very out of your element. And I think going from UCLA inside of a classroom with air conditioning, talking about these things in theory and being really passionate about them. It's actually being in the field, like my team was working in Santa Maria de Ribera, which is kind of far out, added to all this.*

Tokyo

- *Getting to know the students at UCLA and in Tokyo [Waseda] was an amazing part of the experience. Even through the relatively brief contact, the different experiences and attitudes were very eye opening and put my own work into perspective.*

- *LA is connected to Tokyo in multiple ways - both through history as well as facing similar challenges in parallel.*

- *Going to Tokyo taught me a new way to engage with the city, a different way of tourism, where travel is not for leisure, an orientation I have used on trips since. It's really invaluable. I learned that walking is good and can be empowering. More importantly, I learned about historical transformation in a city. It also helped to demystify Japan's cultural weight in my imagination, as an Asian American person.*

Other Reflections on Transnational Learning

These responses collect answers that had a synthetic component, where students were thinking and reflecting about important interconnections occurring within UHI, particularly the transnational interconnections.

- *Cities are like siblings. We all have our own individual issues and strengths, but there is so much that is shared. We benefit from being invested in one another.*

- *The transnational experience deepened my understanding of the linkages between megacities who face urban problems of similar scale.*

- *The planning profession in the USA is still very Eurocentric, and provincial, even if the academy is less so. Even architecture training has much more contact with international currents than planner. That's why it's critical for UHI to have a transnational component.*

- *I felt the preparatory knowledge of the city was somehow useless when we were there, and it only matters if we try to connect such experience with it afterwards.*

- *UHI is such a unique educational set up, leveraging this conversation between different places to produce far-reaching and comparative knowledge. I think there would have to still be a comparative component in some way to make sure that UHI is not just LA studies, which would be OK, but wouldn't be as fully transnational (though seeing the other places in LA, is valuable, but the whole two-way dialogue seems incredibly important). But it could be inter-region in California (LA-Fresno, or LA-Inland Empire), or it could be focused more specifically on the border, yet I also wouldn't want to lose Asia.*

  The complex intersections are what seems especially productive in UHI, between the Latinx world and Asia. This could be pushed even further through UHI, and I think the comparison points have been a bit unimaginative or conservative at times, still thinking in old comparative ways, without a mechanism to really Unlock the FOUR CITIES in a conversation together. Effective conversations/connections one to one and one to the other three need to be worked on more. I also think that transnational sites could expand. Problem of not much Global South, either in Americas or Asia. SE Asia (Bangkok?) would be productive, as would somewhere in South America (Colombia?). There is a lot more work to do. But I was satisfied with the transnational part, as I think what we have done is

even more than most imaginations of what can be done in this arena (more than study abroad or more than individual research).

- *I was not sure about whether the focus on comparative cities was valuable or not, since I remembered that we only talked about L.A. for one summer [this student was from an earlier year where the summer focused on L.A. and then the other city for the rest of the year]. However, I think the whole process would naturally have everyone think comparatively as the backgrounds were so diversified. On the other hand, it was exactly because the variety of the background, sometimes I even wondered that maybe the focus on L.A. as the comparative framework was not enough. I think one of the presumptions of this program was to compare L.A. (here/familiar) with the other city (there/unfamiliar/the Other). But apparently not everyone was originally familiar with "here."*

- *When I walk around other cities, I often imagine taking some shots or making some kinds of documentary for the places I have been. The experience of touring Shanghai still often comes to me when I am touring other places.*

One student gave a clear criticism of the attempt to do too much transnationally, responding to the issue where different quarters did not seem to fit together well, a criticism that I also had. The student responded:

> *The transnational project was rushed and not well prepared for. as with all projects, they were all rushed and rather lacking in preparation even though we had the time. It would have been better to connect projects over each quarter rather than being so disjointed.*

I agree with the above student who wrote about that there seemed to be a lack of imagination in thinking about how the cities fit together beyond a loose binary, where there would be great room

for comparative thinking across all four cities. Too often the years seemed to be put together in a piecemeal and reactive manner, rather than a set plan, where—and this is a finding/axiom—a "disciplined" and self-aware structure makes for good and coherent interdisciplinarity. Scaffolded comparison needs to be built up through a step-by-step process with clear moments where the comparison can happen throughout the year.

Students also remarked repeatedly of the importance of the transnational partnerships with students across the three years that it happened, with the Tokyo year being the most successful and two-way because they came to Los Angeles. Students from a studio partnership in Shanghai came to L.A. but did not interact closely with UHI students, students from Mexico City were not able to come due to visa issues due to the US government, as well as comparative wealth to other international student groups (e.g. the Japanese students who were more globally able to travel both in terms of visas and money). This is another issue that requires further theorization in a follow up article that will look specifically at international education and partnerships within UHI.

Another key transnational issue was brought up during an interview. One student from a Latinx background remarked that traveling to Shanghai reframed their global perspective and helped to reframe their understanding of scale. They reported that the context of another place helped provide more context for their home city (Los Angeles). In China, they were worried that they would not be able to navigate the city, but found it at first easy and welcoming, designed to cater to their position as a global tourist (e.g. at places like Shanghai Disneyland). Further reflection, however, created an "identity crisis" where they realized that what they were experiencing was a sense of privilege and ease within the Chinese city due to their position as a western outsider (who was read as white), which they had never experienced living as a person of

color in Los Angeles. They remarked on the unexpectedness of this transnational complication, as a main learning take-away from the UHI travel experience.

A final not on the complications of international/transnational study programs is that relationships between sites, as well as perceptions of them, change over time. For instance, there was a marked difference in perception of Shanghai and China between the first program and second, 2015 to 2019, which reflected larger geo-political complications and tensions between the two countries. Though deeper discussion and data on the second Shanghai program is reserved for its own future article, there was a marked additional anxiety concerning travel and engagement with China during the second program. This manifested in ways diverse as worry about digital data privacy and security related to travel to the ethics of traveling with an awareness of the situation in Xinjiang, an issue which I struggled with finding ways to integrate into course discussions and content as Shanghai is a key urban hub in the wider Belt and Road developmental strategy that stretches through that area (basically an impossibility). Theoretically minded students also pointed out a prevalence of a techno-Orientalist discourse that ran through western perceptions of China, manifesting in both utopian and dystopian readings (when the reality is more complicated), and in general finding ways to teach and create content that did not reifying these Orientalizing discourses was difficult.

Additionally, within the wider locational context of UHI, Mexico City was perceived as closer, more tied to Los Angeles in an intimate perceivable way that necessitated a certain ethical self-awareness and investment in intellectual/activist tools from both student and faculty. In other words, the need to develop the right approach to deal with Mexico, and Latinx communities within L.A. was an ethical constant on the surface—deepening in an increased and politically potent way post-2016. Whereas with Asia, both China and Japan, there was less surface level articulation to

create similar modes and tools, perhaps do their perceived physical and imagined distance, which served to make them more "Other," despite a plethora of historical and contemporary connections. Future Trans-Pacific travel programs will need to work harder to develop complex and appropriate conceptual and ethical tools for engaging with such study and travel, a topic that I will continue working on in a future publication.

Afterlives: Long-Term Outcomes

The following response articulates what programs like UHI can accomplish with their student participants:

> *Participating in UH . . . has afforded me the opportunity to step outside my own discipline and critically reflect upon it, while also becoming a historian, an architect, an artist, and a storyteller. I can no longer think about urban issues without considering the narratives, both visible and invisible, that are embedded in any spatial context.*

This is a kind of money quote for what I see as the generative possibilities of interdisciplinary educational spaces, where they give both critical reflective capacities and allow for a sense of "becoming" something else, a bit of each of the other disciplines in some ways—so that they are carried within individual into not just future work, but the future perceptual sensibilities for how the city is viewed. As this student reflects, it changes how they see the city and experience it, able to peel back layers of space like an onion, to see how they wrap around a complex core.

Learning and Use of UHI Methodologies

These questions how students have used and integrated key UHI project methods and theoretical approaches into their research and practice and stand as areas where learning from the program will be integrated into student lives and afterlives. Students report about different ways that they see UHI methods becoming tools for their dissertation projects or professional work. Again, this is a point of synthesis, where UHI adds to the toolbox of what is possible.

- *I think I learned a lot from the process of visualization. To make ideas presentable, accessible, and readable by receivers. This is probably also the most interdisciplinary part in this program for me. In most humanities, ideas by themselves stand. A theatrical work might require visual imaginations but they can be abstract and imagery. In contrast, to concretize and visualize abstract ideas in a form of poster or film was a very different experience to me. The requirement to present each step also urged me to think in a more practical way. I did appreciate this laboratory (workshop?) working process and think it was definitely a precious experience for humanities.*

- *The ability to communicate urban matters through film and ethnography, the open discussions, the intimate engagement of two cities' history, and current situation…*

- *There were many important take-aways. From a methodological perspective, I am still applying spatial ethnography and film to address important urban matters, particularly those which have been rendered invisible and need to be brought into the surface (of collective awareness, public policy, economic models of development, urban design, etc.)*

- *What makes UHI so special is that it recognizes how thick cities and their inhabitants are and attempts to explore ways to better understand them. No matter how many GIS maps you produce, they can only give you a brief overview of a particular location. In essence,*

those analyses give you a surface understanding, without getting to the heart of the issues. UHI tries to merge those two components together, and give meaning to spaces. And for that, I really appreciate the program.

- *Thick mapping and its tools was another highlight of the program. I will be using its methods extensively in my dissertation, professional work and teaching. The strength of thick mapping is that it allows us to incorporate multiple dimensions into urban analysis, once again, breaking away from the distant, dry, and often failed techniques of technocracy. Thick mapping humanizes urban analysis.*

<u>Professional and Career Gains through Participation: Value-Added Training and Networking (MA Students)</u>

These questions were asked specifically to MA students and reflect on how UHI might be used within their careers. In some ways, MA students have less individual creative agency in where they work—they enter into an organization that has practices and hierarchies within which they must conform. These positions are also hiring based on their professional skills signaled by the MA degree, with UHI maybe coming up as a secondary element within job interviews. Whereas Ph.D. students report direct integration, for instance using mapping in a doctoral dissertation project, or making a UHI-style exhibition within a course they are teaching, MA students perhaps find subtler ways to signal their experience.

- *Through UHI I was exposed to work at the UCLA IoES, and to a Major Fellowship through the Grand Challenges, which I won. Both of those experiences had a major impact on my*

last year at UCLA and beyond and have no doubt informed my current employment both in recruitment and capability.

