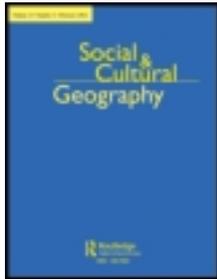


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The matter of displacement: a queer urban ecology of New York City's High Line

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*This paper critically queers gentrification through an ecological analysis of the redevelopment of New York City's High Line. Taking the abandoned-queer-ecology-turned-homonormative park as a novel form of gay and green gentrification, I argue that the 'success' of the project must be critiqued in relational ecological terms. Intervening into the literature of gentrification, I begin to account for the material and symbolic aspects of ecological gentrification with the help of innovations in plant geography and queer ecology. To ground my analysis, I look to the process of 'succession', focusing, in particular, on one of the most established and successful plants growing on the abandoned High Line, *Ailanthus altissima* or the Tree of Heaven. Drawing on empirical insights, this account of the High Line's redevelopment tracks relations between queers and plants. Through layers of sexuality, ecology, and geography, the matter of displacement becomes central to a consideration of ethico-political possibilities for a queer ecological critique of urban space. In conclusion, I argue for an ethics and politics of responsibility to and for abandoned spaces that calls us to pay closer attention to the queer, the ecological, and their ongoing entanglement.*

Key words: gentrification, queer urban ecology, High Line, *Ailanthus altissima*, New York City, critical urban studies.

Introduction

In this paper, I pursue a queer ecological critique of gay and green gentrification by way of considering entanglements of human sexuality and more-than-human agencies, specifically those of plants. Empirically, I focus on the redevelopment of New York City's High Line, a 1.45-mile-long (2.33 km) linear urban park or promenade constructed in the formerly abandoned remains of an elevated railway on Manhattan's West Side. Building on a foundation of semi-structured expert

interviews and archival research, my effort is animated by photographic documentation of the vegetal landscape of the abandoned High Line by the American photographer Joel Sternfeld. Reading his photographs through some key analytics of queer ecology, I think relationally with one of the former botanical inhabitants of the space, *Ailanthus altissima*, also known as the Tree of Heaven.¹ *A. altissima's* biological capacities, along with its reputation as a so-called nonnative invasive species, offer some crucial insights into the political and ethical possibilities of a

queered urban ecology. I emphasize both the material and symbolic role of *A. altissima* as an unruly actor whose ‘success’ as a species is inseparable from the continual anthropogenic production of waste spaces and successional ecological landscapes. I take *A. altissima*’s successional emergence in the abandoned ecology of the High Line, and its subsequent erasure from the planned landscape which replaced that ecosystem, as both metaphorically suggestive and literally entangled in the preservation-through-redevelopment effort spearheaded by Friends of the High Line (FoHL), the organization behind the effort to ‘save’ the structure from demolition.

I am interested in *A. altissima* because of its status as an unruly figure, a literal weed, whose presence and adaptive capacities to produce space (i.e., to territorialize) involve (1) a geographic expression of its reproductive process and (2) its quasi-strategic capacity for ‘self-recognition’ by way of a phenomenon called allelopathy. Perhaps uniquely among pioneering plant colonizers of the High Line, *A. altissima* challenges us to consider the ways in which nonhuman displacement, in addition to reproduction and growth, plays an important role in the politics and ethics of ecological gentrification. Biological and ecological research on *A. altissima* retains a certain heteronormative attention to reproduction (i.e., reprocentricity). Even so, *A. altissima*’s reputation as an invasive species has prompted further exploration of the so-called ‘secondary metabolic’ processes that contribute to the plant’s success in urban ecologies. I read the latter alongside homonormativity, a term popularized by Duggan (2003) to critique the mainstreaming of metropolitan, white, bourgeois, and male gay sexuality in the neoliberal era.² Duggan defines homonormativity as ‘a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but

upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption’ (50). I extend the critique of homonormativity to geographic and urban ecological analyses of gentrification to demonstrate the political and ethical risks and opportunities of the ‘progress’ claimed by organizations such as FoHL.

From an ecological perspective, even as particular ecosystems ‘services’ are beginning to be ‘valued’ in political-economic terms, *A. altissima*’s ‘success’ in urban areas globally continues to symbolize blight and decay, often marking spaces as ripe for redevelopment. What might have been different if plants such as *A. altissima* had not been erased from landscape of the High Line? How might an insistence on ecological queerness as a domain of responsibility *for* and *to* unruly actors help to provide political power and ethical grounding for human inhabitants of cities who are opposed to or impacted by gentrification? Finally, what might the destructive territorializing capacities and successional strategies of *A. altissima* offer to radical queers seeking to critique the success of human organizations and strategies that use ‘gayness’ to immunize against meaningful political opposition?

Building on the history of gay territorialization of New York’s Lower West Side neighborhoods, FoHL’s political success relied on a selective and naturalized narrative of succession between waves of gentrifiers. This was accomplished, in part, through the proliferation of images, including Sternfeld’s, and discourses of ‘urban pastoralism’ (Cataldi et al. 2012: 369). FoHL’s success in advocating preservation through redevelopment relied not only on a variety of classic neoliberal and gentrifying tactics, as the review of literatures of gay and green gentrification will demonstrate, but also on an implicit appeal to the

notion of *homonormative* urban ecologies in which possibilities for political and ethical linkages between sexuality and urban nature were only expressed within the narrow limits set out by the exigencies of capitalist urban development. In this context, *A. altissima* becomes a spectral figure whose disappearance from the 'revised' landscape of the High Line bespeaks an insidious tendency to obscure the project's negative impacts on vulnerable *human* communities.

My analysis of the abandoned landscape of the High Line deploys queer ecological critique rooted in a notion of responsibility *to* and *for* abandoned urban spaces and the complex entanglements they enable and embody. In addition to invoking concepts of nonhuman agency (Cloke and Jones 2002, 2003; Jones and Cloke 2008), I look to the pioneering work of Sandilands, who, invoking one of her literary interlocutors, calls us to '[A]ssume responsibility for a place' by pressing ourselves to 'look both backward at the burden of its history and forward at our responsibility for those parts of its future that lie under human control' (Grover, quoted in Sandilands 2005). Putting a notion of responsibility at the center of a temporal development of *place*, I introduce a grounded set of possibilities for political-ethical engagements *of* and *in* queer ecologies. This gesture connects to a more recent specification of the significance of the 'queer' in 'queer ecologies' offered by Sandilands: 'If "queer" is to mean anything at all, it must include a *continual* process of displacing the heterosexual couple at the center of the ecological universe' (forthcoming, emphasis in original). In the case of the High Line, FoHL's insistence on the 'gayness' of the space suggests that, at least in urban contexts, we must be attentive to the ways in which ecological argumentation must displace not just heteronormativity and its couples, but an increasingly

insidious and naturalized urban homonormativity (Andersson 2011: 1093–1094). This is especially urgent where the latter silences or displaces issues of race and racialization, class, and gender by way of embracing white metronormative gayness (see Halberstam 2005: Chapter 2).

