

Moving Home: The Art and Embodiment of Transience Among Youth Emerging from Canada's Child

Welfare System

Amelia Merhar

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN GEOGRAPHY  
YORK UNIVERSITY  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

September 2017

© Amelia Merhar, 2017

**ABSTRACT**

*Youth who have exited the child welfare system are among the most vulnerable in Canada. Ample research in social sciences disciplines outside of Geography have illustrated the significant likelihood of poorer life outcomes for former youth in care across a variety of indicators. Combining geographies of mobilities, children's geographies, and emotional geographies, this research seeks to understand the embodied experiences of former youth in care as they relate the transience experienced in care in the past and lived on in the present. Using arts-based, participatory and Indigenous methods this comparative study collaborated with 15 co-researchers from Toronto and Whitehorse ages 18-30 with lived-experience in care. Representations of bodies were complex, partial, and most often created by female-identified co-researchers. An interesting finding was positive representation of and identification with nature and natural elements, while homes and depictions of them hardly present in comparison. Hope for the future and other youth in care emerged as strong theme, and this hope connects to resilience as practiced by co-researchers as a conscious form of resistance. Methodological findings include the compelling nature of the data created by opening up artistic medium to be self-selected. Lastly, policy suggestions for housing and transition supports to be more understanding of the mobility of these young people are discussed.*

*Keywords: youth, embodiment, mobility, transience, arts-based research, child welfare*

**DEDICATION**

To all the wanderers and travelers emerging from difficult childhoods who have wondered why they feel compelled to move.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my foster sisters, Jennifer and Ly, for inspiring this work through our reconnection as adults. Thank you to my partner organizations and all the staff at SKETCH and Splintered Craft for sharing your space, wisdom, and dedication to improving the lives of young people. Thank you to each and every co-researcher in this project for your contributions: Zula; Xavier Binette; Wolfie; Starchild Dreaming Loud; Sophia Nahz; Singing Thunder; Rachel MacIntosh; Oddane Taylor; Nicholas Ridiculous; M.T. Ness; Michelle Charlie; Jessie Stone; Elijah M; Bethany Papadopoulos; and Anonymous. Thank you to my external funders, Office of the Provincial Advocate and Yukon Child and Youth Advocate for valuing this project and the voices of youth. Thank you to Elder Frances Woolsey for grounding the project in the Whitehorse with your support and prayer. Thank you to the faculty, staff and my colleagues at York University Geography Department for turning me into a Geographer. Thank you to Dr. Alison Bain, my supervisor, and Dr. Gabrielle Slowey, my committee member, for your guidance throughout this process. Thank you to Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Association of Universities and Colleges for Northern Studies Program for awarding me scholarships that dramatically increased my standard of living. Thank you to CUPE 3903 for your incomparable benefits package that kept me well-massaged and cavity-free for two years. Lastly, thank you to the staff at the Lakeview Diner for your friendly 24-hour service and bottomless coffee refills as I wrote this thesis.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF IMAGES	vii
CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	1
1.1 CONTEXT	1
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	3
CHAPTER TWO: MAKING KNOWLEDGE AND MAKING IT PUBLIC: LIVING THE PROCESS ON PAPER: CHECK-INS, CHECK-OUTS, AND A DASH OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY	6
2.1 ON CHECK-INS AND POSITIONALITY	6
2.2 A NORTHERN FEMINIST POSITION	8
2.3 MIXING METHODOLOGIES AND MEDIUMS FOR DESIRED EFFECT	11
2.4 COMPARATIVE DESIGN AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS	15
2.4.1 BEGINNINGS: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	17
2.4.2 CO-RESEARCHERS AND COMMUNAL KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION	20
2.5 DIGITAL CAPTURE: DOCUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION	25
2.6 ACTION AND IMPACT: ART SHOWS AND MEDIA ATTENTION	26
2.7 CHECKOUT: WHAT WENT WELL TODAY?	29
CHAPTER THREE: THE PLACE OF YOUTH IN CARE IN GEOGRAPHY: FROM MOBILITIES TO CHILDREN’S GEOGRAPHIES TO EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES	30
3.1 CHECK-IN: AN “ALL-GOOD” PLACE	30
3.2 OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	31
3.3 THE CONTEXT OF TRANSIENCE	39
3.4 THE EMBODIMENT OF TRANSIENCE	42
3.5 RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE, AND THE VULNERABILITY OF RESISTANCE	44
3.6 THE SELF-CARE OF AN ETHICS OF CARE	47
3.7 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW	48
3.8 CHECK-OUT: LEARNING	50
CHAPTER FOUR: THE EMBODIMENT OF TRANSIENCE: FEELINGS, RELATIONS AND MOVEMENTS	51
4.1 CHECK-IN: RECOGNITION AND INTRODUCTION	51
4.2 THE FEELING BODY: EMOTIONAL PORTRAITS AND COMPLEX COLLAGES OF BODIES	51

