



Interview

Dumpster diving and apple picking: Dialoguing food justice and food sovereignty in Ontario, Canada

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Abstract

This dual narrative and digital art submission is formatted around a transcript of a Zoom conversation (or co-interview) between the article's co-authors: food justice activist-scholars Dr Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa and Naty Tremblay. The conversation is structured by the same interview guide that Da Costa and Tremblay used for their research project *Exacerbated Hunger*, in which they interviewed racialized and Indigenous food aid users in Central Southern Ontario, alongside food justice activists and food aid providers, about their experiences with racialized food insecurity in the era of COVID-19. As members of their research population, they decided to co-interview each other to reflect on the findings of the project while also exploring their own experiences with food justice and food sovereignty, two salient themes within the research.

In the first part of the transcript, featured below, Da Costa and Tremblay respond to three questions in particular: (1) What is your first memory of food, or the first memory that comes to mind; (2) when, how, and why did you get involved in food justice, with the follow-up question: (3) how do you define food justice (and food sovereignty)? Interspersed throughout the transcript is digital artwork created by Tremblay for *Exacerbated Hunger*'s forthcoming poetry chapbook, *The Genesis of Food*, thereby underscoring the project's multidisciplinary design. They have also attached a glossary with definitions for bolded Food Studies terms within the transcript, but the interview's foci, "food justice" and "food sovereignty," are defined within the transcript itself and through collective dialoguing.

Keywords: critical food studies, sustainable food systems, activist research, Indigenous knowledge, storytelling, digital art, food narratives

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Résumé

Les chercheur-euses militant-es en justice alimentaire Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa et Naty Tremblay offrent ici une contribution alliant récit et art numérique organisée autour de la transcription de leur conversation (ou de leur interview mutuelle) sur Zoom. La conversation est structurée au moyen du guide d'entretien que Da Costa et Tremblay ont utilisé pour leur projet de recherche *Faim aggravée*, dans lequel iels ont interrogé des personnes utilisatrices de l'aide alimentaire autochtones et issues de minorités ethniques dans le Centre-Sud de l'Ontario, ainsi que des activistes en justice alimentaire et des fournisseurs d'aide alimentaire, à propos de leur expérience en matière d'insécurité alimentaire chez les personnes racialisées durant la période de la COVID-19. En tant que membres de la population concernée par leur recherche, iels ont décidé de s'entrevue l'un-e l'autre pour réfléchir aux résultats de leur projet de même qu'à leur propre expérience de la justice alimentaire et

de la souveraineté alimentaire, deux thèmes prépondérants de la recherche. Dans la première partie de la transcription, Da Costa et Tremblay répondent à trois questions : (1) Quel est votre premier souvenir concernant la nourriture ou le premier souvenir qui vous vient à l'esprit ? (2) Quand, comment et pourquoi avez-vous décidé de vous engager pour la justice alimentaire ? (3) Comment définissez-vous la justice alimentaire (et la souveraineté alimentaire) ? La transcription est ponctuée d'œuvres d'art numériques créées par Tremblay pour le prochain recueil de poésie de *Faim aggravée*, intitulé *The Genesis of Food*, soulignant ainsi la dimension multidisciplinaire du projet. Un glossaire fournit également les définitions de termes importants des études sur l'alimentation utilisés dans la conversation ; les objets d'intérêt principaux, la « justice alimentaire » et la « souveraineté alimentaire », sont cependant définis dans la transcription elle-même, au fil du dialogue.

Mots-clés : études critiques sur l'alimentation, systèmes alimentaires durables, recherche militante, savoir autochtone, *storytelling*, art numérique, méthodologie, récits alimentaires

Prelude

Below is a transcript of the first 35 minutes of a Zoom conversation between the article's co-authors: Food justice activist-scholars Dr. Jade Crimson Rose Da Costa and Naty Tremblay. Our conversation is structured around the same interview guides we authored for our SSHRC funded research project¹, *Exacerbated Hunger*, in which we interviewed racialized and Indigenous food aid users and providers in Central Southern Ontario about their experiences with racialized food insecurity in the era of COVID-19. Food aid providers were defined as: (1) food justice activists and organizers, and (2) food bank employees and volunteers (or advocates). We used three interview guides: one for racialized and Indigenous food aid users, one for food justice activists and organizers, and one for food bank advocates, combining them where necessary. In our roles as Principal Investigator (Da Costa) and

Graduate Research Assistant (Tremblay), we interviewed 30 participants across the region. We later invited ten participants to a three-day digital storytelling workshop to produce multimedia videos about their food experiences.