My analysis unfolds four sections. First, I trace multiple threads of scholarly literature, which help to situate the redevelopment of the High Line as a novel instance of gay and green gentrification. With this theoretical scaffolding in place, I move on to a more substantial account of the history of the site's redevelopment. My empirical insights demonstrate both the extent to which the High Line's redevelopment exists as a case of gay and green gentrification, and the important lacunae that remain if we only deploy literatures addressing these phenomena in order to understand this case. Here, I make an initial gesture toward plant geography that I develop more fully in the third section, in which I elaborate the theoretical insights necessary to push the critique further by considering queer ecology and the agency of nonhuman actors. This leads, lastly, to an overview of political and ethical possibilities for understanding the complex dynamics of gentrification and displacement in queer ecological terms.

From gay and green gentrification to plant geography

Geographic analyses of gentrification form an important part of the broader trend in Marxian/Marxist geography focused on the right to the city. This well-developed conceptual terrain deals directly with the question of *who* inhabits and produces urban space, *how* they come to inhabit it, and *under what conditions* they displace others, in particular

the urban poor and racialized communities, from spaces targeted for redevelopment. Literature on gentrification is traditionally divided by production side accounts, epitomized by the work of the late Neil Smith (1996, 2002) and his various collaborators and elaborators (Hackworth 2002; Hackworth and Smith 2001), and consumption side accounts, emblemized by the work of Zukin (1982, 1995, 2010) and Ley (1996, 2003). On the one hand, production side accounts tend to emphasize the role of both the local and national state in securing the privately owned space for private–public development. On the other hand, consumption side accounts highlight notions of authenticity, re-branding strategies, and cultural dimensions of the right to the city. Broadly, these critiques identify both the economic mechanisms and cultural drives that account for the phenomenon by which those who abandoned central city neighborhoods during the historical era of ‘white flight’ come to reinhabit the very spaces left ‘unmanaged’ in the wake of their departure. Without wading further into this debate, it should be clear that the dynamics of abandonment and the right of return form a core conceptual target of critiques of gentrification.

While I share the political and scholarly commitment to naming and resisting gentrification, foundational geographic literature does not leave much room to analyze sexuality and urban ecology, both of which are central to the High Line’s redevelopment. In short, a queer ecological politics of gentrification is lacking. Before elaborating the empirical support for pursuing these connections, I turn to a classic piece by Caulfield (1989) that suggests the limitations of structuralist analyses of gentrification on *both* the production and consumption side. Caulfield argues that the *desires* of gentrifiers must be considered to be a crucial force driving

successive waves of gentrification. Where structuralist critics of gentrification are too bent on critiquing the ‘complicity’ of first-wave gentrifiers with market forces, Caulfield posits that it is perhaps more *ironic*, rather than *complicit*, when first-wave gentrifiers are displaced by the very process in which they are implicated (627). Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin, Henri Lefebvre, and Manuel Castells, Caulfield points to the role that erotic or spectacular excess plays in producing the raw material for uptake by the more familiar, and more sinister, version of gentrification (626). Caulfield summarizes the argument:

[D]eeply embedded in the landscape of gentrification is an immanent critique of modernist/capitalist city-building ... the relationship among different groups of old city neighborhood resettlers may be best understood in the context of a model of entrepreneurial appropriation of marginal cultural practice ... [C]ultural forces may be vital in shaping urban landscapes, that not only economic or ‘practical’ factors matter. Crucial among these forces in the case of resettlement of old city neighborhoods is the desire of certain social actors to elude quotidian domination, whether by *technique* or by spectacle (or by the hegemony of heterosexuality). Their activity constitutes emancipatory practice of a kind that mainstream social science, serenely naturalizing existing structures, and Marxian political economy, finding in existing structures a monologic totality, are not always well situated to detect. (1989: 628)

Caulfield’s intervention suggests that both market forces and more recent ‘creative city’ arguments are inadequate to account for the (re)production of urban space and the displacement, direct or otherwise, of those *to whom* parts of the city were abandoned during deindustrialization. Caulfield’s insight opens

critiques of gentrification to the power of landscape itself, or, as I will suggest below, to the plants, queers, and animals which body forth a representable landscape. On my reading, the High Line's pre-development landscape, or, more pointedly, its queer ecology, becomes a source of *both* the excess by which gentrification (and, by extension, urban capitalism) reproduces itself *and* the immanent critique by which the same process may be more thoroughly subverted. In light of more recent efforts to analyze gay and green gentrification, Caulfield's prescient, if partial, invocation of notions of landscape and desire suggests a moment of the urban in which perverse nature of a weedy ecology and deviant sexuality of a queer cruising space come together to rebuff the falsely creative homogeneity of even the most apparently progressive forms gentrification.³

For this claim to carry weight in a queer ecological critique, it is important to situate our understanding of particular forms of desire, most notably a desire for gay and green neighborhoods and urban spaces, in terms of the critical scholarship on gentrification. Here I turn to literatures of both sexuality and space and, more recently, of ecological gentrification. Building on foundational works (Bell and Valentine 1995; Ingram, Bouthillette, and Retter 1997) and their elaboration in extended debates (Browne, Lim, and Brown 2007), investigations of the social coproduction of sexuality and space have become relatively mainstream in critical human geography. Among many vibrant contributions to this subfield, Knopp's work stands out not only as charting its development over time, but also for investigating material and ontological concerns related to the spatial entanglement of humans and more-than-human actors. Further, Knopp has emphasized the pluralization of gay and

lesbian geography in the form of pluralized queer geographies (2007a) and his work has lately explored ontological concerns nascent in geography (Knopp 2004, 2007b). In contrast to his earlier work on gay gentrification (1990, 1992), which emphasized how gays, particularly gay men,⁴ were enrolled in the survival of urban capitalism, Knopp has increasingly put both actor-network theory (ANT; Whatmore 2002) and nonrepresentational theory (Thrift 2005, 2008) into conversation in queer geographical terms. Nevertheless, he has remained strongly, if not centrally, concerned with 'queer quests for identity' (Knopp 2004) even as queer theorists and feminists interested in many of the same ontological and biopolitical questions push for alternate framings of politics in terms of multispecies engagements (Giffney and Hird 2008) and micropolitical/affective scales (Chisholm 2010), and emphasize imperceptibility (Grosz 2005), rather than the visibility and the taxonomic tendencies of identity politics.