	59
4.3 THE BODY IN RELATION(S)	69
4.4 MOVEMENT: FREEDOM, FORGETTING AND HOPE	81
4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	94
4.6 CHECK-OUT: HOPE AND WANTING	95
CHAPTER FIVE: RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE: INDIGENOUS ONTOLOGIES AND PRACTICES TOWARDS HOPEFUL FUTURES	96
5.1 CHECK-IN: BODY OF WATER	97
5.2 INTRODUCTION	97
5.3 INDIGENOUS ONTOLOGIES AND RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE	100
5.3.1 RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE: TORONTO	108
5.3.2 DAYDREAMING AS SELF-CARE	110
5.4 HOPE, GIVING BACK, AND AN ETHICS OF CARE	116
5.5 SUMMARY OF RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE	119
5.6 CHECK-OUT: COMMUNITIES, IDENTITIES, AND GIVING BACK	120
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS	122
6.1 CHECK-IN: WHAT'S IN YOUR BACKPACK	122
6.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW	123
6.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: EMOTIONS, RELATIONS, MOVEMENT AND RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE	124
6.3.1 GIVING BACK AND HOPEFUL FUTURES	126
6.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE1	127
6.5 POLICY SUGGESTIONS	128
6.6 CHECK-OUT: MAPPING SIMILARITIES	129
REFERENCES	131
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: RECRUITMENT POSTERS	140
Appendix B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM	142
Appendix C: ARTIST STATEMENT WORKSHOP OUTLINE	146
Appendix D: MEDIA LIST AND LINKS	149
Appendix E: FULL LYRICS/TEXT TO WORKS PRODUCED	150
Appendix F: ART SPREADSHEET	154

## LIST OF IMAGES

Image 3.1: All good place, Amelia Merhar, 2016	30
Image 4.1: Recognition, Sophia Nahz, 2016	51
Image 4.2: Positive/Negative by Starchild Dreaming Loud, 2016	61
Image 4.3: Portrait series, Jessie Stone, 2016	63
Image 4.4: Late Bloomers, Nicholas Ridiculous, 2016	66
Image 4.5: Collage, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016	71
Image 4.6: Thoughts and Inner Workings, Michelle Charlie, 2016	74
Image 4.7: Wolf, Rachel MacIntosh, 2016	76
Image 4.8: Cosmic Diaspora, (in-progress pic) Elijah M, 2016	78
Image 4.9: Knowledge Production, Yukon co-researcher group, 2016	80
Image 4.10: Patched Skirt, Amelia Merhar, 2016	84
Image 4.11: Untitled, M.T. Ness, 2016	86
Image 4.12: Streams (Live Performance Still), Zula, 2016	89
Image 4.13: Welcome Home Series, Sophia Nahz, 2016	90
Image 4.14: Start, Go, Search, Fall, Land, Sophia Nahz, 2016	92
Image 5.0: Emotional Geographies of the Yukon, Amelia Merhar and Gen Gagnon, 2016	96
Image 5.1: Dream-catchers Series, Starchild Dreaming Loud, 2016	102
Image 5.2: Fuck your feelings, Singing Thunder, 2016	104
Image 5.3: Trust Issues, Singing Thunder, 2016	106
Image 5.4: From A Different Point of View, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016	108
Image 5.5: NOT Jus7 An07h3r Numb3r, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016	109
Image 5.6: Many Things are Made of Silver, Sophia Nahz, 2016	112
Image 5.7: Still from performance of Moving On Home, Oddane Taylor, 2016	115
Image 5.8: Stills from dance performance, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016	117
Image 5.9: The boy who lived in his head, Nicholas Ridiculous, 2016	121
Image 6.0: Backpack Installation, Toronto co-researcher group, 2016	122
Image 6.1: Interactive Mapping Projects, Toronto co-researchers and Anonymous, 2016	129

## CHAPTER ONE

### CONTEXT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### 1.1 Context

Canada has more youth in care per capita than many developed nations, including the United States, Japan, France, Italy, Norway, and Australia (Thoburn, 2007) and apprehensions of youth into care have been on the rise since 1992. There are an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 youth in foster care, group homes and kinship care in Canada (Mulcahy & Trocmé, 2010). The child welfare system and its failings are especially difficult for Aboriginal communities, as almost half of youth in care under the age of 14 are Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2013). The very first recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report (2015) is to reduce the number of Aboriginal youth in care. Additionally, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (2016) has recently come to a decision that “the Canadian government discriminated against First Nations children and families through its inequitable child welfare services”. Furthermore, research has illustrated that Black youth are more likely to be apprehended than their white or Asian peers, and are also likelier to stay in care longer (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health & Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, 2014).