As members of our research population, we later interviewed each other to further reflect on the project's findings and to explore our experiences with food justice and food sovereignty, two salient themes in our research. In the first part of the transcript below, we respond to three questions in particular: (1) What is your first memory of food, or the first memory that comes to mind? (2) When, how, and why did you get involved in food justice? (3) How do you define food justice (and food sovereignty)? Questions one and three were asked of all participants (with food sovereignty mentioned when relevant). In contrast, question two is from the food justice interview

guide and reflects our dual entry point into food aid from a grassroots perspective. Specifically, Da Costa identifies as a disabled, neurodivergent, genderqueer, mixed-race, mixed-classed woman of colour food-justice organizer, and Tremblay as a working-class, mixed-race Indigiqueer farmer, agrarian earth worker, food-justice activist, and former food aid user.



Interspersed throughout the transcript is digital artwork created by Tremblay² for *Exacerbated Hunger*'s forthcoming poetry chapbook, *The Genesis of Food*, thereby underscoring the project's multidisciplinary design. We have also included a glossary of the bolded food studies terms within the transcript. However, our foci, food justice and food sovereignty, are defined within the transcript itself and through our dialogue.

Transcript: Part 1 of *Exacerbated Hunger* Chat on November 28, 2025

Naty Tremblay (NT): So, Jade Da Costa, are you inclined to tell me what your first memory of food is, or the first memory that comes to your mind, from your youth?



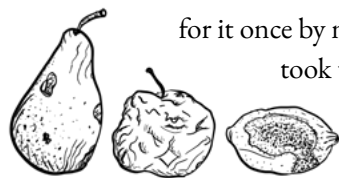
Jade Da Costa (JD): I thought about this a lot during the interview process, when we asked people what their first memories of food were. Most folks, even those who experienced food insecurity, recalled positive food memories, especially of harvesting food, but also eating foods they loved or eating certain foods with people they loved. But for me, the first thing I think of, which isn't even my own memory—it's more like a relayed memory, is something my dad shared with me recently about me not eating. I can't remember why, but he told me that when I was in grade one, maybe grade two, my teacher called him up, all angry, one day and was like—and I'm

quoting him quoting her—"Hey, every time the bell rings at lunch, Jade gets up and runs to their backpack and scarfs down their food. Are you not feeding them breakfast or something?" And my dad was like, to me, "Ever since that moment, I made sure that you never left the house without eating breakfast." It was clearly a memory he has carried with him, and one he's also very ashamed about. But the funny thing is, I didn't remember it at all, and it was interesting for me, because I was like, "Oh, I never actually thought of myself as experiencing food insecurity." But I guess I have, particularly as a function of neglect, but also gender, because my mom was the neglectful parent, and I don't think my dad thought about my breakfast because of gender socialization, right? But as soon as someone chastised him for it, he made sure I ate.

And then a counter to that was another memory, an embodied memory I have, of when my dad would sometimes take us to McDonald's for breakfast on Sundays, and on Fridays, my mom would usually take us there too. Those were, like, such huge moments of joy for me, to the point that I remember one time I didn't get my Diet Coke with my meal, and I literally bawled my eyes out. I think it was because I had such an emotional connection to food, and it was a source of joy for me, particularly coming from this larger place of neglect, like food as love. And I was thinking about how neglect wasn't something our participants talked about. A lot of them did experience **food grief**, where they had really positive memories of food in their youth, and then, as they got older, that was replaced with more scarce realities. But I've almost had the opposite experience: I've built a better relationship with food as I've gotten older.

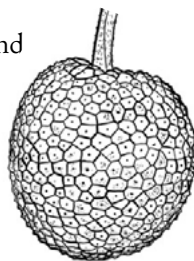
NT: Thank you for sharing that. It's interesting that going to McDonald's was a highlight. I had a similar experience as a kiddo. It was very rare that we went out for food, let alone to McDonald's, but when we did, it was an *event*, a *phenomenon*—even though it's garbage food. It's not nourishing at all, but it's compelling to a child. You get it in the box, and there's a toy, right? It just pops.