Knopp's hopeful forecast for the outcomes of these engagements is 'a geography that is less arrogant and elitist, more hopeful than fear-driven, more possibilistic than deterministic, and more human (and humane) than inhuman (and inhumane)' (2007a, 27–28). While I am sympathetic to Knopp's vision,⁵ I am perhaps most interested in his notion that, considered through the 'ecologies of place'⁶ explored in nonrepresentational theory or the 'weak ontologies' of ANT, 'queer quests for identity' suggest that queers have 'ambivalent relationships to place and identity' and 'affection for placelessness and movement' (2004, 129). Adopting this direction, we must be careful to pay close attention to the real material relationships of ecological configurations. While ecology does not provide a template for either ethics or politics, it

certainly lends itself to mobilization of creative concepts of resistance immanent to a relational mode of ecological attention to urban spatial politics.

In this case, FoHL relied on decidedly non-relational representations of both place and identity in their melancholic attachment to and institutional interpretation of the abandoned landscape of the High Line. Even as the project grew into a multibillion-dollar real estate development effort, FoHL self-consciously emphasized an approach which fused metropolitan sexuality with urban pastoralism in order to naturalize a hitherto unimaginable transformation of both the High Line itself, and the character and economics of the surrounding neighborhood. Recalling Caulfield, this convergence may be more ironic than complicit, but, in either case, a queer ecological approach suggests that it can—and even must—pay close attention to the reconfigured ecology of the High Line. If, as both the anecdotal and archival evidence suggests, metropolitan sexuality is a primary referent for the aesthetic of the space, what are the political and ethical implications of the *particular* landscape which emerges as a result of emphasizing this dimension of the structure's history? And what of its occlusions and erasures?

My interest in the displacement of a queer ecology by a homonormative ecology differs from the notion of ecological gentrification lately explored by geographers (Bunce 2009; Dooling 2009; Quastel 2009). These authors detail specifically ecological arguments and policies fashioned to drive gentrification, though they have so far avoided textured relational analyses of more-than-human ecologies. Dooling (2009) coined the term 'ecological gentrification' to critique the displacement of homeless people in Seattle on the basis of ecological redesign of city green

spaces (629–630). While Dooling does not give an exclusively humanist definition of the term, she carefully limits her concern to the deployment of 'an environmental ethic' in which ecology signals both a commitment to low-impact development and a scientific attentiveness to the nonhuman aspects of urban ecosystems (630). Given the differences between her case and the High Line, I am primarily interested in her claim that 'ecological gentrification relocates gentrification within the environmental discourses and in the discourses related to the exclusionary aspects of public spaces' (631). No doubt, the ecological argument for preserving the High Line *as* a green space was a tactic to quell potential opposition to its impact on affordable housing, for instance, on the basis that the project was a giant leap forward in both ecological design and in the greening of a formerly industrial, gritty, and sexualized area of the city.

Bunce's (2009) insights into the convergence of sustainability and gentrification in Toronto are expanded upon by Quastel (2009), who offers Vancouver as a prime case study for considering political ecologies of gentrification. Perhaps coming closest to a queer ecological critique of urban spatial politics, Ingram (2010) advocates an adaptation of landscape ecology to describe and analyze queer uses of public space in Vancouver. Ingram's work aligns with the queer ecological analysis that I will develop in the final section. All of these efforts might be read as consonant, if not explicitly engaged, with earlier work by While, Jonas, and Gibbs (2004), who put forward the notion of a 'sustainability fix' as the 'selective incorporation of environmental goals' into various processes of urban governance, regulation, and neoliberal state restructuring (552).

These authors hold a common understanding of urban environmentalism as a set of

development, planning, and political problematics related to the ever more emphasized imperative for cities to grow sustainably. Primarily in response to discourses that relate the rapid urbanization of the planet to the impacts of global warming, the ruling classes clearly find themselves under pressure to articulate pro-growth positions in terms ideologically immunized against environmental critique. Critics of ecological gentrification and capitalist proponents of green growth seem to agree, however, that urban environments must be adapted for a future laden with deep anxieties about environmental and social change. Nevertheless, the impasse revealed by this debate deals with the decidedly *human* displacements endemic to gentrification.

In this paper, I respond as much to the trend toward networked ontologies evidenced in Knopp's work on sexuality as I do to emerging ecologies of gentrification. I do so with a particular interest in a case where an abandoned ecology is reshaped by queer and vegetal actors, an interest that lends itself to one last set of touchstones in the literature: plant geography. Hitchings (2003) emphasizes the relationality of desires and the concomitant cultivation of desired plants while exploring plant agency in the private garden (107). Looking toward ANT, Hitchings gestures toward the aspiration to 'trace wider, unstable performances of power that reconfigure the ways in which we understand gardens' (111). Largely concerned with methodology, Hitchings subverts the visual by focusing on the multisensory impact of plants in their relations with gardeners (Hitchings and Jones 2004: 15). This work identifies important dimensions of the plant's role in ontologies of desire for particular kinds of domesticated nature, but it is not clear that such investigations speak to the politics of urban space, a limitation to which Head and

Atchison (2008) point. This is to say nothing of queer space.

The work of the plants, to which Sander-Regier (2009) attributes a form of agency expressed as activity or 'by virtue of being alive' (69), has lately become the concern of a variety of authors writing under the umbrella of plant geography (those cited above, as well as Cloke and Jones 2002, 2003; Heynen 2006; Jones and Cloke 2008). Sander-Regier focuses on the production of abundance and excess as a strategy of survival for plants, eventually feeding a concept of the 'ethics of partnership' based on Lorraine Johnson's notion of reciprocity, which is rooted in openness and mutual cultivation (2009: 80). Most interestingly, her understanding of weeds is sensitive to the irony that a weed often 'initially serves a desirable purpose, yet with time and incessant activity, the plant becomes invasive and undesirable' (70). By emphasizing the recursive temporality of weediness, Sander-Regier reveals the process of dislocation which subtends the disjunction between an ecology of desire and a desirable ecology.

Extending Sander-Regier's analysis of private gardening to the abandoned ecology and cruising space of the High Line, I understand an ecology of desire as reflective of relations of mutual benefit and attraction between human and more-than-human figures. A desirable ecology, on the other hand, tips the relation toward the human, objectifying or instrumentalizing the vegetal as a component of the landscape that lends itself to management for human reproductive ends. As in Caulfield's description of first-wave gentrifiers, initial attraction to particular areas of the city suggests a desire to escape homogenization. The irony of appropriations of often 'gritty' neighborhoods is that they clear the way for the same homogenizing forces which they sought to escape in the first place. But where

Sander-Regier writes about gardeners and their gardens, and Caulfield writes about gentrifiers and their neighborhoods, I am writing about an abandoned and transitional space which is part garden, part underdetermined pleasure ground, part neighborhood, part postindustrial, part public, part private. Across time, this queer urban ecology shaped and was shaped by the actions and desires of cruisers, gentrifiers, and plants, each displacing and being displaced by the other in various modes of anomalous relation.