- *UHI enabled me to network with faculty and professionals who now employ me full time.*

- *I applied to NASA JPL and was hired.*

- *Will figure in any future Ph.D. application. Also, have connected with artists who are "UHI-like" and used UHI as a platform for discussing ideas about the city.*

- *I emphasize the cross-disciplinary nature of the work, as well as the training we received to do in-depth, site-specific analyses using mixed methods approaches.*

- *I have drawn on the multidisciplinary collaboration, human-centered design approach.*

- *It'd be a chance to highlight my diverse interdisciplinary interests, ability to execute creative projects, and the ability to work with others.*

UHI Integration into Doctoral Education

These questions were asked only on the Ph.D. survey and concerning specific issues or tensions related to interdisciplinary program participation when in a doctoral program. In contrast to MA students, the doctoral students who utilized UHI ideas found it very significant and transformative. This was not all of them, as I would say that the doctoral students who did not find benefit from UHI rejected it more completely, but rather the idea that when it worked with the Ph.D. it really worked, deeply changing the content, identity and objectives of that degree. This was certainly true in my case, but I see it in many other colleagues, some of who will appear in the following chapter.

- *It is worth the time because the time you put into it is what makes it. It is also important to go in being open and curious, rather than wanting specific knowledge or qualifications, because it tends to shut down those that are too mercenary in wanting it to force it into something specific to them, rather than seeing where it goes in the collective. The relationships are really what make it and the chance to have some sustained time to think through something/somewhere with other people. The more you cultivate that as an opportunity to learn and to be, the better.*

- *Students should choose UHI classes that simultaneously fulfill their own disciplinary requirements, thus they do not "lose" any time by participating in UHI. At least that worked for me. I would recommend students to participate as early as possible, as, in my case, it took me 2 years to recognize the intellectual and personal value UHI had for me.*

- *Don't take it with the expectation that it will lead to something concrete. UHI is about serendipity. It's one of these things that being a Ph.D. student is all about: exploring new ideas and avenues for research.*

- *That dose of the professional grad school experience, which is quite distant from the experience of being in an academic Ph.D. The collaborative nature of many of the projects. The quick turnaround times. The experience of in-person verbalized crits (as opposed to the shadowy, impersonal manner of receiving online comments from a professor). Facing communities with work pertaining to their immediate and everyday lives. Watching and participating in contestation among activists and professionals.*

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- *When I first started UHI I had little idea where my own research was going to take me. UHI helped me narrow some of my ideas - especially regarding the meaning of "engaged scholarship" - a topic we would always come back to in class. To be an "engaged scholar" to me means to bridge disadvantaged communities with active scholarship and that is what I am trying to do in my own research.*

- *UHI was the gateway that empowered me to root my interests in aesthetics and meta-historical constructs in the human and the urban. Overall, it gave me the opportunity to create a healthier balance between meta and microanalyses. Walking through the city with open eyes is the method that the "un-urban" humanities lack these days, as they sharpen their theoretical lens without feeling the duty to apply them. (Ph.D.)*

- *Everything? UHI showed me the only restrictions on my research is my imagination (and what the professors want).*

Academic and Professional Career Plans post-UHI

These are responses by students discussing how they have used UHI in their academic or professional careers and start articulating important program afterlives.

- *Without the spatial justice awareness UHI equipped me with, I would not have been interested to attend related events, think about mapping, or work for a neighborhood council. While teaching UCLA summer school in Berlin, I took 30 UCLA students to the object I am analyzing for my Ph.D. thesis: a cylinder of concrete that the Nazis left behind. I was interested to hear what they have to say and how they would engage with the 'haunted' space. (Ph.D.)*

- *I am currently developing a film on the growth and evolution of Quito, emphasizing the existence of its indigenous communes, since pre-colonial times until now. The film is a continuation of the work I started at UHI. We applied it to LA and Tokyo, now I am applying it to Quito. At the intersection of art, architecture, urban studies and geography it is possible to work as an urban humanist. (Ph.D.)*

- *I am currently working on updating the City of Long Beach's Historic Context Statement and I'm having flashbacks to the methods/ideas of UHI. I want to bring in thick, interactive mapping, storytelling, and archival research of underrepresented groups into this project. I also want to highlight the uses of space (rather than buildings themselves), which certainly draws inspiration from our exploration of public space in UHI. (MA)*

- *Architectural projects are inherently tied to all of the urban conditions in which they are situated. It is impossible to design anything without considering everything that we learned about determining the true urban issues and how our design proposals impact them. (MA)*

Concluding Comments

It Takes Time to Appreciate the Experience at UHI

The pace of learning and making may be overwhelming, the literature and skills to internalize may be challenging, and the quarter is short; added to the tight working schedule are expected and unexpected tensions and contradictions between those present and between the requirements of UHI and those of one's home department. To some students, it is only when the program was over and what had been experienced had a chance to settle down those new meanings and refreshed memories began to ferment or catalyzed in a longer-scale alchemical reaction. What

gets produced is not a totality of what was in the curriculum, specific terminologies, or techniques of measuring things, but a sensibility, the ability to "attend to" seemingly minute matters and distant relationships.

> *Especially in the beginning, there was a lot of interdisciplinary chaos/Babylonian confusion in terms of jargon, positionalities, interests, which created a certain tension. I only learned to value that when I was two years out of the program, as this tension led to a seismic shift in my intellectual and human apparatus.*

Not everything was done or complete while the class was still going. The time and space allowed for a class are inevitably limited. Therefore, what envelopes a class, especially the time and attention devoted, is key to keeping "required" or "structured" learning vital and make it take flight.

> *Though it felt short-term in the beginning, because we were always racing against the clock, the long-termism involved with folks like Jon and Gus and Lucy, and Dana and Todd reaching out to keep us thinking about promising projects we had started in UHI. So, I could call that, "the follow-up," which is a rarity for seminar work in my discipline. Perhaps the best example of this is the ways my UHI skills have migrated into fieldwork I did at Burning Man and on Instagram.*

But again, this quote points to the essential role of teaching that cannot be measured by classroom or office hours. There is a lot of "human" work in this kind of pedagogic devotion, which delivers a crystal-clear message: we (the teaching team) are all here, listening and paying attention to you. UHI worked best when this was the prevailing spirit. It did not work when faculty or students were checked out: thinking about other things, going through the motions, trying just to get a product

finished, or another year in the books. This attention cushions confusion and tiredness that may otherwise have had a hard landing on unattended ground. It allows everyone to be at peace with disciplinary or knowledge incompleteness, and each other (a forgiving grace needed to have uncomfortable conversations about the politics of knowledge and the city), taking care of the insecurity of the unfinished or disconnected thought, and move on to work together.

When it works it creates experiences like this final quote, which is enough of a legacy of UHI that nothing else needs to be said after:

- *The feeling of trepidation as we filmed ourselves eating donuts outside on a sidewalk in Hollywood. The excited stress of a story map coming together at the last minute. The stale air of our Mexico City hostel room after we'd all been working on our project for hours. The group fieldwork, code-switching, dinners, nights out, walkabouts, language barriers, pride in others' work, and ideas proposed that were off-putting but heartfelt.*

  So in short, the people!

Select Data on Post-UHI Employment

PhD Students (2015-2020)

Status	Total
Graduated	18
Still at UCLA (ABD)	21
Still at UCLA (Coursework)	6

Left Program Before PhD	3
Total (2015-2020)	**48**

PhD Students Types of Positions (2015-2020)

Position	**Number**
Postdoc	2
Assistant Adjunct	2
Researcher	1
Faculty Position	7
Unknown	6
Total (2015-2020)	**18**

Example of MA Graduate Employment (as of 2020 all UHI June MA students from the sample

have graduated)

Program	**Urban Planning**	**Architecture**
Examples of Positions	Transportation planner City of Los Angeles International Consulting/Building Firm County Planning LA Metro Associate Director, cityLAB	Design Associate Architect for City Government Owner of Interior Design Company Program Manager Architecture School Travel Facilities Support at Research Lab Architectural Designer

	Designer, cityLAB	Owner Design and Fabric Craft Company
	Project Planner	Designer and Researcher
	Program Director, Chinese Cultural Organization	
	Researcher at University	
	City Planning (in LA area)	
	Management Assistant for City	

Chapter 11 Student Afterlives

Introduction: Afterlives and Afterings

This chapter constitutes the time after the end the program when the rest of life is opened up; the postscript to the story, from the vantage of program, but what from the vantage of education is the actual story. This dissertation has tried to theorize and understand educational events occurring within an interdisciplinary location called Urban Humanities that pulled different people and ideas together and put them out in places within the world. In these places, events happened due to the encounters that occurred. Education happens at particular times and in particular places with particular people, it is marked by this time. Yet, education itself—what was learned, encountered, open-up, and so on—carries on, into each individua's future in its own way. In this way, education can transcend a program, or an institution, or a particular field. They spread out messily, unpredictably and unexpectedly, after education is over; education's afterlives.

By afterlives, I mean the way that a student's encounter that came together with conditions such as interdisciplinarity, peer collaboration, the global, other places, e.g. the general crossing of intellectual and physical borders, leaves traces within the student, initiating an open-ended process that then finds expression in their future work. *Aftering* might be another way to express this, a term adapted from a recent volume tracing the *aftering* of global literary scholar Masao Miyoshi's work and area studies (Wilson, 2019 p. 1), a valence that also connects it to a variety of postcolonial and post-disciplinary uses of the term that try to create new planetary formations of knowledge that are *after* the Western conception of the human/humanities (Ahluwalia, 2007; Lowe & Manjapra, 2019).

In some cases, the education of UHI has become central, living on and continuing to be productive and named. It exists on resumes, c.v.'s, research programs, and other outward symbols. Graduates carry on its legacy through articles, podcasts, courses, policies. These are the positive outcomes, the apparent ones. But education can also be forgotten; just a thing that was done somewhere back in there in the past referred to now and then with slight nostalgia or passing unhappiness (as some no doubt have bad, or indifferent memories). All these outcomes are important, possible, valid—along with registers in-between—coming as the result of that "beautiful risk" that education always has inherently within it (Biesta, 2013). It is like Mallarmé's poem about the dice throw, oft quoted by Badiou (2016), which stands for the possibility of some truth emerging out of contingency, where the educational event can structure a way forward. Education has something like that inside it, a power for generative encounters that carry into the future after the formal registers of it are over.

UHI Scyborg Agency

In chapter 3, I briefly introduced a theory by the education scholar la paperson that talks about the assembled agency of those students who pass through the elite first and second universities, but who try to build a third university from the cracks. la paperson calls this agency Scyborg, and agency that is "multiscalar" and that "hacks," as "the scyborg is a sculptor of assemblage—s-he splice one machine to another to work in making new machines, disassembles and reassembles the machine. The scyborg can connect Black radical thought to the paper-producing academic-industrial complex and set the print command to "manifesto" (p. 64). This is a radical vision of a different, better interdisciplinarity that takes into account the worlds and

institutions that academic subjects are created in, while also giving some synthetic agency for those who are "interpellated" within the university.