JD: That's very true, although I failed to say, I actually ate Big Macs when I was a kid. I remember getting shamed



for it once by my friend when her mom took us through a McDonald's drive-thru, because I was a fat kid. I remember thinking I needed to get something else too, but I am also autistic, and I couldn't fathom eating anything else, right? *That* was the food I ate, so that was the food I got. Related to that, my late grandfather would always take my brother and me for fish and chips when we visited them in Toronto (from London, Ontario). But I wouldn't eat the fish and chips, so he got me a Big Mac instead. It was very accommodating of him, but it was also a family experience I kinda missed out on, because I think he went to that fish-and-chips place because it was one of the first restaurants he went to after my family was expelled from Uganda...but also, now, I [boycott](#) McDonalds, and whenever I want to feel close to my family, I get fish and chips [laughs]. How about you? What's your first memory of food?

NT: The first memory that comes to mind for me is one of my richest and most sensorial memories, and it's of processing apples in the kitchen at our family farm, with my grandmother and all my aunts. I guess it's more like a series of first memories, then, because we would do that every autumn. We'd pick apples in the afternoon and then, in the early eve, we'd boil them, and the sweet smell of apples would just fill the entire house. Then we'd process the apples into applesauce—and I actually have the saucer now. It was my mother's, mother's, mother's, so my great-grandmother's, and it's this beautiful steel machine that's like, five pieces that come together. You put the apples through the top, churn it, and then all the like, funky stuff comes out one end, and you compost that. Then out the other end comes this beautiful applesauce.



And when I was young, we would make like a hundred jars of applesauce and give them out to everybody, and it was just so lovely. I just remember being in the kitchen with my kin, that sweet smell surrounding us, telling stories, playing cards, and taking turns churning the apples. That memory, too, is embedded as, like, an

“agrarian experience” for me, of like, “Oh, you know, autumn is the season for picking apples;” of deciding which apples you want to produce the applesauce with; of making the applesauce; of the collectivism, because the process could take two days if it was just one person, but it only takes an evening when it's all the aunts working together, plus the time it takes to play cards. I'm sure people were smoking cigarettes, too, and cussing, and all of that as well, which is, yeah, pretty nice. And actually, like, a lot of those people in that memory are not alive anymore, so it's got an extra layer of meaning for me today.

NT: Okay, so, when would you say you became involved in food justice activism, and why?

JD: I got involved in food justice activism in response to COVID-19 and through [mutual aid](#). I remember the exact moment, too. It was March 14th, which, actually—thinking of my memories of fish and chips—was my late grandpa's birthday. My immediate family got together at my grandma's place to commemorate him. And I remember my partner was driving us over to my grandma's, and I checked Facebook, and I saw that my friend Ellie posted to the Toronto [CareMongering-TO](#) Facebook group, which started in response to the quarantine, and also inspired similar groups in Mississauga, Guelph, and Kitchener, and eventually sparked the national phenomenon of “[CareMongering](#).” But originally, CareMongering came from social justice activists in Toronto. And Ellie was in this group, and she made a post offering free food to people in the area. I saw it, and remember thinking, “I can do that.” So, I made a post offering free food to people in my area [cities in or near the Greater Toronto Area



(GTA)]. A few other people did the same thing, and we all kind of realized, or Ellie realized, we were doing the same thing, and so we consolidated our efforts. A few weeks later, we became [The People's Pantry](#). And that group is still going, which is interesting, because we never meant to form a group. We never intended to organize; we were just people, mostly students, showing up because we could.

And it was a pivotal moment for me, because coming from London and living in the GTA, I didn't know how to get into organizing in Toronto. It can be a very exclusionary, very urban-based space, and I was struggling to get involved. That was the moment things changed for me. So, while a lot of people talk about quarantine as a time of isolation, for me, it was the opposite; it was when I found a community within the GTA... It is interesting, too, because my getting involved in food justice had nothing to do with my experiences of food insecurity, at least, not on the surface. I didn't even know what food justice was. I didn't know what mutual aid was. I didn't realize that was what I was doing until people told me. I thought I was just making food, getting groceries, and delivering them to my neighbours. I didn't know there was a name for it... How about you, Naty, how'd you get involved in food justice?

NT: My family are farmers. They come from a long line of agrarian people. Both my parents are from really big farming families and poor. My mom had 14 siblings, and the youngest, the only woman who went to post-secondary, was my Aunt Sue, and she was really tuned in to environmentalism and the impacts of agricultural pollution, especially the impacts of fertilizers and pesticides. She tried for many years to persuade my dad to go organic (because the rest of us were already on board) and to think about growing food in the context of food justice, specifically. She would say, "Just because you grow soybeans doesn't mean you're feeding people. You're mostly feeding cows and/or contributing to plastic production." So we were having conversations about food justice when I was still in grade school, and we eventually converted to [organic farming](#), when I was in grade nine. It wasn't that we ever heavily used pesticides and fertilizers, but mostly just because we couldn't afford to do that.