History of the High Line's redevelopment

The High Line was originally erected between 1929 and 1934 as part of the West Side Improvement, a Robert Moses led plan for industrial and infrastructural development. Following its industrial falling in 1980, the railway, which runs both through and alongside by-then abandoned or converted industrial buildings, remained difficult to access and almost completely unmaintained by Conrail/CSX, its private owner. During nearly three decades of abandonment, the space came to be home to a weedy ecosystem inhabited by more than seventy-five plant species (New York City Department of City Planning 2005, Appendix C), a bevy of urban animals (Foster 2010),⁷ and a range of human uses, including queer sex and cruising, artistic production, encampment, and drug use.

In 1991, a five-block section south of Gansevoort Street was torn down over the objection of community activists (first-wave/pioneer gentrifiers, see Smith 1996) who had been moving into abandoned factories and lofts on the Far West Side. Despite promises to the contrary, Rockrose Development Corporation, which owns the sites, eventually sought and obtained zoning variances to

develop residential properties on the formerly industrial lots freed by the elimination of the High Line overhead. The achievement of zoning variances sent a strong message to other High Line property owners that condemnation and demolition would be the best way to profit from otherwise very limited development opportunities for single-story lots located under the structure. Such development pressure encouraged the Chelsea Property Owners—a vocal group led by Edison Properties CEO Jerry Gottesman—to push for condemnation and demolition at City Hall. Their justification for demolition was the apparent public safety threat posed by the decaying structure and its ‘unsavory’ surroundings. Defeat appeared inevitable when, in his last days in office in 2001, Mayor Rudy Giuliani signed a demolition order.

Two years earlier, in 1999, Joshua David and Robert Hammond, two white, bourgeois, gay men, met at a Community Board meeting concerning the fate of the structure. The pair would soon cofound FoHL, which was able to combine legal action with political brokerage to halt demolition and push for preservation through redevelopment. FoHL is now the only not-for-profit organization to license the right to operate a publicly owned park in New York City. During his time as Executive Director, Hammond came to be more well compensated than Adrian Benepe, former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (Kovaleski 2009). In 2010, FoHL listed eighty-four people on its staff to manage and operate a 6.7-acre park (12.5 staff per acre). Compared to the Friends Hudson River Park and the Hudson River Park Trust *combined* (17 staff for 550 acres = 0.03 staff per acre), the Central Park Conservancy (367 staff for 843 acres = 0.4 staff per acre), or the Prospect Park Alliance (263 staff for 585 acres = 0.44 staff per acre), the High Line

is the most highly staffed park per acre in New York City.⁸ Beyond the costs of staffing, the park's per square foot operating costs are also the highest of any in New York City (Calder 2009).

After ten years of planning and advocacy work, the first two phases of the three-phase project opened in 2009 and 2011 at a combined cost of \$152 million (New York City Department of Parks and Recreation 2009). The third phase is slated to open in 2014 at an estimated cost of \$90 million, making the total capital construction costs of the park close to \$250 million (Debuquoy-Dodley 2012). The project claims to have spurred nearly \$2 billion in real estate development through the zoning compromise crucial to the formation of the park (McGeehan 2011). The New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC 2011) indicates that, prior to the park's redevelopment, 'surrounding residential properties were valued eight per cent below the overall median for Manhattan'. By 2011, the value of property within a five-minute walk of the park had increased by 103 per cent (NYC EDC 2011: 2). Such statistics demonstrate the challenges for smaller-scale business owners, apartment renters, and residents of public housing near the High Line to maintain their foothold in the neighborhood, to say nothing of the cruisers.

While these facts begin to bespeak the unevenness of resources and funding accorded to the High Line in comparison to other parks, they do not tell the whole story of how the High Line came to be a powerful gentrifying force. For this, we will look to alliances forged not only around the idea of redevelopment, but also with the queer ecology of the High Line's postindustrial landscape. Related to the former, and owing to their confessed ignorance of urban spatial politics,⁹ David and

Hammond resourcefully assembled a group of pro-development experts, neoliberal consultants, powerful figures in real estate development, and a bevy of celebrities to aid in crafting their redevelopment strategy.¹⁰ This glittering group easily overshadowed FoHL's community-based supporters, though the latter remain an important source of funding and public relations support.¹¹ FoHL's early efforts are too detailed to recount here,¹² but it is important to note that its emphasis on building high-level support through recruitment of powerful developers, politicians, and celebrities breaks with more 'quaint' forms of Jane Jacob's style community activism (Herman 2009), let alone radical politics. It is hardly surprising that such a coalition came to support the organization so quickly in light of its avowedly pro-business disposition and professed political neutrality regarding gentrification (David and Hammond 2011: 10, 55).

But the High Line's success is not only about money. As Hammond pointed out in a 2012 interview preceding an event called 'Behind the Bushes: The Secret Homo History of the High Line',¹³ FoHL relied on a strong connection to gay aspects of the project. 'The High Line is totally gay', said Hammond (quoted in Pipenburg 2012). In addition to noting that the High Line runs through Chelsea, which, next to Hell's Kitchen, is Manhattan's most established gay neighborhood, he pointed out that 'The core part of [FoHL's] early supporters were gay people'. These were not just *any* gay people, they were people like legendary artist AA Bronson, lesbian City Councilperson and future speaker of the City Council, Christine Quinn, and the flamboyant and famed restaurateur Florent Morellet, whose eponymous diner ironically closed in 2008 due to rising real estate values preceding the opening of the park. These supporters, many of whom already inhabited

positions of political or cultural power or privilege, were drawn upon for their ability to fund the project or to provide political or cultural capital to the FoHL's effort. Their implication in a gentrifying process had far less impact on their material survival than on those in more tenuous circumstances.

When probed further on the connection between gays and redevelopment, Hammond offered the following explanation:

I believe gays have an ability to see beauty in places other people might find repellent or unattractive. It was easier for gays to see potential in the High Line. They were more willing to support a crazy dream. It goes back to Richard Florida and his concept of the creative class, this theory that gays are vital to neighborhoods because they see something special in them that real estate agents may not. (Pipenburg 2012)

Invoking the neoliberal avatar Richard Florida, Hammond opens up FoHL to critiques of Florida's ignorance of the urban poor (Wilson and Keil 2008) which identify 'creativity' as an overdetermined category that obscures socio-spatially exclusionary impacts of policies undertaken to lure the so-called creative class back to central-city neighborhoods. More immediately relevant for my interest in the entanglement of sexuality and nature, Hammond's response also implicates FoHL in critiques of homonormativity (Duggan 2003) and metronormativity (Halberstam 2005) in which white gay men are hegemonically overrepresented in (urban) spatial politics, provided they are conversant in the depoliticizing discourses of good gay citizenship (Bell and Binnie 2004). If we accept that 'gays are vital to neighborhoods' such as the one re-branded by the High Line redevelopment, then we must also realize that bodies marked as abject, particularly queers of color and the urban poor, are all too frequently displaced in

order for the 'creative class' to claim success in their revitalization efforts.