The 2011 National Household Survey was the first occasion when foster youth were counted nationally in Canada, which is an illustration of just how marginalized this group is. Youth who have been in care are more likely to become homeless, more than 40% of youth on the street in Canada have been involved with the child welfare system (Raising the Roof, 2009). Beyond the initial trauma and abuse that led to a child being apprehended into foster care, once within the system school and home life are impacted greatly (Snow, 2006, 2009a). Each move means a new home, different rules, other youth in care to live with, potentially hierarchical



relations with biological children of the foster parents, and often a new school and neighbourhood. In the case of group homes youth must become accustomed to all the staff, their shifts and personalities, as well as sharing a home with five or more youth in care. Studies have illustrated the negative social effects of being in a foster home or group home (Samuels & Pryce, 2008; Snow, 2009a).

Youth are placed in an average of seven homes during their time in the child welfare system (Covell, 2010), though many studies cite youth individually listing higher numbers including as many as 32 (Serge, Eberle, Goldberg, Sullivan, & Dudding, 2002). Placement bouncing has significant spatial impacts, approximately 70% of youth in care from the city of Toronto are placed outside the city limits in suburban foster and group homes (Goodman, D. personal communication Sept 20 2015). This issue, termed “placement bouncing” (National Youth in Care Network, 2003), is correlated to poorer life outcomes for former youth in care including greater life dissatisfaction, lower self-efficacy, and more criminal convictions (Dregan & Gulliford, 2012). Additionally, research has shown the increased likelihood of smoking, relying on social assistance, and single parenting for former youth in care overall (Office of The Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth, 2012). These negative outcomes for youth exiting the child welfare system can have numerous lifelong effects. A Canadian study found that youth who had never been in care were 20 times more likely to attend university than youth from the child welfare system (Turpel-Lafond & Kendall, 2007). Among Canadian former youth in care who become homeless, they are more likely to have multiple placements, a negative impression of their foster care experience, to have left care earlier, and have an ongoing desire to have a relationship with their parents (Serge, Eberle, Goldberg, Sullivan, & Dudding, 2002).

Much research looking at the experiences of youth in care note the likelihood of poorer life outcomes as they transition out of care, known colloquially as “aging out”, usually at age 18-

19 (Cook, Fleishman & Grimes, 1991; Kufeldt, 2003; Leslie & Hare, 2003; MannFeder & White, 2003). Thus, youth in care experience a biologically determined moment in time when they now must be independent, ready or not, even in a social context when 42% of youth 20-29 in Canada still live with their parents (Statistics Canada, 2015). Sadly, Thompson and Newman (1995) determined elevated death rates of care leavers around the age of 18, when child protection services are often withdrawn. As the vast majority of parents and guardians do not immediately withdraw all support from their children at 18, this abrupt removal from the system is highly problematic and a unique feature of life and identity as a former youth-in-care. In Canada, approximately 6000 youth “age out” of the child welfare system each year (Fallis, 2012).

## **1.2 Research Questions**

In this research, I explore how former Canadian foster youth understand and have experienced transience – what is referred to as “placement bouncing” (National Youth in Care Network, 2003) – within the child welfare system. I focus on embodied experiences of transience, seeking to understand if transience within the system is connected to transience later in life as experienced by former youth in care. I also seek to understand how the frequent moving of homes, schools, and neighbourhoods relates to feelings of belonging or the absence of it. By inquiring how youth respond to placement bouncing through self-care practices, my hope is that this practical lived knowledge can be shared later with youth currently in care to help increase their self-awareness and coping strategies. Lastly, through my data analysis of the comparative micro-case studies, I seek to understand potential implications for child welfare policies in Canada. My research, then, is driven by three key research questions:

- How is transience, as manifest through “placement bouncing”, experienced and embodied by youth who have exited the child welfare system?

- How do former youth in care experience belonging and the absence of belonging within their everyday lives?
- What practices of self-care do youth engage in as a response to placement bouncing?

In what follows, I clarify my research objectives further and situate them within my own life experience as a means of reinforcing why I am best positioned to successfully undertake this work.