All of this is to say that I've been thinking about the relationship between food production, the environment, and nutrition since I was a kiddo. When we became organic farmers, we started [market farming](#), which means

that instead of producing a bunch of grains, for example, to send off to the U.S., we tried to sell food locally, and were confronted with a culture that is not only ignorant of the environmental impacts of [industrial agriculture](#) but also quite intentionally indifferent, you know? For me, food activism as a kiddo also meant talking to people at the farmers' markets about why our peppers cost ten cents more than the store-bought peppers grown in big-company greenhouses, which get subsidies for their electricity and chemicals. Then those costs are further externalized through the lives and bodies of the migrant farm workers who have no status and tend to get cancer by the time they're 40. *That's why! That's why those peppers are cheaper!* And again, people would just tune out. They just didn't care. To me, food justice was also about finding the language to get people to care about where their food comes from, while also working to get healthy food to people that's affordable and accessible. It is seeing all these layers and all these things as interconnected.

But then, in my 20s, I moved to Toronto, and I became a poor student, and an activist, and a frontline worker, and I started using food banks. There is a marked difference between food banks like [The Stop](#), which have an analysis of food justice, and provide fresh produce, and going to a number of food banks where there's a religious or "We're doing you a favour" overtone. You get a little box of canned food, have to stand in line for two hours, and should be *so damn grateful*. And, you know, lots of the people we interviewed spoke about that, too.

JD: I'll say, too, when we started The People's Pantry, food banks always wanted to partner with us, and once we partnered with a food bank in Mississauga, and they just gave us garbage. I don't know how else to describe the food. They just assumed we would want it, no discussion, no dialogue. And it created all this extra work and burden for us because no one wants to waste food. But, we are not in the business of giving people trash, and it put the volunteers and me in an awkward place. It felt like a weird re-responsibilization of [food waste](#) onto the community.

NT: That reminds me, too. In my late 20s, I worked with a bunch of activists and did something similar to

what [Guelph FEWD](#) does now, which is create networks to collect surplus food and repurpose it in interesting ways to eliminate food waste. We did that, plus dumpster diving and all kinds of other fun things. For example, once a week, we would make a big meal or host a potluck or gathering in Kensington Market and redistribute food. Again, like in my youth, this work was as much about repurposing food and feeding people as it was about talking with the community about food and food justice. In some ways, this was *my* entry point into Toronto organizing.

This was back in 2009, maybe 2010, when there was a big push across different communities to establish [community gardens](#), and that came up in a lot of my conversations at Kensington Market. So, being new to Toronto, I felt like, “Oh, my agrarian background and my knowledge of food and organic food are valuable to people.” This also included activists, mind you, who I had previously found to have pretty misinformed understandings of organic food, and who would say things like, “Oh, that’s bougie, and you’re bougie,” and blah blah blah, and I would be like “What the fuck are you talking about? What?” People had been growing organic food really until the [Green Revolution](#) in the 1960s, i.e., the chemical pesticide revolution after the World Wars. That frustrated me. But with community gardens, I saw the opportunity to challenge that thinking in activist spaces and to lend my agricultural, agrarian, earth-working skills to the people.

It also had a different energy than what I had been doing previously, with dumpster diving and chasing around different grocery stores to get a little surplus of lettuce. Instead, we got to grow our own dang food and animate these spaces in beautiful ways. Because, calling back to my first memory of food, it was the collectivism that made these spaces beautiful. It was another way of picking apples together. So, you know, having a community garden; harvesting the food together; making a meal together; having a big picnic or potluck together; these are what invigorates food justice for me, and it feels like this is what the world *could* look like.

JD: I find that striking, because something that really af-

fected me in our research was Nookomis Carol [an Indigenous participant in both phases of *Exacerbated Hunger*] talking about the difference between [food abundance](#) and [food scarcity](#), particularly at our first meeting for the [digital storytelling](#) workshop, where she pointed out that the way everyone was talking about food justice was operating from a place of scarcity, and she said, “I, as an Anishinaabe, come from a place of abundance.” So I can see the difference in how the two of us came to food justice. I operate from a place of scarcity, where food neglect shaped my relationship with food and, in turn, shaped my entry into food justice—yes, I do grassroots organizing, but only in response to the scarcity cultivated by quarantine. But when you talk about food justice, it comes from a place of abundance and a deep-seated notion of collectivity, where it’s not just about dumpster diving, but also about growing and eating food together...and that makes me curious, too, whether you even used the language of food justice when you were a kid? I’m thinking of something else Nookomis said, that “justice is a man’s word, a two-legged word,” and how she used food sovereignty instead. I’ve been thinking about that a lot lately, and I’m wondering what you think.