Organizations such as the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer)¹⁴ youth-of-color group Fabulous Independent Educated Radical for Community Empowerment (FIERCE!), which has a long history of sociospatial justice activism on Manhattan's West side,¹⁵ remain critical of the undemocratic neoliberal approach to privately led public space development, including the High Line. They identify an enormous contradiction in the provision of tens of millions of public dollars to a 'gay'-park-cum-speculative-real-estate venture even as queer youth of color have been fighting for affordable housing, access of medical services, and opportunities for employment, all while resisting police profiling and violence in the symbolic center of queer New York. Indeed, while the High Line's gayness is invoked as a cultural 'value added' according to the logic of the creative class, the reality of the project's uneven impact on the queer community, itself differentiated along racialized, classed, and gendered lines, is powerfully obscured by such pinkwashed statements as 'The High Line is totally gay'. This is to say nothing of the fact that the redevelopment of the High Line and subsequent influx of millions of tourists to the neighborhood has commercialized, securitized, and all but destroyed one of the last zones of public sexuality in Manhattan in the name of good, gay, and green development.¹⁶

From critiques of gentrification to queer urban ecologies

Queer ecological critique of both gay and green gentrification has important referents in the foregoing literature, specifically—an assumption of a consequential relationship between

sexual difference and regimes of urban spatial and ecological management—a temporal understanding of *place* which takes seriously the ‘entanglements of relationality and consequent affective politics and ethics’ (Jones and Cloke 2008: 87) and, relatedly, the need for specifically queer relational figures, such as particular plants, which trouble our accounts of agency, action, and responsibility *to* and *for* anthropogenic urban ecologies. Queer ecological critique builds on the foundational work of Sandilands (2002, 2005, 2008; Sandilands and Erickson 2010) and borrows insights from the more recent and limited speculations of geographer Gandy (2012). While neither has invoked queer ecology to critique gentrification per se, Sandilands has developed a powerful analysis of the biopolitics of heteronormativity and reproductivity in ecocriticism, while Gandy (2012) combines Foucault’s and Lefebvre’s notions of heterotopic alliance and heterotopy, respectively, in order to ground an interest queer urban spaces understood as ‘unruly’, ‘ruderal’, and ‘anomalous’ (734). Gandy asks: ‘How far can queer theory be usefully or meaningfully extended beyond the realm of sexuality to the study of complexity, indeterminacy, and new models of scientific explanation more generally’ (742)? Gandy concludes by arguing that queer ecology is most theoretically intriguing when it is ‘beyond language, beyond the bounded human subject, and thus far largely beyond spatial theory itself’ (742). While I find many affinities with Gandy’s interest in the anomalous, ruderal, and indeterminate aspects of queer urban ecologies, I think his positioning of queer ecology ‘beyond’ spatial theory overemphasizes the divide between the territorializing practices of human agents (i.e., proper ‘subjects’) and nonhuman actors. As I outlined in the introduction, queer ecology calls our attention to the urgent task of developing ethical and

political concepts that can link sexuality and ecology as they operate in discursive strategies, human subjectivities, *and* ecological process. To be sure, Gandy’s survey of both ecological and geographic theory shows us that there is a long way to go in making this work relevant to geographers and consonant with the current limits of urban ecological science. Recalling Knopp’s intervention, my effort here attempts a specific conceptual link between a particular plant in a particular sociohistorical configuration of urban nature. My primary aim is to attend to the political and ethical possibilities that issue forth when we pay close attention to the specific material and symbolic role of both human and nonhuman actors in urban space. I see the development of an ethics of responsibility as a necessary first step toward a queer *urban* ecology in which the proliferation of creative concepts might prove useful to existing efforts to oppose spatial injustices of gentrification. For this to carry weight, we must traffic between the determinate and determining aspects of particular urban contexts while not underestimating the transformative and indeterminate capacities of ‘unconventional’ actors.

Bringing a notion of responsibility to bear on the redevelopment of the High Line invites a return to the abandoned ecology of the space. FoHL’s own initial attachment to the space was ironically predicated on the charismatic assemblage of queers and plants, now replaced by a highly managed, labor-intensive ecosystem in which basic interactions between humans and plants are circumscribed (Figure 1). Whereas the abandoned ecology of the High Line offered a space for underdetermined interspecies interactions—sex ‘behind the bushes’, for example—FoHL’s emphasis on management, development, and economic success demands both more social and ecological control over the space. FoHL



Figure 1 Signage throughout the park implores visitors to avoid walking (or doing anything else) behind the bushes. Photo by author.

rewrites the ecology of the High Line into dominant discourses and practices of gentrification, rendering plants as inert objects and queers as normative subjects whose ‘excessive’ desires always risk capture by an urban capitalism incapable of producing its own surpluses.

In order to take more seriously the notion that the abandoned High Line’s queer and vegetal inhabitants and activities might suggest an immanent, if anachronistic, critique of homonormative gentrification, we will need to look more closely at the ways in which plants were enrolled in the political, economic, and social discourses and practices of redevelopment. For this, I turn to the iconic photographs of the abandoned space taken by landscape photographer Joel Sternfeld (Figures 2 and 3). Sternfeld’s images of the High Line’s abandoned ecology played a crucial, yet ambivalent, role in redeveloping

the space as a park. These particular images depict *A. altissima*, which, with its reputation as an ‘aggressive’, invasive species with a strong affinity for ‘disturbed’ ecologies, suggests immanent vegetal critiques of the purified discourses of preservation and sustainability advocated by FoHL. Encountering the High Line’s abandoned¹⁷ ecology through Sternfeld’s photos transgresses FoHL’s narrative of success by emphasizing the extent to which the planned landscape performs material erasures of unruly species and activities from the High Line’s past even as it invokes their characteristics in its design. Of course, Sternfeld’s photos also play a significant role in purifying the landscape of its animals and queer uses by depicting a space free of non-plant figures, without any human sex. Nothing seems to be going on behind *these* bushes. This move emphasizes the extent to which the park’s carefully curated plants invoke a queer aesthetic of abandonment only to foreclose any possibility of articulating, for instance, a pro-public sex stance which argues for the provision of spaces in which such activities could be undertaken safely and even with aesthetic enhancement.