Though la paperson's reaches for a radicality that is perhaps beyond the scope of my study, I take inspiration from their theorizing as it provides an account of how we synthesize different parts of education experience, from the complicity of our positions within institutions to the random pieces of knowledge and other toolsets that each person faces the task of pulling within themselves and their work in their own way. We each have to do this coming out of the university, and if we are conscious of this, we perhaps some agency however corrupted it might be by the larger social-institutional structures that we find ourselves. paperson never stops reminding the reader that they are "privileged" and that to be emerging out of the university is to as a professional or an academic professional, is to be a "technologically enhanced colonial subject," though this is not wholly negative as it is in this position that alternatives can be carried and dreamed. Perhaps thinking of UHI as a technology, a kind of academic version of a Foucauldian technology of the self, would also be useful: a technology (skill) that students gain through their participation and then integrate in themselves in a variety of different long-term outputs.

The small book ends with a call for continued connection between scyborgs, giving an account of a collaborative solidarity that is outside the scope of academic capitalism, where in "one another, we augment each other's scyborg powers. One and others, scyborg dreams become blueprints become realities, become ruins, become soil for scyborg schemes" (p.70). Perhaps, those scholars and professionals that UHI produces in part might also be able to do something like this?

Chapter Methods and Overview

The chapter presents fragments from my fieldwork observations and individual conversations in order to give some accounts of how UHI alum have found ways to synthesize UHI into their lives. Not enough time has passed for a full longitudinal study, there may be a future twenty-years later check-inversion, so these moments and conversations all occurred in the middle of lives in motion (as well as further versions of this article, as the data I have extends beyond what is presented here). In this way, the chapter is the most provisional of the dissertation, presented as more a series of linked vignettes, or stories of my encounters with different members of UHI, farther down their path of life. They present times where I had singular or collective conversations with UHI graduates throughout my fieldwork (interviews). It was my way to try to listen to my colleagues on how they saw UHI in their lives, as well as way to keep the conversation going.

Who I talked to was also fairly contingent, based on who had time, when our schedules could meet, and other prevailing issues, and while the voice recorder was formally on for many of the conversations it wasn't for others (which I reconstructed through fieldnotes of the conversation). The conversations occurred over about a 14-month period (roughly spring 2018 to summer 2019. They were also, as I have mentioned, somewhat freewheeling and flowing, engaging with broad themes and trying to work them out, rather than being extractive conversations that were trying to get a specific point. For this reason, I have tended to render the conversations into distilled insights. The conversations occurred in many places, both inside and outside the university, but outside when possible because I wanted them to have the feeling of life and of UHI spilling out onto the streets to become something else, unconstrained by the academy.

By this I mean I try to give the vignettes a sense of time and place, which can then help to undergird the specific insights of each fieldwork encounter.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first part recounts the collective organizing of the UHI Alumni Salon, which was a formal, graduate organized attempt to keep UHI work going. I present the series of salons that occurred during the spring of 2018 and culminated in Salon 01, a two-day conference to showcase student work. The second focuses on sketches from interviews, placed into a kind of loose ethnographic narrative.

11.1 Saturday Nights at the Alumni Salon

De-Café, Perloff Hall, UCLA, Spring 2018

A couch sits in the middle of the architecture building's exhibition space, recreating the scene of a living room. There is a rug on the floor and a lamp set standing on the side, almost like a stage set. There are chairs and little single-person benches, or "poofs," that are set up for a kind of audience. The "living room" is designed to replicate a series of Saturday night salon events that had taken place over the past few months in a small apartment in Koreatown with 10 to 15 urban humanists packing in to present work, engage in conversation, and try to keep UHI going in a new way. The event at UCLA is the culminating event of this cycle, where the salon engages with the public, curating examples of work, small talks, and other types of performance from a wider network of alumni.

The living room, then, is the central speaking area of the "salon," a self-described, "part symposium, part exhibition, party performance [the salon] reflects five years of making urban

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humanities in Los Angeles, presenting projects blurring the edges of our respective disciplines in the humanities, urban research and design" (Salon 01 program booklet). Circling out from this central area are a number of individual exhibitions, 24 in total. They represent the work of Urban Humanities students, collecting projects made during and after UHI. Visual projects on big poster boards hang from the ceiling, making a path from the front entrance to the salon living room floor. These include frames from a *fotonovela* on Black and Latina/o street vendors in Los Angeles, select images from an Instagram mapping project about L.A. history, and the architectural and social history of a country house outside of Chengdu. There are other materially made objects: the Animó benches made for EPFC, the bicycle safety cut-outs, and a more ephemeral block of ice standing on a pedestal that gives a physical manifestation to the object in the film *Mist Opportunity*. There is also a film festival, screening in a small hallway alcove, including a "greatest hits" of UHI films from past and present.

Throughout the day there are also as series of talks, panels, and performances, including by a group of high school students from South Los Angeles, whose teacher is a UHI alum. They have done a project using methods of walking and photography, taught to them by another architecture alumni, to document their home neighborhoods, also presented in a series of image triptychs that fill one corner of the room. This is tied to a reading of a Charles Dickens novel, from which they have developed a dance and theater performance. The students are in costume and perform a part of the piece in front of the couch that puts 19th century London in conversation with 21st century Los Angeles.

More than the presentation of the work itself, though this is important as people come in from the wider university and public community to be exposed to the work in a way that is bigger than just from a classroom, it is the process that the alumni salon came about, coming out

of the UHI students desire to continue building community after their respective program years were completed. The previous fall alumni from the first Mexico City and second Tokyo years met, along with me from Shanghai, to try to think through how UHI could move into the future outside the program itself. Many ideas were thrown onto the table, ranging from the fully experimental (a kind of disembodied festival) to the more formal (a formal conference), with the model of the outside the university salon, inspired by intellectual salons from centuries past, seemed fitting as a way to build an in-between, twilight space for those who had graduated and those still in the university to meet and talk and build ideas.

The Salon kicks-off in the winter at a small gallery space in mid-city, where over 40 alumni come from different years, sharing drinks and tamales. The salon committee presents a short vision of the next few months: small monthly salons that will culminate in the larger exhibition at the end of the spring. Alumni and current students are asked to consider submitting projects that are in various stages of completion and conceptualization, as the salon will be a space for continuing to collaboratively workshop ideas in the ways that UHI taught. One thing I notice is that despite differences in years, there is a built shared lingo that exists between alumni, allowing for an ease of communication and collaboration. They speak about the city the same way, through a conceptual toolbox that is attuned to issues of city and able to combine spatial, historical, theoretical, engaged, and so on, in a "thick" way. By this, I mean they can recognize and have conversations, and more so than the community of practice that exists within a singular year, which is in a way enforced by the structure of university time, the alumni salon illustrates a community of practice that transcends the course itself.

This is a topic I am interested in and plan to present an open-ended conversation at one of the salon meetings with a fellow alumnus from the Tokyo year. We want to begin a wider

conversation about what it means and plan to first have a conversation together that we will transcribe and send to the salon to provoke discussion. The following presents parts of that first conversation, wrestling with UHI and excerpts from the alumni salon conversation itself.

A Freewheeling Dialogue on the Praxis of Urban Humanities

I meet with SC, an about to graduate urban planner, to reflect on the nature of the Urban Humanities, in a late-night café in Westwood sometime in April. We sit down and talk, with the conversation arranged in three excerpts, which engage with interdisciplinarity, education, and our (collective) future relationship with UHI. These were transcribed out of a longer two-hour conversation and we sent them to the Salon Group with these two guiding questions.

- Where is Urban Humanities now in your lives? Has it moved/evolved beyond the definitions presented or enacted in your year (by the faculty, or your classmates)? How have you made it "workable" in your work/research?
- How can Urban Humanities be more useful as a concept, a way of working and knowing, or as a field?

The conversation has been lightly edited and is followed with some of the ideas generated from the alumni conversation (not-audio recorded, but with conversation notes taken). I provide it in full because it shows the type of conversations that can be had when people are speaking from such a shared language, but more importantly, it provides an in-motion capturing of how conversations about UHI go, with natural switching between who is the question asker and

question answerer. In a way, it represents a kind of Freirean problem-posing about the meaning of educational events, and one that we wished to pose with others:

#1 Interdisciplinarity

SC: So for next week [the salon night]…I enjoy asking big, pie-in-the sky questions…

JB: What are the questions you're interested in?

SC: I was going to start…what I was going to propose for the salon before I was to collaborate with you…was, "What is urban humanities?" Just put it out there! What do people think of that? For me a working definition is: "A set of methods, widely defined, as widely as possible you can define, for investigating this thing we call the city, or the urban." To me that's as expansive a working definition as I can think of. I don't know what you think. But I'm starting to reflect on the projects that we did, that other people have done, of trying to understand this thing called the city that don't necessarily fit in our home disciplines. And I'm excited about that, as an intellectual, as a scholar, that there are different ways of knowing, that I feel need validation, that I think that the banner of UHI is a good one to use for that validation.

JB: Like what other things that don't fit into planning, humanities, architecture, or whatever else? Cause I feel there are more disciplines represented on the table actually than just those three.

SC: Yeah, no I only mention those three because those are the ones represented in the program.

JB: I feel like all these other ones have snuck in.

SC: Oh well yes, like ok, so film, art…performance studies - I need to look more carefully at that to see, well, actually I might go there for grad school, I never thought of it. Performance studies, who knew? Those are what come to mind, I'm sure there's others…

JB: Those are other disciplinary areas, but is there something that UH you think allows for, I don't know, not creating new methods exactly but rather allowing for a conversation between methods, or a meeting of methods.

SC: Right…a sharing of methods, which I think is the important part. Because I think, in the university, so much is invested in creating these disciplines and defining these boundaries. Defining them, meaning, what's in, what's out? What counts, what doesn't count?

JB: My whole thing is that, as graduate students, we're all being disciplined within those Disciplines, that process is being enacted on us, at a time when we are not fully formed, but a space like UHI is a place where the sharing can happen, which maybe changes your conception of what is being imposed on us from above. Would you say that something like that is…

SC: Yeah, well I think something that's really exciting but uncomfortable for all participants in the program, faculty and students is that…yes, you can, as graduate students, as scholars, as faculty scholars, accumulate and sharpen the disciplinary tools by which they had earned, or were given, or had worked hard to create, and then to suddenly to have someone else outside the discipline use those tools can seem (a) like, turf issue, but also (b), this fear that those who don't have that intense about of training are doing it "wrong" - I sense that.

#2 Experimental Education

JB: Bringing it back to the experimental education part of the conversation, I am interested in how to develop that attitude of sharing. How much is that spirit and sensibility important to the making of UH, or any experimental education initiative/thing?

And how do we carry that sense of sharing forward outside of a particular group of people [UH class/cohort, alumni group], into other work?

SC: This goes to a deeper question of what is education, and harkens back to things I thought about in high school [and college, SC went to an interdisciplinary college program involving arts and biological sciences, a major intellectual event and legacy he is also reckoning with]--what does it mean to know things and to learn things, and how you learn?