NT: Good questions. I didn’t, no. I didn’t have access to the language of food justice as a young person. Instead, I think I thought of it very squarely as environmentalism and ecological sustainability, as organic farming and growing community gardens as ways of cultivating and accessing food that were based on a sustainable relationship with the natural world.

And I think it was being in the city that turned me toward the term food justice specifically, because it makes so much more sense in urban spaces. When you’re in different neighbourhoods, you start to see that there are no grocery stores. There’s only a McDonald’s in Parkdale that’s open after nine, and you see how food access is for particular people—it is not for the poor, the newcomers, the immigrants, the racialized. Food justice in cities is very different from that in the country, and it was in my 20s, when I was in the city, that I



started to use the term food justice.

And then, for food sovereignty, I only started to use the term, probably in the last 15 years, through building relationships with Indigenous folx, especially folx at Six Nations who have been telling settlers for decades: We have foodways that we have always had that are sovereign, just like our nation is sovereign, just like our justice systems are sovereign. We don't need anybody to tell us how to grow food. We know how to do it. We've been doing it for thousands of years. We just need to be able to do that. We don't need the Indian Act to say, 'We're not allowed to grow food and then sell it,' for example, or other kinds of impositions that prevent people from benefiting from the surplus of the food they produce.

It also reminds me of what Nookomis said in her interview about how wild rice used to be grown here in the waterways, and it isn't anymore, because settlers love waterways you can boat and swim through without weeds, plants, and mucky muck. Well, rice is a plant that fills the waters, just like bulrushes do, and to grow those things, you have to share the water with them. But settlers don't share. And I think that if there were a push to try to grow wild rice now in the waters, people would resist it. Not to mention that most waterways are deeply polluted by the agricultural industry, especially by animal barns. In that sense, food sovereignty, for me, is recognizing histories and lifeways with food—not just the idea of “Oh, we could have a community garden,” but we can grow wild rice and give Indigenous People access to their hunting territories and trap lines again...

How about you? When did you start using that language, and how do you relate to food justice and food sovereignty?

JD: Yeah, as I said before, I came to food justice through The People's Pantry, and people telling me that what I was doing was food justice. And as someone whose work is informed by my own life, I came to realize what that meant academically. So, I came to the language of food justice through doing it. For a long time, I understood food justice as being able to have, or working toward, universal access to culturally appropriate, nutritious foods in ecological and sustainable ways. I still think that's true,

but through *Exacerbated Hunger*, I have realized that *that* is not the same as food sovereignty. It's part of food sovereignty, yes, but it's also more than that.

And that was in big part because of Nookomis, and also having conversations with you, and also other research participants, who maybe didn't use the language of food sovereignty, but were still very much describing it, and who were often Indigenous to elsewhere in the world, in which food was just a part of their daily landscape. And I think, for me, food sovereignty is honoring Indigenous ways of knowing and being, which I think I know through Anishinaabe, as well as Haudenosaunee worldviews, like Nookomis', but that I think has an Indigenous global quality, too, or at least, it did among the participants we spoke to, and which comes down to the core belief that us and our food, as the earth, are from the same consciousness, and so we need to live with the earth, and cultivate ways of harvesting food that are fundamentally different than big farming.

And I think food sovereignty, in that way, is a cosmological orientation that is inherently ecological. So, like, when you describe food justice as environmental justice, that's more like food sovereignty, right? Because when you think of yourself as part of the consciousness of the world, what you do is going to be ecological, because you're harming yourself if it's not. And through this project, I realized there is an important distinction between food justice and food sovereignty. Food justice, I think, is a response to a symptom [hunger] of colonial capitalist ecological violence, which means it ultimately comes from a place of scarcity, it's a reaction to violence. In contrast, food sovereignty always acts from abundance, which fundamentally shifts how you relate to the world. So, when I think about doing food justice, I think to myself: “How do I get folx food that they want, that they like, and that they need, accessibly?” And that is dignified. But that doesn't necessarily mean I'm also thinking about what I'm eating, where it comes from, and why. It doesn't mean I am thinking of the earth as my kin. It means I'm reacting to violence.