As Cataldi et al. (2012) analyze in detail, Sternfeld’s photographs have a complex and ambivalent relationship to the High Line redevelopment. On the one hand, they were crucial to galvanizing support for the project despite the artist’s preference for ‘maintaining the High Line in its 2000–2001 [abandoned] state’ (362). On the other, they serve ‘as floating signifiers and design elements, divorced from the material conditions of maintenance labor, public and industrial transportation’ (368). Focusing largely on the aestheticization of the space, Cataldi et al. offer a searing critique that points to many of the elements that I have discussed above, including the relationship of the High Line to



Figure 2 'Ailanthus Trees, 25th Street, May 2000', Joel Sternfeld. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.



Figure 3 'Looking South at 27th Street, September 2000', Joel Sternfeld. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

gentrification, queer space, and post-9/11 security regimes (369–371). I pick up on the critique of landscape representation offered by Cataldi et al. while being careful to attend to the *destruction* of the High Line’s abandoned landscape in terms that are sensitive not only to the human aspects of the ecosystem but also to the more-than-human aspects. The important point is that, even if problematically, Sternfeld’s photos afford us imaginative access to a charismatic landscape and its particular inhabitants in a moment when the apparently desirable ecology of the redesigned High Line obscures and covers over the dynamics of the ecology of desire on which it is based.

As the Chairman of the Board of Directors said in a personal interview, Sternfeld’s photos proved to be a ‘very powerful’ tool for creating the High Line brand and for stimulating a ‘remarkably brilliant execution’ of the designed landscape (J. Alschuler, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the FoHL, Personal Interview, 18 April 2011). The official submission of the winning design team makes this explicit:

Inspired by the melancholic, unruly beauty of the High Line, where nature has reclaimed a once-vital piece of urban infrastructure, the team retools this industrial conveyance into a post-industrial instrument of leisure, life, and growth. By changing the rules of engagement between plant life and pedestrians, our strategy of agri-tecture combines organic and building materials into a blend of changing proportions that accommodates the wild, the cultivated, the intimate, and the hyper-social. In stark contrast to the speed of Hudson River Park, this parallel linear experience is marked by slowness, distraction and an other-worldliness that preserves the strange character of the High Line. Providing flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs, opportunities, and desires of the dynamic context, our proposal is designed to

remain perpetually unfinished, sustaining emergent growth and change over time. (FoHL 2004)

The jury, which included Robert Hammond, chose this design for its sensitivity to the High Line’s plants and landscape (David and Hammond 2011: 75–77). Symbolic reverence to the original inhabitants bespeaks a queer desire for maintaining melancholic attachments to disturbed urban ecologies of the bygone ‘gay ghetto’ even as they are reworked, displaced, and sanitized. Yet, the design team’s description leaves no ambiguity regarding the *proper* work to be performed by the figures populating the High Line’s ecology. The team handily enfolds the queer (‘unruly’, ‘intimate’, ‘strange character’) with the vegetal (‘nature’, ‘wild’, ‘cultivated’, ‘plant life’) in the context of neoliberal pressures for sustainable development (‘flexibility and responsiveness’, ‘perpetually unfinished, sustaining emergent growth and change over time’). The team makes the very condition of abandonment the basis for their design, embracing a mode of city building in which both unruly nature and deviant sexuality are perversely invoked to stimulate development. In this vision, the High Line’s queers and plants (indeed, the animals seem to be lost in this narrative) carry more freight than the structure itself ever did. By seeking to ‘change the rules of engagement between plant life and pedestrians’, the design team reveals a limited scope of acceptable modes of engagement with plant life in the park. Indeed, figuring all the park’s users as ‘pedestrians’ signifies that the space is unfriendly to the kinds of intimate and anomalous encounters enabled by the louche landscape of the abandoned High Line. Instead, the design puts the landscape *as a whole* into the service of ‘sustaining emergent growth and change over time’.

Accordingly, 'plant selection [for the park] focuses on native, drought-tolerant, and low-maintenance species' which are arranged according to 'naturally-created plant communities' that occurred in the self-seeded landscape. These choices are justified on the basis that they minimize resources (FoHL 2013). The role of plants as 'native value added' belies FoHL's claims of constructing the 'world's longest greenroof' even as it obscures the reality that, prior to redevelopment, virtually no resources were required to maintain the space even as it provided valuable ecological services. While the continuation of unmanaged succession¹⁸ might have posed some measurable, but mitigable, risks to the stability of the structure itself, it is clear that the exigencies of surplus value extraction took priority over any notion of responsibility *to* or *for* the existing ecology and the relations it supported and enabled. Sustainability is quite limited in this formulation, pertaining only to the 'natural' elements of the space, while leaving the gentrifying impact of redevelopment on adjacent neighborhoods unaddressed as part of the project's ecologic. Externalization of politically contentious impacts of the redevelopment deploys plants and queers in the construction of a desirable ecology, thereby naturalizing the displacement of both human and nonhuman inhabitants of the space under the guise of an ecologic of succession. In other words, queers and plants, and eventually the public, are permitted access on the condition that they yield to appropriately normative visions of redeveloping the space for the purposes of unlimited growth and capitalist reproduction.

In light of its absence from the redesigned landscape, *A. altissima* offers an immanent potential for queer-cum-vegetal resistance to gentrification and redevelopment of postin-

dustrial urban natures. Here it is useful to discuss some of *A. altissima*'s characteristics and entanglements with broader processes of urbanization. *A. altissima*, or the Tree of Heaven as it commonly known, was originally introduced to North America in 1784 by William Hamilton of Philadelphia (Shah 1997: 22). Native to China, it is now found on every continent besides Antarctica, a diffusion that has helped it earn a classification as a so-called exotic invasive species in many places, including parts of New York State.

British nature writer Richard Mabey (2010) points out that, 'In New York it's already clear that just a few months of neglect by city maintenance teams would lead to the streets becoming a burgeoning forest of Chinese tree-of-heaven seedlings' (237–238). Mabey goes on to describe how the sight of this charismatic tree on the High Line influenced desires to preserve the space as a park. What he does not discuss is that the very tree that populated the abandoned landscape would ironically be displaced by the very transformation in which it was implicated. Quite suggestively, Mabey follows his brief nod to the High Line with a passage on the proliferation of the tree in Detroit. There, in the paradigmatic epicenter of postindustrial 'decay', Mabey suggests that 'Young people from all over America—musicians, Green activists, social pioneers—are flooding into the abandoned areas, keen to experiment with new patterns of urban living which accept nature—including its weedy frontiersmen—rather than attempting to drive it out' (239). *A. altissima* has a strong affinity for the same kinds of spaces that draw subjectivities frequently implicated in gentrification of postindustrial urban areas. Recalling Caulfield, we can begin to see a parallel attraction to specific ecological niches expressed by *A. altissima* and by urban gentrifiers, the latter being far more selective than the former. Here we can ask what

would happen if we made more political room for the ‘succession’ of the former rather than the ‘success’ of the latter.