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No one has a total claim to knowledge, no one, no discipline has a total claim to knowledge. And that is exciting and liberating and scary for some people, who may have a vested interest in how academia is set up, but to not be so embracing of all the ways of understanding, knowing, and learning, you are a much poorer human being for that.

And I think, I remember what my high school principal said: "the goal of educators is to preserve this spark of curiosity and imagination that we all had when we were in kindergarten; when you are in kindergarten you don't think in disciplinary terms, you are a sponge that is using every way and method to understand the world that you have at your disposal as a five year old. The job of teachers is to find a way to allow students to keep that attitude for the rest of their lives."

So, when I look at the project of urban humanities [I think of this]. God bless those people who are a virtuoso at a narrow thing [and stick to it], but I'm not that kind of person...

JB: Neither am I!

SC: I wish other people had that attitude, that knowledge isn't constructed in a certain way. I don't think knowledge is put together like this. The sense of adventure in learning is a driving personal force and I'm excited to be around other people that are like that. And I think that Urban Humanities, [or at least] the people that I have kept talking to, do this.

JB: That's why I've stuck with it for so long, feeling like there wasn't a sense of adventure or pushing intellectual boundaries, etc. in my home department, or with many grad students I talk to. It's like an illness! Where grad school is the place where if anyone had any of that adventure or imagination left, it gets sucked out of you. And UHI has always been, if not exactly an oasis, a place where there is a potential to keep pushing with other people, over the course of time.

#3 Meanings and Futures

SC: Yea, I mean, I think…yeah, to go back to epistemological, critical work. I think that's how you foster the attitude. Is that when you're vulnerable to have these conversations about what you know and what you don't know, then you set up this attitude of, OK, well, I don't know everything, you don't know everything, but that's okay, and together we can pool together what we think we know, and how we know. And together, maybe, we're more than the sum of our parts.

JB: I mean that's why, the city, is important [as a place where that can happen]… or the city question, to go to your earlier definition of Urban Humanities. I mean there's an epistemological question about knowing the city, right? Like what we know and what we don't know, that epistemological question can fit into the city very easily.

SC: Yes.

JB: And I think too, that ontological questions, too, that being and holding onto that knowledge after encountering it and then embodying it in some way… like I feel urban humanities does that, because it puts you into the world, into the world of encounters and of things happening [and it unfolds from there].

SC: I'm not much of an artist, but I was thinking of designing a t-shirt that says "*the urban human condition*" for the salon. Because I think that is a particular, that cities are a particularity of the human condition, [and have been] for some time. I think that goes back to the beginning of our conversation of "what is UH," it is about trying to understand this human condition in cities.

Looking back on this conversation, I see many of the themes and processes of reflection that I have been articulating formally within these pages. They represent a framework that I tried to build further through research, my own program afterlife.

Full Alumni Conversation

Later we take the conversation to the full group, expanded with a wider cast of characters, at the apartment in Koreatown. Picture a small 1920s era studio apartment packed with some 15 people, sitting on chairs, beds, the floor, hot from the day's heat and humid with bodies and food. Earlier, there have been two presentations where UHI alum talk through their current research projects, getting feedback, and both of which will appear at the Salon exhibition. We are last, presenting as a final round of Tecate beers (the official beer of all UHI events) and homemade Aperol Spritz cocktails are passed out.

This conversation continues the freewheeling spirit, with questions about how UHI doesn't fit in a discipline, the meaning of data in UHI, and how UHI isn't stable because it doesn't have a stable way to make a research question or a method to collect data. Wrestling with this in-betweenness is a constant tic within similar conversations, wanting to know what it is, when it is a lot of things. The question of whether it is a discipline, a field, something else, comes up. One person says it exists at the intersection of artist practitioners and critics. Another proposes it might just be a community. A third gives a take that it is because of a constant "anxiety" or "claustrophobia" within disciplines themselves that makes people want to join, allowing "us to think about our disciplines differently." Is this enough to build a community? This is the question the conversation flows to next, with discussions about academic labor, the precarity of knowledge, and how communities like UHI can help navigate through such difficulties.

One alumnus from the humanities poses this question: "Those of us who are producing knowledge, how do we organize spaces and commit to communities we are in, not just after, but in, through and beyond?" This, again, is another heart of what is going on here, where the question opens up an understanding of what is actually happening here. If we trace the key moment from the Tokyo year in Chapter 9, which happened about one year earlier from this moment, to here, there is an attempt in the conversation to keep that spirit going. The Saturday nights in Koreatown are one step on that process, of continuing to discuss and theorize as a collective (a community) the meanings of that shared experience.

Reverberations

The larger Salon 01 exhibition also does this. At the end of that I give a keynote, from the couch of course, which tries to speak about some of these themes, and how it is the community of

practice that emerges as the important afterlife. The following year, at a Second Alumni exhibition (Salon 02), SC arranges a panel of professional practitioners, architects and planners now working in positions in firms and city governments and other agencies, to discuss how UHI has continued to influence their practice. That same spring (2019) I arrange a panel at Urban Affairs where we five alumni from each city year talk about how the UHI experience and how it is continuing to shape our work.

What I am saying here is that there is not a clear answer for what the afterlife is, as there are multiple, but there have been formal moments of organized community where the ever-flowing conversation is worked out. These conversations have been organically generated from the alumni themselves and for themselves, rather than in some top-down focus group way to account for the "educational excellence" of UHI, either to the university or to the Mellon. In fact, when the Mellon did come to UCLA that same year that the Salon occurred, it seemed elitist and out of touch (only focused on the trajectories of faculty, oblivious to students far beneath, it told me the city is not for them), missing the fact that the true story, perhaps hidden from view because it was no longer on the radar of what was legitimated by the institution, was the bonds the alumni had created among themselves.

11.2 Urban Humanists in the City

The Chilean Mexican author Roberto Bolaño's novel *The Savage Detectives* (1998) tells the story of an underground poetry movement occurring in Mexico City in the 1970s among a group of radical youth. This group, the Visceral Realists (based on the similar Infrarealist movement that Bolaño was part of), stage antagonistic literary provocations around the city, and the first and last part of the novel recounts a young law student at UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónmous de México), who is drawn into their countercultural orbit of sex, drugs, and poetry.

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These sections, written as diary entries, are full of the excitement and vigor of youth, of being seduced by big ideas and the energy of "new" movements. Of course, this all falls apart, and the new movement doesn't amount to anything other than a small footnote by an obscure scholar at a regional university who is the "only expert on the Visceral Realists in Mexico" (p. 584).[78]

The majority of the novel, besides the "book-ends" set in the present of the 1970s, consists of a long-series of monologues with participants and other figures related to the characters, moving towards the present in time. This section, called the titular "The Savage Detectives (1976-1996)," covers a twenty-year period of tracing out theses lives as they disappear into the world. Life gets in the way, people fall off the map, face different kinds of oblivion. They are framed as a series of interviews, by some unnamed detective, who is hunting down the story (the secret story) of the Visceral Realists, as I, or someone else in the future, may track down that secret story of Urban Humanists.

This last section is a kind of mini version of that project, a start to it, which utilizes my interviews as an initial set of these conversations, or the longer conversations that I have a starting version of, but that are not yet fully formed because not enough time has passed; there isn't an end yet, but there are some steps towards the future already taken and I point these out. These are just a few of the countless UHI stories (144 and counting). Consider this a more singularly put together narrative that points out a longer version of collected interviews and monologues, notes towards a future work: a syllabus of urban humanities futures.

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[78] Of course, Arturo Belano, or the Bolaño stand-in in the novel, becomes Bolaño a world-renowned novelist, which is the irony of the novel.

I ride the 720 bus to downtown on Wilshire boulevard with PN, a Ph.D. student in the humanities. Later in the afternoon we will attend a festival in the ACE hotel, curated by David Lynch, but will spend a few hours before talking as we travel the city. When talking about the effect of UHI on his thought, he discusses the shift from the abstract to the concrete, in this case literally, as his research project has shifted to studying an actual concrete building, a type of material object that is rare to study in the humanities, but engaging with complicated histories, cultural memories, and other issues through the study. He discusses a conference in his discipline where other scholars did not quite get what he was doing, too confined in thinking it was an either, or situation: either history or architecture or literature, but not a project build from the interstices that come in between. The UHI experience has allowed him to bring in different practices to his research, visiting the building in Berlin, collecting engineer documents as part of the archive. He says, as we walk down the block on Los Angeles street:

> "One of the best things about Urban Humanities is that you learn to be open to new
> things, and to learn from new things, and be informed by new things. But in the end,
> you also have to put it together, and that's a struggle. But it's really important to
> struggle and go through that because we are pioneers, we want to have that
> connection, we want to be a bridge from our intellectual realm and show how much
> value it has for the urban reality."

PN has put the work into developing a dissertation project that fully utilizes the knowledge position of UHI to make something wholly new.

We finish our interview in a basement level bar in an old bank vault and then enter the *Festival of Disruption*, an interdisciplinary mind trip of another order.

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Sitting behind one of the cafes on campus with JA, a doctoral student in Spanish Literature, who studies the social memory of an important historical in Mexican history as it is portrayed in literature. We talk about integrating UHI practices like urban fieldwork into a literary study, where she recounts visiting magazine stands in Mexico City, and using it as a place to talk to people coming in from the community. She says:

> "I will just stay in the little kiosk for like an hour and talk to them and be like 'are you buying that magazine? Why or why not? [Or] I will see people in the subway with magazines under their arms. And I'll ask them questions. So [it's about] the whole interaction of not isolating the material on its own but also taking into account the spaces, people, everything."

These ethnographic practices of everyday places and people were directly influenced by UHI projects she participated in, which also gave her a sense of integrating reciprocity and engagement in humanities work: "I think the [two UHI projects] taught me is that we can give something back [to people]. So, in that sense, I am trying to make my research as available as possible to the people in Mexico." Later, after the interview, JA will teach literature courses that utilize design projects such as zines and posters and that are exhibited in a final exhibition and reports that the interdisciplinary learning and teaching experience in UHI was an important part of landing a tenure track assistant professor position.

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SC and I continue our long twisting conversations over the next year, sitting down in a variety of places, but more importantly, walking the city. Up Vermont Ave. from KTown to Los Feliz, south down Hoover to the Velaslavasay Panorama, talking about the city as we walk. Over this time period, he gets a job with a city transportation agency, and we talk about he uses his

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professional skills from planning and knowledge of architecture from UHI. More importantly, we talk about how to balance this professional work of city planning and building, with a more artistic practice as well as continuing the kind of intellectual and interdisciplinary exchanges he valued within UHI work. Having left the university, it's hard to engage with the same UHI group, who become more ephemeral and harder to connect with (or with different goals, inhabiting different worlds that are not always easily commensurable). We talk about the need to find new connections and collaborations, building similar webs of people within our new contexts, wherever we are.