For example, I had this moment while I was writing a

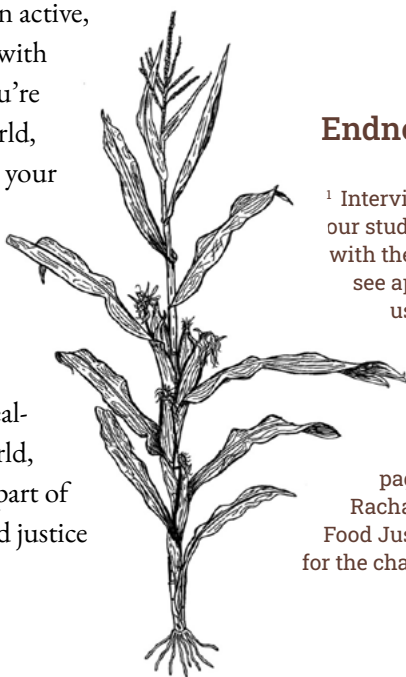


paper about our research, specifically on food abundance and food grief, and I was eating, when a bug came near me, and my instinct was to swat it, but then I was like, “That’s hypocritical! Like, if I actually think about what I’m writing, this bug is not someone I have the right to kill. Nor should I want to kill it.” So, I just let this bug hang out with me, and we became friends...I guess all of this is to say that when you divorce food justice from food sovereignty, you don’t actually shift your thinking from scarcity to abundance. You can always be acting from scarcity because you’re always reacting, and it makes sense in this world to react. But I think we also need to think about how to stop reacting, how to live in abundant ways, and how, from abundance, we can and will thrive. And that’s something that I feel like you, Nookomis, and other folx who were Indigenous to the Global South, really made me think about in ways I hadn’t before. Instead, I had a more ego-centric view and ultimately came from a place of scarcity. And I couldn’t see beyond that until other people really made me think about it and reflect.

NT: Yeah, to riff off that, there’s this idea that all you gotta do is create a channel, a ramp, a bridge, a way for food to reach people who don’t have access to it. But if you just do that, you might end up becoming a conveyor belt for cans of chickpeas, without thinking about your relationship to food. To me, food sovereignty is both thinking about historical relationships to food and an active, everyday practice of building relationships with food and where it comes from. It means you’re building a relationship with the natural world, the seasons, and the bugs, like you did with your bug friend. That, I think, nicely extends to harvesting, with folx asking themselves, “How do bugs actually contribute to my garden? Oh! These bugs here actually eat the critters that otherwise eat my plants,” and then all of a sudden, you realize you’re part of the world, the natural world, and the web of life. I think that is a critical part of food sovereignty. I’d like to believe that food justice as a political framework also leads to that.

I think that when people, like a lot of the Indigenous immigrants and elder participants in our study, talk about food grief, of “I remember being a part of a world where I could move and encounter food,” they are also saying “I remember being a part of a world where I was aware of trees and the plants around me, and I knew them by name. They were kin.” And then, you know, the feeling of deep loss when you exist in a world where you just don’t have access to that. Yes, maybe it’s because you don’t know the plants, but you can learn them. But it’s also that the plants are not there. You live in a place where you’re surrounded by concrete, or you just don’t have access to soil.

JD: Yeah, there is a loss of food sovereignty in that, too, and it is a sacred loss; a grief so deep it makes it hard to feel food abundance, but it is still there, I think, like you say. It’s in our memories and in the world still, even if we have to search tirelessly and wade through all the concrete; even if we have to go dumpster diving to smell the apples [laughs]. It’s like, food sovereignty is just underneath all the trash—food bank donations and the discarded Happy Meals boxes, waiting for us to pay attention—it is like what Nookomis says in her digital story, “creation is still creating.” We start from a place of abundance, always.



Endnotes

¹ Interview guides were created for the purpose of our study, drawing both on our lived experiences with the topic and Da Costa’s past research. Please see appendixes B–D for the three interview guides used for the project. For this article, we used a combination of Appendixes B (Food Justice Activists) and D (Non-white Community Members).

² One exception is the image of a table on page three, created by research participant Rachana Mandal, for her digital story, “A Recipe for Food Justice,” which Tremblay lifted from the story for the chapbook, with permission.

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Naty Tremblay (they/them) is a mixed indigiqueer food justice activist, earth worker, community artist, and PhD candidate in the Social Practice and Transformational Change Program at the University of Guelph. They ran the community arts for social change training program for youth leaders at Sketch Working Arts, formerly directed Rittenhouse, Canada's oldest abolitionist organization, and cofounded the Switch Collective and the Trans Healing Arts Web (TAW). They are the Graduate Research Assistant and workshop facilitator for *Exacerbated Hunger*.