Turning to the behavioral ecology of *A. altissima* reveals some striking creative possibilities. Among the many qualities that make *A. altissima* a highly successful plant is allelopathy, or the production of the so-called ‘secondary metabolites’ which ‘have no apparent role in life processes or plant structure’ (Heisey 1997: 28). While not fully understood, allelopathy is a plant capacity excessive to reproduction. *A. altissima* produces a variety of chemicals that are believed to be capable of inhibiting the growth of other plants in areas immediately surrounding an *A. altissima* tree (Lawrence, Colwell, and Sexton 1991). While this tactic is not uniformly successful, it has contributed to *A. altissima*’s localized success even as it has helped it earn a reputation as an unruly and unmanageable biopolitical presence in urban ecosystems.

While allelopathy is too complex a process to describe in greater detail here, we can begin to explore some political and ethical implications of attending to specific plant capacities in a queer ecological critique of gentrification. I read *A. altissima*’s allelopathic capacity as differently temporalized process of displacement. Echoing Sandiland’s argument about the meaning of ‘queer’ being linked to displacing the heteronormative couple, I consider *A. altissima* to be a queering agent on the abandoned High Line. Specifically, *A. altissima* not only reproduces itself sexually, it also relies on territorializing tactics excessive to its strictly reproductive functions. If we could imagine queer human users of the space engaging in an analogous process through their transgressive patterns of use (sex and cruising), it seems possible to suggest a form of queer human/nonhuman alliance in which the anti-normative displacement of a scripted

space of capital might support a politics of anti-gentrification. Is this an ecology worth saving?

Here it is important to distinguish between the form of displacement initiated by gentrification and the ongoing ontological reality of displacement wrought through the incessant relational interactivities of the material world. Here I invoke Cloke and Jones (2002), who advocate for an understanding of tree agency, and, indeed, material agency more broadly, that is sensitive not only to ‘the very differing forms of beings and processes’ in which such agencies are articulated, ‘but also the very differing velocities and rhythms they might be operating in’ (87). Such a call suggests that a queer ecological critique of the High Line as gentrification should be at least as concerned with *time* as with *space*. Indeed, looking to the lost elements of the High Line’s abandoned ecology, such as *A. altissima*, helps us to understand the displacement of that ecology as a loss worthy of both ethical and political consideration. Perhaps the spatial tactics deployed by FoHL might be countered by a temporal resistance, which advocates for a responsibility to allow ecologies that emerge in abandoned spaces to continuously determine the conditions of their own emergence. This amounts to an argument for nonintervention or minimal intervention in abandoned spaces on specifically ecological grounds. Such arguments regarding the imperative to protect ‘fragile’ ecologies in urbanized and anthropogenic environments are far from politically neutral. If critics of gentrification attended more closely to both the human and nonhuman sexuality, materiality, and symbolic production at the heart of gay and green gentrification, they might find alternative sources for disrupting the perverse logic of displacement. Rather than submitting the process to the overdetermined elements of

dominant regimes of capitalist space-making, a queer ecological critique of gentrification foregrounds underdetermined elements as a source of potential tactics and terms for a renewed anti-gentrification politics.

Conclusion

With *A. altissima* as my guide, I have explored the ground on which political consideration of human–plant relationality might begin to challenge dominant modes of urban development. Of course, it is easy to fetishize the radical potential of queer figures and derelict spaces as engines of difference and radical possibility. Let me be clear: I do not take queer ecologies to be inherently resistant to the vicissitudes of urban capitalism. Nevertheless, with all of the irony suggested by Caulfield, I take the desire expressed by FoHL to honor and preserve the High Line seriously enough to wonder whether it could have staged a politics in which plants were called to do anything *other* than serve gentrifying ends. *A. altissima* is an intriguing figure on account of allelopathic capacity to relate to its environment and to create a space in which it can flourish despite severe limitations of vital resources. Its success is deeply related to the ongoing tendency of humans to create highly disturbed ecologies in the midst of profoundly anthropogenic spaces. In other words, its ‘natural’ success is linked in complex ways to our ‘cultural’ failures. If we foreground a relational responsibility for such spaces, it hardly seems ethical that *A. altissima* should bear the weight of being demonized as invasive when the very conditions for its survival are intertwined with the forms and structures of urbanization in late capitalism.

Here I can begin to suggest the ethico-political outlines of queer resistance to gay and

green gentrification. Recall Sandiland’s notion of responsibility *to* and *for* the weight of historical destructions and displacements undertaken in the name of (re)producing a heteronatural order. The High Line context is one in which nonnormative or counter-normative queer lives— and forms of life— are systematically attacked and undervalued because they are not apparently (re)productive. Perhaps now we can begin to imagine a specifically queer resistance to homonormative gentrification on the basis of both historical communities of sexual difference and nascent theories of urban ecology, which emphasize the material and symbolic exchanges that shape historical configurations of matter and energy in anthropogenic environments. Rather than seeing the landscape as a ‘merely’ passive ground, we must trace the movement and relational activity immanent to a queer ecology of desire not only to engage multiple agencies, but also to learn tactics, if not strategies, for creating spaces in which the imperative of capitalist redevelopment is suspended long enough so that we might genuinely engage alternative modes of being. If urban queers attended more closely to the ecological dynamics of the spaces so often ephemerally reclaimed for sociosexual purposes, they might begin to find compelling figures with whom to ally both politically and ethically. In so doing, they might denaturalize discourses of invasiveness associated with figures such as *A. altissima*, whose ability to thrive in disturbed ecologies is directly related to the political and ethical conditions in which such ecologies are coproduced by humans.

Returning to Cloke and Jones (2003), our ability and willingness to take relational ecologies seriously as scholars or activists depends on our ability as humans to imagine an ethics conditioned more by the opportunity to appreciate, cultivate, or work with existing

assemblages than by the imperative to intervene on an anthropocentrically instrumental basis. Situating ourselves within dynamic ecologies begins to unsettle understandings of phenomena such as displacement, which can be understood as an incessant ontological reality. Far from naturalizing displacement—a move that would complicate any anti-gentrification politics—this move marks queer ecological awareness as a fundamental part of any such politics. Here, queerness displaces both heteronormative and homonormative forms of identity whose reproduction is predicated on socionatural destructions and endless reproduction of the same associated with the homogenized landscapes of gentrification. The goal of a queer ecological critique of gentrification is neither to pluralize nor to proliferate vogue queer identities, a process which we have seen can too easily be co-opted. Instead it engages in responsible consideration of the many contingent ecological factors required to sustain any apparently stable and reproducible form of identity. Rather than taking displacement to be an arrestable phenomenon, queer urban ecology asks what must be displaced in order to affirm the emergence of *any* particular space. The life that abounds in queer urban ecologies offers us a complex material-discursive opportunity for new ethico-political alliances with nonhumans. The challenge, then, is to ensure that such alliances subvert incessant demands to reproduce ‘successfully’ by developing tactics that enable our survival and flourishing here and now.