For instance, SC mentions an artist he met at an exhibit event who is interested in nature in L.A. and climate change:

> "At this point, I give her lots of things to think about, I think she is really excited to talk to someone who is an urban planner . . . [and that we] hope we can collaborate on some kind of work . . . a kind of art that operates in this nonverbal world. It's an interesting conjecture for me at this point in my life. I think we've been talking about what is the utility of the urban as an object of study that converges to three different disciplines. And I think that there's this urgency around climate change. I think ecology is turning into one of those environmental studies, for example, but ecological humanities. I mean, I don't know where it's going to go. But it gives me some direction in terms of "Okay, what are we all going to do, as professionals, [is something] I've been grappling with, what the heck, [and] are we doing anything as professionals?"

These are lingering questions. SC addressed some in his Alumni salon panel. For instance, how to balance the professional work with a larger creative, artistic, and meaningful mission. And how to continue collaborating with other people, building interdisciplinary communities of practice like

UHI but with different elements and ingredients; to keep it going. But in the end, there are no easy answers. It will some creativity, a holding of intention and sensibility towards doing the type of work in life that UHI opened up, taking it into new situations and contexts.

These are questions that SC and I continue to theorize on our walks; words of conversation spilling out across miles of Los Angeles streets, continuing into the silent days of the pandemic when the city could almost begin to be seen anew.

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I speak to CV at one of the campus restaurants in the outside courtyard, at the end of the lunch rush. She is just finishing her dissertation in Chicana/o studies and is commuting from another city. We speak about the evolution of her academic identity and the possibilities that were opened up by UHI, which "mixed things up and showed a way of what is possible" at an integral part of her graduate pathway. She used different types of cognitive mapping as part of data collection in the dissertation, to get a sense of how people who cross the border experience public and private space and ideas of community. For the future, UHI inspires for what sort of academic research hub could look like in her home city of Tijuana: "Since 2016, I've honestly been thinking, planning, and brainstorming; I have this vision board of [another] cityLAB, a TJ cityLAB." We talk about how this lab could deal with different issues around the border and aspects of the city, including both government and informal power structures there.

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PC and drive out to a speedway in Pomona to attend a hot rod show. A historian of Los Angeles, and graduate of a Mexico City year, who is writing a history of car culture, the show is part of his fieldwork, seeing the current versions of some of the cultural trends he is writing about. In the time since UHI, we often go on small trips like this, investigating parts of the city, digging

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into historical places or other complicated issues at the nexus of space, history, transportation, and race. We talk and tour from the window of the car, conversation flowing, across the endless boulevards of the Southland.

Back in Pomona, with the sounds of drag cars doing speed trials on the track, we turn to UHI, PC speaks about his experience. I ask him how he has contextualized UHI into the rest of his work as a historian, and as someone who can speak in more or less full paragraphs, the following responses flowed out, only interrupted by the roar of souped up mid-century motor engines:

I came into the Urban Humanities Institute as an aspiring urban historian who had hardly gotten much chance to learn about the urban in my history coursework. Little did I know that UHI, this program I foresaw as supplementary, would reshape everything about my PhD, from dissertation to the diversification of my career prospects. The readings we did as preparation for our trip empowered me to formulate my argument as historicizing identity politics through mobility studies and sensory history. Such shifts made me malleable for a changing job market. I can see myself just as comfortably and effectively working in consulting as on the tenure track.

When asked about how he has utilized methods or other strategies from the course in his work, PC speaks about a project he worked on in Mexico City:

I traveled with UHI to Mexico City in 2016. An architecture firm instructed us to imagine an alternative future for this park space, Jardin de la Santisima, which local street vendors treated like a marketplace for everyday commerce. In just a couple

days, the eight of us collected data about the space, met many people who worked and consumed there, and crafted an answer for this question of futurity. More interesting than what we advised, which was for the public to cede this space to the vendors union and allow them to enclose it, was the choice of medium we used to state our position.

Among the eight team members, each selected a thematic question, like where do vendors plug in? and how high is public space? Using our smartphones, we took photographs to help us answer these questions and then turned the resulting images into visual poems. Thus you can see from my own poem, an image of empty beer bottles and dog shits in the bushes, that what happens at the Jardin, after dark when commerce clears out, is a reversion to the commons. Unlike the category of park, which I thought I knew from life in L.A., sundown remade this under-regulated space into parkland by night.

These were applied years later in his own work in this way:

This method our Mexico City collaboration practiced and - dare I say pioneered - has reappeared in the work I now do on Instagram as @historycritic. There I compose short nightly photo essays with photographs from L.A. Public Library's online database. The result is a historian's sketchbook: partially digested reflections on a relatively broad range of topics from the history of a city. I started this project as an open-ended place-making and place-breaking exercise, thus the hashtag #LAunforgotten, but I quickly shifted from merely adding or subtracting layers of meaning (and value) to a greater aspiration: taking place.

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This Instagram project is fascinating, running every day for a calendar year and mixing image and text to tell counter stories of L.A. history to a wider audience than any conference paper, and it represents a creative way to engage with public humanities through education and the interjection of some radical thought.

And finally, asking about future prospects in the academy, or outside of it, PC said this, which addresses generally uncertainties about future positions in academia, as well as individuals are having to leverage their skills in an entrepreneurial way:

> I learned from the street vendors several important lessons about how to grab economic power as a gig worker. There is a perpetual struggle between the makers and breakers of place, between those who support existing institutions and those who dream up replacements, but I'm placing my bets on this third way. Taking place happens when the ground might shift suddenly beneath your feet, but you can keep balance and move on wherever and however needed next. Thus, after UHI, I have found myself confident to take relatively brief consulting gigs for teams doing everything from writing housing policy to writing a narrative tv show.

After watching a few of the drag races in the afternoon heat, we descend from the stands and spend the rest of the afternoon walking among the custom cars (the smell of In N Out wafting across the speedway parking lot), talking to owners coming from all parts and cultural car traditions of Southern California.

And after leaving we drive back via the old Route 66, passing through the suburban cities of the San Gabriel Valley, past relic motels and strip malls, on this key artery of the American car culture that shaped the West, fast approaching the sparkling and splendid city on the edge of forever.

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I meet LS in San Francisco Chinatown where she is working at a Chinese culture and arts museum a few years after an urban planning master. We tour her work, which is a combination community center and art gallery, and which is trying to give the POC and immigrant community in Chinatown, who are threatened by gentrification, "a sense of a right to public space" through various programming. We talk about the community engaged work they do, and her role as a program manager who is trying to connect the organizations work, both at the community level and the artist level, to other areas for instance academia.

UHI is seen as a bridge for being able to make these connections between communities. Commenting on this, LS says:

> I think the discourse where we can see so many areas that are overlapping and intertwined, and the greater context, such as the kind of what urban humanities is looking at, you know, using the urban to posit, what needs to happen within our disciplines [and how they interact with communities].

LS is in an important bridge position to facilitate conversations between different sectors: urban policy, the art world, academia, and the community. UHI was part of the training process that helped her translate between these worlds.

After the formal part of the interview, we wander out into Chinatown walking through the late afternoon spring sunlight, a cool breeze starting to arrive from the bay. We wind our way through small back alleyways to a gallery space the organization runs, where an art opening focuses on the corporeality of memory (a UHI topic if there ever was one). I stand outside for a minute, watching as members of the community, of all ages and backgrounds, wander in and out, connecting the different worlds from above through the public art space.

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AK and I meet for ramen on Sawtelle. A doctoral student in gender studies, who researches gender and power issues in sports and coaching, he was part of the second Tokyo year, and worked on the project that mapped the gardens in the area, building a series of local connections with stores in the neighborhood as he helped produce a zine and distributed it at the local curio stores and cafes. He is committed to fieldwork practice and engaging community and keeping connections. And on our way to ramen we stop in the Giant Robot store and chat with the owner for a few minutes. Almost every morning he visits a local café working on his dissertation. AK has embedded himself in this community, springing from the fieldwork over the summer institute. He takes this same attention to people and work and space to thinking through the UHI and has been a constant springboard to ping-pong back and forth ideas about pedagogy and power in the university.

In our interview, we talk about how UHI opened "different strands of ideas that could come together and be worked out in a new way." We talk about some tensions in the home department and how it was difficult for a collaborative community to be built within a small and competitive cohort. We also talk about how even though he did not have any experience with Japan, the UHI Tokyo year was life changing. AK's advisor has connections to Japan, but he did not see it as a viable path before the UHI year, as his research topic seemed far away, but traveling for UHI "opened up and mediated" some of those networks making them closer. He speaks about how UHI gave him close collaborators in the form of two students from Waseda who worked closely on the Tsukiji market project, giving opportunities, but more importantly a better sense of scholarly collaborative spirit. After finishing his dissertation, AK started a postdoc at Waseda in Tokyo, and his research is now situated across the US and Japan.

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I talk to PM for an hour in the later afternoon at the big table in cityLAB. Our conversation circles around issues of academia and moving forward in finishing the Ph.D., preparing academic jobs, how to publish; generally, how to position yourself moving forward. It's a difficult road and we talk about spaces that work and spaces that don't, collaborations that are vital, and those that aren't. She speaks extensively about other alternative spaces she has found, nurtured, and created in the university, for instance a group for doctoral mothers of color. In the middle of the conversation, we talk about UHI and the space and importance it held.

The following quote articulates her read on that space and why it was important as a sight of learning and a mode for making work more tangible and engaged with the public.

You get to see the strengths and weaknesses of your own field which you never really get to in any other spaces right, because if you go to a conference it's all sociologists or it's all Chicana studies? So, you're all speaking to the same crowd no matter what in your career. I think the cool thing about you UHI was that you got to understand [what was important to each discipline]. For instance, for us in Chicana studies, positionality is really important, and this is a word that architects and urban planners might not be really exposed to. And so, it's like, Wow, you get to see the different approaches that there are two different ways to at the same exact problem. And I know, urban problems [from my research with L.A.'s street vending population]. [UHI] lets you see how working together we can fill each other's gap, the gap that each of us have, because we each have gaps, right? So, and being critical of ourselves in Chicana studies, a lot of times its very theoretical, it's about identity. But nothing practical is accomplished, right? And so that's our gap.

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We turn the conversation to thinking about what that practical output might look like in an interdisciplinary making context:

> And so, the way that we can work, you know, working with people across other
> fields, we can actually create things, tangible things are a moment of like, the thing
> became a practicality, became tangible wasn't the way today because I think that's
> an important theme of know, again, like have knowledge moves [to different
> places]. [I had a summer grant from a project through UHI] I worked on for a
> *fotonovela* about street vendors and we developed it into an exhibit that was in City
> Hall [where it could be seen] by the city council.