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Conflicts of Interest: None to declare.

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Appendices

See following pages for supplementary material for: “Dumpster Diving and Apple Picking: Dialoguing food justice and food sovereignty in Ontario, Canada”.

Appendix A: Glossary

Boycott: When you stop buying or using a company's goods or services in protest of its ethics. Da Costa boycotts McDonald's for providing meals to the genocidal Israeli military.

CareMongering/CareMongering-TO: *CareMongering-TO: TO Community Response* to COVID-19 was an online mutual aid platform formed in response to food hoarding and grocery store overcrowding in Toronto during COVID-19 quarantines, “by providing a counter-culture to COVID-19-based fearmongering. Soon after the group was created, similar Facebook groups started to appear across the GTA and, eventually, all of Canada, thereby sparking the national phenomenon now known as ‘CareMongering’: a mutual aid movement that rapidly spread across Canada in the wake of COVID-19” (Da Costa, 2024, p. 81; also see Wood, 2020).

Community Gardens: Gardens that, “generally occupy underused urban spaces, transforming these places into productive plots of land and yielding social, economic, and environmental returns...providing access to the space (and often tools) necessary for residents to produce their own food” (Cochran & Minaker, 2020, p. 154).

Digital Storytelling: An audiovisual arts methodology that combines personal narrative with digital recordings, visual content, and soundscapes to create short (1-5 minutes) multimedia videos, or digital stories, that critically and meaningfully reflect on the narrator's personal and/or social experiences related to a given cause or issue (Rice & Mündel, 2018).

Food Abundance: Borrowing from Nookomis Carol and the other participants in *Exacerbated Hunger* (Da Costa, 2026), “food abundance” describes (global) Indigenous ways of being that underscore the praxis of food sovereignty. These ways foreground ecocentrism, interdependence, animism, and cyclical divinity, and approach the growing, sharing, and eating of food as a collective, sacred act performed in relation to the land as a living, thinking, feeling being.

Food Grief: A term coined by Da Costa (2026) to describe a persistent yearning for a former state of food abundance (see above), buttressed by an ever-growing feeling of food alienation in the present due to the erasure of food sovereignty under late-stage capitalism and white supremacy.

Food Scarcity: Food scarcity is the diametrical opposite of food abundance and constitutes a negative orientation toward food in which our relationship to food is defined by a sense of lack.

Food Waste: “Food that is intended for human consumption that is wasted and lost, and refers not only to food that consumers don't finish at restaurants and are thrown out at home, but also raw materials and produce that are lost in the farming stage, harvesting processes, during transportation, and storage” (Lai, 2021, para 2); (also see Soma, 2022).

Guelph FEWD: A Guelph-based food justice organization that “offers an equitable, dignified, and nourishing food source for community members, no matter their economic status. It approaches food preparation with the same methods used at celebrated farm-to-table restaurants and food businesses” (FEWD, n.d., para 1). The founder, a longtime friend of Tremblay, was also interviewed by Da Costa for the *Exacerbated Hunger* project.

Industrial Agriculture: A broad term used to describe “the large-scale, intensive production of crops and animals, often involving chemical fertilizers on crops or the routine, harmful use of antibiotics in animals” (NRDC, 2020, para 1).

Market Farming: When farmers efficiently use less space to grow a selection of crops for small-scale production and local purchasing, often relying on manual labour, hand, or low-power tools, and generally sustainable agricultural practices to do so (Kone et al., 2025).

Mutual Aid: The “survival work” that everyday people engage in to support and sustain their communities, including developing bold, novel ways to redistribute resources and uplift their kin, particularly in times of crisis or sustained struggle (Spade, 2020, p. 1).

Organic Farming/Agriculture: Farming without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and with a focus given to “maintaining and improving the overall health of the individual farm’s soil-microbe-plant-animal system...using inputs (including knowledge) in a way which encourages the biological processes of available nutrients” (Food and Agriculture Organization, n.d., para 1).

The Green Revolution: “The term used to describe the spread of new agricultural technologies that dramatically increased food production in the developing world beginning in the middle of the 20th century, the impact of which is still felt today” (Wu & Butz, 2004, p. 11).

The People’s Pantry: A mutual aid food justice group that offers free home-cooked meals and groceries to food-insecure people in the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area and Tri-Cities-Guelph, and which was formed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (Da Costa, 2024).