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Notes

1. My initial fieldwork involved sixteen expert and community activist interviews, and substantial archival and media research. Subsequently, I have continued archival and media research paying particular attention to emergent popular critiques of the park’s imbrication with ongoing gentrification of the surrounding neighborhoods. In both endeavors, accounts of the power of landscape led me to considerations of the more-than-human aspects of the development of the park.
2. See also Stryker (2008) for more on the history and uses of this term.
3. See Wylie (2007) for important expansions on the influence of the concept of landscape in cultural geography. His analysis of feminist theories of landscape (82–91) is particularly insightful in the context of critiques of representation and masculinity.
4. Knopp did so in terms less obtusely essentializing than Castells (1983) in his early analysis of gay territorialization in San Francisco.
5. A call richly expressed by recent works in queer theory. See Muñoz’s (2009) work on concrete queer utopias and Halberstam’s (2011) work on queer failure.

6. A term coined by Thrift (1999).
7. I am grateful to Jennifer Foster for insisting on the role of urban animals in shaping the ecology of the High Line. Her work is an important foray into this aspect of the more-than-human inhabitation of the abandoned High Line. Due to space and thematic limitations of this issue, I will not explore this relationship further here.
8. These figures are drawn from the websites and Federal Form 990 (non-profit) filings of the respective organizations.
9. In the preface to their *High Line: The Inside Story of New York City's Park in the Sky* (2011), David and Hammond play into this mythology by describing themselves as 'A pair of nobodies who undertook an impossible mission' (vii).
10. The list of supporters includes politicians Hillary Clinton and Christine Quinn; celebrities Edward Norton, Kevin Bacon, and Diane von Furstenburg; and less well-known figures like John Alschuler, Chairman of the consulting firm HR&A and current president of the Board of Directors of FoHL, and Phil Aarons, founding partner of the Millennium Partners, a billion-dollar real estate development corporation.
11. As the West Village, Chelsea, and the Meatpacking District have gentrified, any reference to 'community' members must take account of the disproportionately high incomes increasingly required to live in these neighborhoods.
12. For an extended version, see David and Hammond (2011); also Patrick (2011).
13. The titillating and revealing poster for the event can be viewed at <http://www.gaycenter.org/node/7512>
14. The profusion of acronyms listing identitarian categories of sexuality is by no means uncontroversial. Here, I have simply opted to use the descriptor adopted by the organization itself.
15. For more on this, consult FIERCE!'s detailed archival website (<http://www.fiercenyc.org>). See also the work of the Parallel Lines collective (<http://parallellinesproject.com>), which has focused on the relationship between the Hudson River Park and the High Line development.
16. An exemplary popular critique can be found on Jeremiah Moss' blog (<http://vanishingnewyork.blogspot.com>). His work stands out both for its tone and its exhaustive cataloging of the disappearing spaces of 'old' New York.
17. The term 'abandoned' may also take a predicative form. To be *abandoned to* is to be 'devoted or given up to an influence, passion, pursuit, etc.; (now *esp.*)

devoted to something evil or immoral'. Even a non-predicative use, which reflects the attribution of a *quality* of abandonment, takes this moral tone: 'Chiefly *attrib.* (without *to*). Uninhibited, unconstrained; devoted to an influence, passion, etc., *esp.* one which is evil or immoral; profligate' (Oxford English Dictionary Online 2012).

18. A possibility that was apparently never taken seriously enough to advocate for politically.
19. Bien que le mot 'allosexuel' existe pour traduire en français le sens politique du mot 'queer', je retiens 'queer' comme un mot plus courant.

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Abstract translations

La question du déplacement: Une écologie urbaine queer¹⁹ de la High Line de New York City

Cet article rend queer d'un œil critique l'embourgeoisement à travers une analyse écologique de la rénovation de la High Line de New York City. En considérant l'écologie queer abandonnée transformée en parc homonormatif comme une forme novatrice de l'embourgeoisement gay et vert, j'affirme que le 'succès' du projet doit être critiqué en termes écologiques relationnels. En intervenant dans la littérature sur l'embourgeoisement, je commence à expliquer les aspects matériels et symboliques de l'embourgeoisement écologique à l'aide des innovations dans la géographie des plantes et l'écologie queer. Mon analyse se base sur le processus de la 'succession' s'axe sur une des plantes les plus établies et abondantes, *Ailanthus altissima* dit 'l'arbre du ciel'. En faisant usage des aperçus empiriques sur la stratégie de rénovation, cette explication interprétative de la High Line se penche à la fois sur les queers et les plantes. En passant par des couches de sexualité, écologie, et géographie, la question du déplacement saute au premier plan dans une considération des possibilités éthico-politiques pour une critique écologique queer de l'espace urbain. En conclusion, je recommande une éthique et une politique de responsabilité à et pour les espaces abandonnés qui nous appelle à être plus attentifs au queer, à l'écologique, et leur engagement continu.

Mots-clefs: embourgeoisement, écologie urbaine queer, High Line, *Ailanthus altissima*, New York City, études urbaines critiques.

El asunto de desplazamiento: Una ecología urbana queer del 'High Line' de la Ciudad de Nueva York

Este artículo críticamente se hace queer el aburguesamiento a través un análisis ecológico del reurbanización del High Line de la Ciudad de Nueva York. Tomando el parque, abandonado y transformado de una ecología queer a un espacio homonormativo, como una forma innovadora de aburguesamiento homosexual y verde. Discuto que el éxito del proyecto tiene que ser criticado en términos ecológicos relacionales. Interponiendo en la literatura del aburguesamiento, empiezo explicar los aspectos simbólicos del aburguesamiento ecológico con la ayuda de innovaciones de la geografía de plantas y ecología queer. Para fundar mi análisis, analizo el proceso de 'sucesión', enfocando en uno de las plantas más establecidas y exitosas creciendo en el High Line abandonado, *Ailanthus altissima* o El Árbol del Cielo. Llevando de conocimientos empíricos de la estrategia de reurbanización, este cuento interpretativo de la reurbanización del High Line piensa en las plantas y los queers juntos. A través niveles de sexualidad, ecología y geografía, el asunto de desplazamiento llega a ser céntrico a una consideración de posibilidades ético-políticas para una crítica ecológica queer del espacio urbano. En resumen, discuto por un ético y político de responsabilidad a y para espacios abandonados que nos requiere prestar más atención al queer, al ecológico, y su implicación.

Palabras claves: aburguesamiento, ecología urbana queer, High Line, *Ailanthus altissima*, Ciudad de Nueva York, estudios urbanos críticos.