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I meet AF in a tequila bar in downtown Los Angeles, with the after-work crowd. He has just finished his day at a planning consulting firm the year after graduation. After a long reminiscence of the year, some of which has appeared in other parts above, as AF was key member of his cohort, producing wise insight into the pedagogical process but also rallying people together to believe in the interdisciplinary endeavor and the possibility of collective and collaborative work. We discuss similarly to SC, the balance between being a professional and still staying creative after moving into a formal job within a profession. This part of the conversation centers on an experimental film he made, using some of the film methods that were picked up via UHI. Later I invited him to my panel at the Urban Affairs association to talk more about this work and how UHI led him to in part make it.

> I came away from this process [of making a film in Tokyo] attracted to video, the
> simple down and dirty stock camera app on your smartphone type of video. I

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pursued a project here in LA to refine that approach. And this project researched a sculpture project Sense of Place. Standing nearly eight feet tall and constructed by 40 distinctly shaped boxes the sculpture exhibition sense of place was installed West Hollywood Park, it's in September of 2017. And at the left, you could see the initial installation, and the right you can see the project at the end of its end of its tour. The Los Angeles Nomadic Division. (LAND) commissioned the sculpture from the Guadalajara based artists Jose Dávila, as a temporary exhibition for Pacific Standard Time, L.A. in three phases over eight months the sculpture was removed from the anchor site and then installed in various places across Los Angeles. The sculpture pieces dispersed across LA absorbed and collected from their surrounding environments. Muralist painted, children drew, some people wrote prophecies. Some remain clean. I followed the path of each sculpture piece, using video to document the material and immaterial realities that the sculpture confronts. I curated a video into I curated all of that documentation into a video index, which was an open inquiry into the experiment of answering: What kind of place Los Angeles is?

AF's film consists of long wide-angle shots of each piece of the sculpture, taken after visiting every location around the city. It is a "study of method," both the formal camera method of disciplined and embodied filmmaking (holding the camera for long shots) and the method of discovering the city and documenting it through a piece of art. It is based in UHI methods but goes beyond them, revealing the city through its unique position and perspective.

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I converse with NP over Zoom who is now an assistant professor at a public university in a major urban center on the east coast. Our conversation primarily circles around how UHI has influenced his teaching, where he is teaching introductory courses to students from a diverse, first-generation background who are primarily commuting to campus, making it a very different environment than UCLA. In the conversation, we discuss the ways UHI become a part of his teaching, in particular with this group of students.

> In general, the thick mapping methodology really kind of stood out to me. And like, really, I appreciate it, Mainly, mainly because I do GIS So, it's like one creative way of engaging and teaching mapping as a concept and as a methodology to students beyond the software. It allows me to really talk about geography and mapping in places and spaces, much more like in depth and wider perspective, when they bring in the idea of thick mapping. So, for example, the first semester last year, I was teaching in terms of geography, right, so just like an introductory course, like a buffet course where each topic, each week, is a different subfield of geography, but I also integrated thick mapping in our in one of our weeks to talk about [the local area where the school is, a less discussed part of that city], and thick mapping. It is a different methodology of understanding, say, like geography, particularly through this layering, right, like the different layers and integration of layers, etc. and then have them do it on their own right. So, for me, I will probably always use the material, like the thick mapping material in all of my courses, just because it allows me to talk about these concepts.

Moving to discuss the importance of integrating UHI's methodological approach to another course and how he sees that teaching the students:

The second thing, I think for, particularly in urban Geography, the class that I'm teaching now, I really think that the UHI methodology is very important in teaching the notion of fieldwork: the investigation and methodology. Because it allows me to teach the students how to talk about sense of place, how to capture a sense of place of the observed, and then how to also kind of process and theorize and then create an output from that right beyond sailing the traditional expectations for students, which is reading and writing, or quizzes, right, so it allows me to actually decide a different, or an alternative assessment or evaluation method. Because then students can create other forms of object to demonstrate how they understand and apply the concepts and methods that are teaching in class. And then the third probably influence is, and I always stress this in class is cooperation, [the experience in] UHI really allows me to speak about cooperation.

I think what I wanted to emphasize with the UHI activities that I'm trying to implement in the class is to really help the [students] learn how to work with each other, and study the city together, negotiating different ideas and different experiences of the city, something like that. A little bit more kind of conceptual. . . Like, say, I'm taking the class on a fieldwork trip, but also dedicating a class just to be more on the projects. I'm also teaching media literacy, rather than the exact content of geography, you know. So, there's that kind of, I'm secretly doing things [within my institution, because these are different learning goals than enforced from the top].

The majority of conversation is spent talking through a set of assignments, where I help conceptualize some ideas for the course, with a collaborative discussion about pedagogy and how

to structure an outdoors fieldwork project. To close our conversation, I ask him to reflect on how he views UHI now and how it fits into his work and sense of identity as a professor and a member of a discipline, basically how he is understanding its influence:

> In honestly, I'm kind of less invested with the term "urban humanities," right, because it doesn't do anything for me in terms of my job, in terms of my research. But what I'm more invested in is about really the methodology that I learned, that allows me to be a better geographer and a better teacher. And I hope my students are also a better geographer at the end of it. I'm really invested more about the different ways of seeing and understanding the city, and the different ways of doing geographical critical geographic work, you know, that traditional geographic classes do not provide, you know, as a graduate student, right, like, like GIS gave me that lens. UHI gave me another lens. But I wouldn't get those methodologies, or ways of approaching the city, epistemologically [in just] a seminar room.

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I talk to TC, a doctoral student from an international background, for a follow-up interview about a year after I first speak to her. In that earlier interview, we talked formally about memories of the program, as we participated in the same year, and issues related to comparison between China and greater Chinese-speaking (sinophone) world and the US (West), and some difficulties that came up in the Shanghai year. In this interview, TC also states that it was the connections that she made with other people that were most valuable in the program.

But now we are speaking in a more informal setting, moving from campus to another area of the city for dinner, and UHI weaves in and out of conversation. Among these are issues of

graduate education, and certain dangers within it, which is a kind of "mystery until you are in it," and the added difficulties of acclimation for international students. This has been a theme of our conversations where there can be a certain kind of isolation within in-discipline doctoral programs, particularly for those in very small sub-fields of the humanities that have a limited number of students in the program and are isolated from other programs. UHI, we agree, has been a beneficial type of space for students in that position, giving a wider circle of community.

At dinner we theorize this more: the UHI experience acts as a glue for further sociability, a reference point that we can always circle back to, even when it is some years later. That year we were making films and it was sometimes hard to get everyone in the same place to work on editing and film composition. We both have a strong memory of staying up all night, the night before a review, in the library, many teams working deep into the early morning, each at their own "pod" space, to finish a cut that would be shown later that day. But more importantly, sharing ideas with each other, showing clips of film or sharing footage: every group trying to make each other's film better. We both agree that this is one of the best moments of our graduate experiences, but one that is rare. We lament that it is hard to replicate this dynamic in other spaces, with other people. It never really happened again for either of us, in all the other years of graduate school.

TC gives a final comment: "My happiest memories of graduate school were working on a team in UHI but also, more importantly, being with other people [in the community in general]. People were very close in Shanghai, during the travel, and after when we returned it continued [and that was really meaningful]."

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A final afterlife of UHI, and perhaps one of most important ones, takes me to a High School classroom in South L.A. On a Friday morning, I take a bus down Western Avenue to near where

the Expo Line intersects, making my way into a back building at a high school, where a room is filled with students dressed in 19th century costume. This is LitLab, and part of their performance and exhibition *L.A. Copperfield*, which puts the Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield* in conversation with contemporary Los Angeles. The students are performing for guests from the community and groups of younger students. Some students serve tea. Others give small performances in character. In the center of the room is a circular exhibition, where scenes from the novel mounted on wooden frames, showcases *fotonovelas* that students have created in a workshop with PM from above about their lives and memories, based around themes from the novel. In this way the past of the novel meets the students present in a meaningful and daring way.

I have witnessed multiple versions of this profound educational and public humanities event across three different years that I have visited as part of an annual exhibition put on by their teacher, JJB a UHI alum who is both a doctoral student in the humanities and public-school teacher. Her specialty is 19th century literature, and she creates a beautiful synthesis of engaging with and putting in conversation the London of the past, through the works of Charles Dickens that the students read each year, with the present of Los Angeles. In the past three years, UHI and its methodologies have become part of this curriculum, with students reading the annual Dickens book, creating a play/performance, and now, using an adapted method (s) from UHI. Above, at the alumni salon, one version of this has been presented, where another UHI alum led a workshop on visual design and photography creating triptych image and text presentations of students walks home. In another year, I taught a workshop on collecting sounds from the world and students created an album of recordings from their neighborhoods in South L.A., which was turned into an exhibition by another UHI student. And this year is taught by another scholar in the UHI network.

This school and place and project are other hub of UHI that collects makes generations of urban scholars.

In my opinion, this might be the greatest legacy of UHI, to see it spread out among so many students, giving them ways to understand the world around them, peeling back history, memory, time, sense, and which they will carry with them. It shows that UHI is scalable to many people and places, with power to learn, think, and make the city given to those outside the academy or government. This is the legacy that should be remembered above all, because it was the one that really went into the city and did something in it for a long time. It did not parachute. It did not objectify and reify, in that way that academia often does. But instead created, connected, and empowered students to see something of their world anew, and it will continue to do so.

I also ask JJB to speak at the Urban Affairs conference, tracing out UHI's influence on her and how it made its way into her long-term practice working at this school and within her larger identity as a scholar. She says:

> What is an urban humanist practice? And this is my sort of takeaway, I think, for me, at least it's an ambulatory and contingent collecting; formal performances that hold things, intention. It's not just about going out collecting things, but there is an act where you need to formalize those accumulations in some kind of form, that holds things intention, and that tension should be visible and feasible. And maybe we can talk about whether you see that in our projects, but so things like disjunctive times and spaces, the hierarchal modes of expression, and the accumulation of otherwise entropic materials. And finally, I think an urban humanist practice is producing cultural works that engage with the kinds of conditions in our city, that demand intervention.

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JJB's work with LitLab does exactly this. It detourns a classic cultural work from the humanities by putting it in conversation with the present conditions in the city in order to create meaning and resonance for students with a different time and place, but in a way that helps them better live in the present. This intervention in South Los Angeles, a part of the city where people are not always counted or recognized in the larger imaginary of the city, is an act of love and care and deep attention, which expands the worlds of the students. It gives the students the agency to intervene and create and inhabit their city in a way they want, to claim their right to see it and live in it; to be fully counted and visible.

By Way of Conclusion

"In dawn, armed with a burning patience, we shall enter the splendid cities."

-Rimbaud, *A Season in Hell*

The question of what students did with their UHI experience and how they synthesized it into their work and themselves, has been the question that has most fascinated me and were what my study and theorization of the program—theorizing that tried to go a layer deeper in understanding it—was supposed to do. It is where I spent a lot of my "fieldwork" time these last few years, not as an outside observer doing a study, but rather as a friend and peer who was checking in, trying to inhabit the space of their actions and thinking. I tried to put myself within the flow of lives to see where at least a few ended up. I tried to have conversations and think together again: about education, about futures, about the city. My fieldwork was about trying to

continue these conversations so that I could both continue to push them forward and capture a snapshot of some sort of record.