The Stop (Community Food Centre): A “nonprofit organization in Toronto, Canada, working to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing multiple challenges within the food system” (Levkoe et al., 2011, p. 250). It was one of the first Canadian food banks founded in the 198

Appendix B. Food Justice Activists Interview Guide

1. What's your first memory of food/the first memory that comes to your mind?
2. When did you become involved in food justice activism and why?
 - a. **Potential probes:** Do you participate in mutual aid or engage in community organizing? Do you go to protests? Donate or fundraise? Write? Create artwork? Do remote actions? Is your work collectivist or more personal?
 - b. **Potential probes:** Are you involved with any specific food justice groups or organizations? (For how long? Within what city or cities?).
3. What does food justice mean to you? (or: How do you define food justice?)
 - a. **Potential probe:** is it collectivist, personal, both?
4. How did COVID-19 impact your understanding of, or experiences with, food justice?
 - a. Are these impacts ongoing and/or have they evolved over time?
 - b. Do you think other things besides COVID contributed to these changes?
5. Has COVID affected non-white communities' experiences with food justice in unique ways? (**Potential probe:** are certain communities more affected than others?)
6. Do you see any problems with the resources available to non-white people who want to access food provision resources within (**their city of residence**) or elsewhere in Canada?
7. Are there changes you feel need to be made to better address food insecurity among non-white communities within (**their city of residence**) or elsewhere in Canada?
 - a. Is there a role you would like to play in this social change work?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share with me that we did not cover?

Appendix C. Foodbank Advocates Interview Guide

1. What's your first memory of food/the first memory that comes to your mind?
2. When did you start working with food banks and why?
 - a. **Potential probes:** What specific food banks have you been involved with and/or are currently involved with now? (**Potential probes:** for how long? Where?)
 - b. Are/were you an employee, manager, or volunteer? Has/did your position change over the years? What kind of labour do you do or did you do?)
3. Why are food banks important to you?
4. Did COVID-19 impact your relationship with, or experiences of, food banks?
 - a. Are these impacts ongoing and/or have they evolved over time?
 - b. Do you think other things besides COVID contributed to these changes?
5. Has COVID affected non-white communities' experiences with food banks in unique ways? (**Potential probe:** are certain communities more affected than others?)
6. Do you see any problems with the resources available to non-white clients trying to access food banks and other such resources in (**residence**) or elsewhere in Canada?
7. Are there changes you feel need to be made to better address food insecurity among non-white communities within (**their city of residence**) or elsewhere in Canada?
 - a. Is there a role you would like to play in this social change work?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share with me that we did not cover?

Appendix D. Non-white Community Members Interview Guide

1. What's your first memory of food/the first memory that comes to your mind?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your relationship to food now? (**Probes:** do you associate it with culture or community? Poverty or scarcity? Is it personal, political?)
3. What sort of food provision/aid services do you use, or have used in the past? (**Potential probes:** Mutual aid? Food banks? Coupons? Community Fridges? Soup kitchens?)
4. Why did you start requesting food aid? (**Potential probes:** for how long?)
 - a. What language would you use to describe yourself as someone who accesses food provision or aid? (I.e., a service user? Client? Requester?)
5. *If requesting **before** March 2020:* Have you noticed a change in the quality or consistency of the food aid you received after COVID-19?
 - a. **Probe:** Do any specific examples or memories come to mind?
 - b. **Follow up:** Are these impacts ongoing and/or have they evolved over time?
 - c. **Follow:** Do you think other things besides COVID contributed to these changes?
6. *If requesting **after** March 2020:* Have you noticed a change in the quality or consistency of the food aid you received over the last [x] months **or** years?
 - a. **Probe:** Do any specific examples or memories come to mind?
 - b. **Follow up:** Do you think COVID-19 contributed to these changes?
 - c. **Follow:** Do you think other things besides COVID contributed to these changes?
7. Do you think non-white food aid users, requesters, or clients (*preferred term*) have been impacted by COVID (*if relevant:* and the other things you've named) in unique ways?
8. Do you see any (*other*) problems with the resources available to non-white people trying to access food aid or support within (**their city of residence**) or elsewhere in Canada?
 - a. **If yes:** What changes do you want to see made to address these problems?
9. What's a positive experience you've had with food aid? What made it positive?
10. What steps do you think society can take to eliminate food insecurity?
 - a. Is there a role you would like to play in this social change work?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share with me that we did not cover?