This is because I do think there was something unique that happened educationally within UHI. There was for a time, something exciting there, and there was a kind of conscious, collective attention to an interdisciplinary experiment, which reframed how people learned, allowed space for collective thinking, and made some things that held that thinking. Those things were exciting and meaningful, artifacts of learning and thinking, and that particular sensibility to the city that UHI proposed. They are the fruit of that learning process, able now to fall away, and become something else. Urban Humanities produces Urban Humanists who go on and do other things, but perhaps with that sensibility within them; a little bit of spirit carried on. The responses from the prior chapter speak to this.

I will argue again and again, after this, that the point of it all is something like what Tim Ingold says at the end of his lovely book on education, where there are places within the university, within education, which remind us that "we have to make our future together, for ourselves. . . that we are intimately bound up with one another" (p. 58-60). It was the creation of people who could continue to do something with it. In the end, education is about the future. I think that UHI was about the future too. Speculation was a constant buzzword: e.g. how do we speculate the future of the city, to be more just, more equitable, better. As it was a laboratory and training ground for these questions, I like to think that UHI taught students also how to make the future together a little bit better, and that they will continue to do so withing the new webs of people, and places, wherever they find themselves, with a sensibility and patience to enter the splendid cities.

Chapter 12 Conclusion

This dissertation has investigated pedagogy and practices related to the education that occurred within the Urban Humanities Initiative at UCLA over the past six years. In doing so, it tries to connect the specific ethnographic and experiential inquiries of the case study, as well as empirical data elicited from students to several wider issues occurring within higher education, interdisciplinary research, and teaching and attempts to engage with the city via humanistic knowledge in conversation with that knowledge of space and the built environment from architecture and urban planning. By placing it within the larger movement knowledge trends of interdisciplinarity, in the general, and the *new humanities*, in the specific, the dissertation has tried to contextualize these forces within a contemporary university and how they intersect with graduate education. For this reason, the dissertation has focused on the way that UHI educated consecutive cohorts of graduate students, teaching them how to better under and, think about, and engage with the contemporary city. This education, I argue, unfolded through a process of learning, thinking, and making, which was unlocked through a collaborative togetherness, which taught students to rely on each other's knowledge to re-imagine what the city can be in the future.

I hope that the dissertation has articulated this in a multi-perspectival, or thick, way, influenced as much by the interdisciplinary processes that the program holds as a core tenant, as my educational social-scientific background with humanities flavoring attests to. This has, I hope, *made* a different way to approach the program analytically than other writings about it may have, through combines top-down theoretical analysis with ground-up ethnographic observation mixed with explications of projects and student voices. In other words, it represents a kind of making in

itself, where I have tried to put side-by-side different bits of knowledge as the program itself did, and make them into something that can speak clearly about the possibilities for future forms of education that take on similar sensibilities to knowledge, praxis, and poesis. This is the "making" legacy that I take with me, a kind of architecture or planning at the pedagogical level, which can do something in other places, other schools, like UHI.

Institutionally, UHI was still deeply embedded in the university, as well as outside philanthropic money from the Mellon, at the ground-level it represented, further possibilities and potentials for these new models. As with many things that scratch and experiment with the new, may not have gone far enough, tied down by its institutional bonds, and a horizon of attention that deaccelerated as the years went on. Did UHI create a new field? I'm not sure about that, as it is part of a wider set of trends and educational/academic common sense that is coming together now in different ways and different places (for instance interest in design, making, collaboration, and so on), and I don't know if creating a new field that is legitimated within the institution is even the point, because as we know from Bill Readings, it is in kind of the slipperiness and short-lived nature of these spaces that make them vital.

Yet, this is not to dismiss what it *did* discover and *did* experiment with, which was vital and life-changing for many, many students. It worked out many of the limits, tensions, and next steps through its experimental orientation, to perhaps imagine a different way to organize education and interdisciplinary togetherness. I have learned much from both its successes and failures, as I believe others have. I hope in this work that I have provided enough evidence of this, of how the knowledge provided within UHI as well as the alternative space of community and engaged practice with other diverse graduate students contributed deeply to careers and the self-identities of these scholars and practitioners of the city who are now in key positions in universities,

city governments, and other organizations, and will no doubt, influence change at any number of levels. It can be a model that others can follow to create better interdisciplinary, or post-disciplinary, nodes of knowledge creation and practice.

Interdisciplinarity itself is hard work. It is messy and filled with misperception. Part of this is because within spaces of the academy there is always power in knowledge, and with power comes hierarchies that form around disciplines. Furthermore, related to this are both disciplinary insecurities, or envy, on one end, where one always feels inadequate to what others know or can do, or on the other end, a kind of interdisciplinary superego also exists where certain people in academia think they can do everything. To craft good interdisciplinary spaces, and it is a *craft*, means being able to troubleshoot issues like these, and many others. This is one major lesson I learned over the past years of being in the interdisciplinary classroom and working through this project: it takes more, much more, scaffolding than other pedagogical enterprises. This extra work is not easy or glamorous, and taking careful attention to make sure that communication happens at both the level of knowledge and of emotions. In this way, in full Zen Koan fashion, interdisciplinary must take on a certain level of discipline (it is not purely anarchic), it's just a different discipline than other discipline, with different ends and horizons.

On this note, within something like UHI, there is a constant need to re-visit and re-make its pedagogy, through a constant process, which responds to the uniqueness in each year: unique students, unique global conditions, unique entrances into the city. I think there was a point where UHI shifted, somewhere in year four or five, where rather than being about discovering or experimenting about a new pedagogy it was about reinforcing some pedagogy that had already been created. Thus, shifting from co-creation, between both the faculty and the student group, to a kind of attempt to curate and legitimate what had already been done. I have talked about this above,

as a kind of "buying its own hype," turning from discovery to replication and maintenance. This, I think, is a natural problem of education as something transformative versus reproductive, which manifested within the UHI learning space this way. I found there was a point where showing past projects as great examples of UHI only reified the past, closing out the imaginations of new students who used them as models to either copy or dismiss.

The question then is how to keep something alive and changing, fresh and exciting, for those involved at levels; faculty members who get burned out, as they did because it is also something extra, and the students, who must be convinced of its efficacy each time anew, as the set up and trust that could be created in one year does not translate to another. There were times when things were lost in transitions of management—the associate director position, as one left who was involved directly in the pedagogy and another came in who was not really allowed to implement new ideas instead of having to replicate the previous ideas without ownership of them—or in translation, where the slow time that is needed to foster the learning and speaking of new interdisciplinary languages is rushed in order to get to the product more quickly. Problems like this exist in programs and need to be managed around, particularly after the original faculty in a grant-based program start to lose interest in later years. Obviously, faculty at top research universities are busy, wearing too many hats that split attention into a thousand little pieces on overcooked calendars. But if any point I have made over and over again education is about one thing: attention. And finding ways to make sure that attention is sustained and given to the students in a way that is deserved, as transitions happen among teaching faculty, is a necessary issue to troubleshoot. When this happens, programs begin their adjunctification phase, filled with postdocs or junior non-tenured faculty (or even graduate students) who exist in a more precarious, underfunded, and less powerful and agentive positions, less compensated for the creative time it

takes. This was a problem where there was nothing built into the structure to deal with, and one I imagine is also wholly prevalent in other similar organizational structures.

At the student afterlives level, it is somewhat hard to maintain participation post-program, notably because the university is an institution that people pass through, imagined to be somewhat separate from "normal life" particularly once someone goes into the professional realm. There have been some struggles in the alumni group to keep alumni involved after they leave or finding the right place to situate it, inside the university or outside the university. There are ramifications to these choices and how it is positioned, as it is hard for professionals to be on the same page and time scale as those still within the university. This issue of timescale, between university time and outside time, as well as Ph.D. time and MA time, not to mention tenured faculty time that is a kind of forever, at least for now, change a lot of perceptions of how things are structured and are sometimes impossible to manage. Is there a way for something like UHI to live on outside the university, as something else entirely via a loose network of individuals who participated? That was kind of a hope that I had but that does not seem possible, as it is too tied, embedded, and entangled within the university to extract. Future outcomes must take on another name, or no name at all, built out of the relationships rather than the trendy code name that it falls under.

To address the global aspects of the program, UHI experimented with creating a multi-sited global constellation of comparative inquiry, where four cities were thought together in some way with Los Angeles being a hub. UHI has contributed not only knowledge about these four cities but also some approaches and methods for thinking about cities in a relational way at multiple scales. Through learning about that city from afar, then traveling to it, before returning "home" to apply what was learned in a new way, a different model for international education was articulated, which was collaborative, reciprocal, and engaged, creating knowledge through a multi-sided

dialogue between two or more cities. There are more work and theorizing, and experimentation to be done in this area, though the current closing down of the global order due to the pandemic perhaps changes this, making the ease of travel to other places more difficult.

But perhaps this is also revealing of a major power issue within UHI that was never truly resolved, which is the asymmetric power of American top-tier research universities and the ease that they could travel the world. In this way, UHI still existed within a place of privilege within the global order as an elite representative of a specific educational imaginary, and there are challenges to creating similar programs that might engage around other, less-globally central urban axes, ranging from the resource level to the organization and preparation level of going to places less cosmopolitan than Shanghai, Tokyo, or Mexico City, all incredibly cosmopolitan in their own ways. As the student response said in the earlier chapter, they were suspicious of something like UHI's ability to travel to the Global South in any meaningful way. On this note, there is also an argument to be made about where programs like UHI can take root and be funded. Are experiments like these solely the domain of elite institutions, or are they needed in other places, at other scales, with other students? That, I guess, is the next step that graduates will seed as they take positions at smaller colleges and state universities, working with students from different backgrounds, creating different ways to encounter, engage, and be a part of knowledge and the city.

I am interested in new future potentials of education and this is the area to turn to last. I am always thinking of the formation of new schools that can engage with the world in different (non-Silicon Valley disruption) ways, which can produce a worldly education (Ford, 2019). In doing so, I always go back to my ancestors' schools, and how they created schools that fit the times. Can we do this now? Can education be organized into different forms, which can deal with contemporary problems and also be more institutionally creative, taking in interdisciplinary, more collaborative,

and produce different outputs? That's been one of the central questions threading all the different aspects of this program together, and one spot where I want to situate this dissertation's generative legacy.

In the literature review, I have presented thinkers who are trying to re-make the university along these lines, authors and critics such as Cathy Davidson, David Staley, Arturo Escobar, Raewyn Connell, Tim Ingold, Sidonie Smith, the Undercommons, and La Paperson, each of who is trying to think outside of current institutional and structural impasses in how we organize knowledge and thinking. These can be combined with thinkers and pedagogues of the city, who are looking for novel approaches to teach, train, and engage with the urban at all levels. Between these two areas, I argue is generative ground that can be continued to be covered, particularly within education and pedagogy studies. There is more conceptual, as well as practical, room for building out educational futures here.

On this note, my work also aligns with the recent educational theory of Pragmatic Imagination developed by the learning theorist John Seely Brown and the architect Ann Pendleton-Jullian—an auspicious pairing of disciplines for this project—in *Pragmatic Imagination: Single from Design Unbound* (2016). Their theory is an updated 21st-century version of Deweyan educational pragmatism that is designed to be practiced in a "white water world." A "white-water world," perhaps another terminology for a wicked problem, is one that is increasingly filled with technological, environmental, social, and political complexity and risk, among others, and requires a different set of tools, practices, and forms of education to navigate a world where there are multiple overlapping wicked problems. Drawing from pragmatic learning practices and design they develop a framework for "the Pragmatic Imagination [which] moves between sense-making and sense-breaking with dexterity and agility. This imaginative agility is crucial in a world of

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exponential changes" (p. 72). UHI, in how it taught students to imagine a different future for the city, with multi-disciplinary knowledge tools, while at the same giving a set of tools and methods for doing this with a greater intellectual and ethical depth, is a piece similar to this pragmatic imagination, and one that should be continued to be aligned. In many ways, I also see UHI as a 21st Century form of Deweyan education, one which I will continue to work on now that I will be physically located at Dewey's home doorstep of Burlington, Vermont.

For final consideration, I present this quote by philosopher Barry Allen (2015), who thinks through ancient Chinese knowledge traditions to plot out a different way to approach knowledge and practice from how it is viewed in the West. He argues that epistemology in the European tradition is about certainty and truth, whereas in the Chinese tradition it is about practice, where the wise practitioner is loaded in through their education with a sensibility, which flows like the *dao*, and can anticipate the future. Whereas knowledge in the west is reactive, knowledge in this tradition is proactive, eliminating problems before they arise, while at the same time situating a process of becoming at its center.

Allen writes, in this long synthesis of a few different passages, which I give some commentary on (p. 226-231). He starts by talking about wise knowledge and how it flows to meet "unprecedented challenges" within our (whitewater and wicked) world, where knowledge "would work with environing forces the way a navigator works with tides, currents, and wind. The work would be softer, more synergetic, like Daoist engineering, good at evading problems petty knowledge cannot see coming, rather than expecting to use knowledge to solve obvious problems everyone sees." This quote has ramifications for academic work, city building, policy, which focus on obvious problems rather than evading the true ones. Our current moment illustrates this more than ever.

In turn, making an argument for an interdisciplinarity that is emerging out of this epistemological position, Allen states: "The obstacles to wise knowledge are obstacles to cooperation, communication, and the prevalence of long- term perspectives; in other words, political obstacles, obstacles of the collective and its habits." In this case, "Knowledge cannot be wise when the agencies of inquiry are isolated and do not know or care what others want to know. Interdisciplinarity makes what others want to know common knowledge. . . The practice of such interdisciplinarity would make everything about knowledge more realistically complicated." And leads to a knowledge position where, "We should know better because we should know that knowledge (including our own) flourishes under opportunistic mixing, not sanctimonious purity." This becomes a better orientation for thinking about knowledge than the disciplined and disciplining western academy, which siloes and scientizes.

True interdisciplinarity produces these messy mixes, structuring an endless process of "translation, in the literal sense of carrying over, transposing from one place or form to another, germinating hybrids, starting new conversations among new interlocutors, adding black boxes to black boxes, like contingent tiles in an improvised mosaic," where our schools need to train both the process of transposing and the process of germinating, where the "improvised mosaic" is perhaps another term for making. And where the generative power of contingency, which is approached through "softness" echoing the "soft interdisciplinary" that one UHI student championed, can "orchestrate multiplicities without abolishing differences, how to turn analysis into synthesis, orthodoxy into unorthodoxy, and method into a way of viable evolution." Perhaps this is the model for the Heterotopia University that I have long sought.

Allen finishes with this long quote, which represents a future that I will try to push knowledge gained from UHI into next, as UHI had something in this in it, and can continue to:

The philosophy that flourishes in a post-Western environment must invent hybrid concepts for hybrid contexts, and cultivate a sort of experimentation in philosophy which, in preferring aesthetic values (like the interesting, beautiful, and new) over "truth," has more in common with poetry than theory. Such poiesis is experimental, not because it tests a falsifiable hypothesis, but because no one can say where it might lead, what it might accomplish, provoke, or inspire, and because its success is not to express feelings but to create new experiences, new values, new ways to know ourselves, and never stop becoming who we are.

A CODA: UHI at the Beginning, at the End (2014-2019)

UHI at an end, on the muddy banks of the Duwamish

To end, we go back to the very beginning.

It is almost six years ago and the summer after my first year of graduate school. I walk to the Young Research Library at UCLA on a hot August afternoon, one of the first student arrivals to the first-floor technology classroom: an educational space that is decked out for so-called 21st Century collaborative learning. A vision of the university of the future. Bright neon green plastic chair desk hybrids that are wheeled to move around for easy engagement, a big interactive screen at the front of the room. Of course, the space doesn't have windows, an oversight that makes sitting in the classroom for six hours a day a feat of human endurance. But that will come later, and at the moment, I am excited to start a new educational initiative, getting to study the city of Los Angeles that I am growing to love, with the city of Shanghai that I already love coming up in the coming months. In many ways, this is why I came to graduate school, to do something like this, figuring

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out education that spins out of transnational connections, which spans the immense Pacific. As with things in life, I find it somewhere else—not in the expected location: a program in the field Comparative and International education that seems to be locked into a past version of comparison and internationalism, within a larger education school that is too tightly focused on the local without engaging with wider contexts.

The room fills up. I talk to two people sitting closest to me. One is an architect another a musicologist who I learn is from Seattle, where I am from. The web of interpersonal connections begins to grow. Later we end up in the same group together. It is my first encounter with a bit of UHI serendipity. There is that buzz of anticipation as you see new faces that you may be embarking on some collective journey together. It is at 10am. The faculty comes into the classroom. The class begins.

I take out my little notebook.

Little did I know that it would be the start of a many-year journey where I would encounter many people, ideas, places in the city. But that was all in front of me. My pen traces the words in the classroom. I am already taking a kind of fieldnote, filling paper with ideas.

Notes from Day One (a fieldwork artifact and a kind of poem), August 2014

Urban Humanities
Humanities-Architecture-Urban Planning
Collective life in the Pacific Rim—Cities/megacities
Come together, do work on interdisciplinary in complexity of cities.
-ignorant-
Collaborative productive mode
Nexus of intellectual and practical interest
Arch: ignored humanities
Lit: application of knowledge of the other place
Material artifact in city
(Page 2)
All of us don't have completeness in all fields:

-Do a little bit of each
-Different types of expertise
-extend from collaboration
Project Oriented:
Pedagogical, to push each other to work
Make knowledge (epistemological base)
It is hands-on
Speculative epistemologies:
-Most challenging
-Problematic
-Compelling
Take understanding of history and culture and speculate-
Put knowledge on the line-
To see what comes next in the future

I discover this little notebook again, as it had been long forgotten, going through papers in preparation for leaving Los Angeles, leaving this version of UHI, and this project behind, for the next thing. I peer into the words and read them. I compare them with the time since and I see a structure there. It is a moment of reflection where you can see the roads that you have walked to get to the present. It is all there. All the ideas, laid out, which I would trace through pedagogy and research. I find satisfaction in being a part of filling in the future, helping it flow into what it would become. I put myself on this wave and let it carry me and teach me because I wanted to know and see where it led.

I see the hours spent in the classroom or preparing different things, the conversations had both in the class and late at night in studio space, the hundreds of kilometers of the city walked, the secrets of the city discovered. It is life's greatest pleasure to be in the world with others, learning and thinking the city, but also unlearning it, questioning the common sense and shaking out something else from it, encountering it in all its impossibility and terror, but also trying to re-make it, again and again. UHI is about this remaking and about the times and moments when the city opens up to reveal something else: a new story, a new perspective, a new sense of place. That

is a legacy of UHI that I take with me: how to put people together who are thinking deeply and put them together to try to make something with their thoughts that means something and can encounter the world in a way that can show different worlds to come.

This dissertation has tried to trace out and record what happens from that original moment of educational encounter and excitement. I felt it, and know others felt it, and for us, it opened up something meaningful, which educated in the greatest meaning of the word through leading us elsewhere: changing how we perceive, sense, and embed ourselves in the world and the cities within it. That is a great gift. My focus on understanding that experience from the student perspective was to capture this gift and how it reverberated through lives; not so much to praise UHI in the particular but know how to do it again in the universal.

The last thing I ever say in public within UHI happens at the final review for the second Shanghai year (June 2019). At this point, my commitment has come full circle. Two Shanghai years framing the beginning and ending, shifting position from student to teacher. A few months before on the last day of Shanghai, I visit the house on Xinhua Lu, with one of the faculty. That project was such a touchstone for me, a kind of gift of UHI where I could dig deep into my family's past and put it in conversation with the contemporary city. The house represents not only the personal meanings but through the collective investigation and creation of it—working on it with others who had different skills, sharing it with others (generations of UHI students)—it took on wider meanings for what was possible within this educational space. Taking the professor there was a kind thanks for the path laid out, and eternal gratitude for where we have been and where we are going, through the lens of UHI, which could hold all these places, pasts, and futures together.

That quarter I also led another studio trip to Seattle, taking some students who could not go to Shanghai, and in this way, UHI extends past itself, past that constellation of four cities, out

into the rest of the world—a place that also happens to be my original home. In Seattle, I stand on the muddy industrial banks of the Duwamish river—land which is unceded Indigenous land—and think about the challenging future. This is the moment that UHI spins off its axis, into something else, where I realize I have to re-imagine it in my own way, as we all do, to take it somewhere else beyond its own scope. It couldn't go any further after taking it home, and I take somewhere else.

These are kinds of endings. And they are on my melancholic mind as the question of what comes next arises, as it often does at the end of these things. But in these there are also beginnings, new horizons to travel into. The little bit of conversation is on a voice memo recording and I listen to myself talking from over a year ago now about what happens next.

I tell the students, and now I tell you:

Now that you're going to be thrown out into the world, the idea is that you're supposed to be the community of each other's critics going into the future. And so, carry that, this is my Acts of the Apostle's moment, to carry that little flame of the fact that have this community of people that you can do work with outside of the structure of a particular class. And, yeah, when you have problems and you need the optimist, or the giddy optimist, or the pessimist, or whatever, you have people to talk to, in this thing that we call the University, and that's the gift of Urban Humanities.

Hidden Track: *A moment where it all came together in UHI, resonating forever in time.*

Jonathan Banfill, pictured here at Roberto Bolaño's teenage home in Mexico City, is Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Core Division at Champlain College, Burlington, Vermont.

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