Placement bouncing is a known and common part of how youth experience the child welfare system. As studies have shown, repeated displacements and disruptions are correlated to a greater likelihood of poorer life outcomes (Dregan & Gulliford, 2012; Serge, Eberle, Goldberg, Sullivan, & Dudding, 2002; Snow 2009a). However, a much smaller body of research involves former youth in care deciding and influencing research questions, and is mainly centred around educational aspirations (Snow, 2013).

An objective of this research is to create space for former youth in care to discuss, reflect upon, and create artwork on the topic of transience aka placement bouncing (National Youth in Care Network, 2003) within Canadian child welfare systems. As this project will be informed by Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods, the research questions stated above are a starting point for further discussion among the youth co-researchers. This research is strongly informed by the calls to include youth in care voices in research about them (National Youth in Care Network, 2003; Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth, 2012).

My interest in this work and dedication to it comes from my personal experience within the child welfare system. I grew up in Toronto, and from the ages of 11-15 was involved repeatedly with the Children's Aid Society (C.A.S.) of Metropolitan Toronto, due to my mother's (a single parent) mental health issues. In 1997, my mother took my brother and I out of school and kept us in the house for 4 months, fearing violence from my father. During my involvement

with C.A.S, I was placed in foster homes in Bowmanville, Pickering, and Scarborough, and group homes in Brampton, as well as in kinship care with my maternal grandparents in Toronto. I had 15 social workers during my involvement with the child welfare system, due to the way the system is designed with separate intake, family, and youth workers. While it has been years since I left foster care and group homes, many issues that I experienced still persist, including transience. With my lived experience as a former youth in care, I am an insider within the child welfare system and have unique insights and knowledge to bring to my research. From this insider position I can more easily establish a strong rapport with former youth in care. This rapport can positively influence the spirit and relationships of collaboration that participatory action research seeks to develop. This lived experience makes my interest in the work explicit and upfront, and can work to bridge and challenge the privileged researcher-marginalized subject relationship. Additionally, having lived in Toronto until I was 19, and Whitehorse since 2008, I have local knowledge, contacts and context that can ground this research in local realities, practices and traditions. Since child welfare is bound by provincial and territorial jurisdiction, (former) youth in care who move to another part of the country, are thus limited in the supports provided by their legal caregiver, the state. Given the suggested connection between early leavers of care and increased homelessness (Serge, Eberle, Goldberg, Sullivan, & Dudding, 2002), and the transience and mobility of the young and homeless, a national child welfare policy could potentially address these issues. If (former) youth in care are more transient and mobile than their more normatively-housed peers, then what might a new national inclusive and supportive policy to support them entail? If (former) youth in care have developed unique ways of coping and self-care to deal with embodied transience stemming from their experiences in care, can these strategies be shared with current youth in care to help foster greater resilience?

## CHAPTER TWO

### MAKING KNOWLEDGE AND MAKING IT PUBLIC: LIVING THE PROCESS THROUGH CHECK-INS AND CHECKOUTS

#### 2.1 On Check-Ins and Positionality

At the beginning of every day, the co-researchers and I did a check-in, a simple group activity designed to get the group on the same page, as well as hint at how we are feeling and entering the space. These activities range from demonstrating a physical position that illustrated how you felt, to describing what kind of bird or body of water you felt that you embodied that morning. Such activities got creative juices flowing and allowed co-researchers to allude to how they are feeling without the pressure to name feelings like depression, worry, or excitement. Every chapter in this thesis starts with a check-in, and ends with a check-out, as way to make this document live and communicate the process of the research. Check-in's and check-outs have a long history in group work (Hunter, Bailey, & Taylor, 1994), and are a component of creating safe spaces for Participatory Action Research (Wadsworth, 2006).

I begin this section with a very personal check-in because the state of my family relationships affects my state of mind and influences how I approach, see, and reflect on this work as I begin my analysis. These insights overlap with the autoethnographic ontologies that cross-cut this project. A brief reflection upon what aspects of autoethnography I use follows the check-in.

*Last night, my mother called me. She was getting kicked out of the shelter because she has accumulated too much stuff. She was anxious, and filled the back of my truck up with bags and bags and bags of clothes and papers. I am already storing some of her other bags in my storage locker I rented for when I went away for fieldwork. The word 'enabling' is at the*

*forefront of my mind, but I know that throwing her stuff out won't help, the stuff makes her feel safe. And I do not want to ever, ever be that person who throws all her belongings out in a fit of frustration.*

*She made me park around the corner from the shelter because she is very private and didn't want the staff to know she has a daughter. I offered my couch for a few days. She declined, as always. She thinks everything happens for a reason. Her eldest brother, my uncle and godfather, was found dead in his condo last Friday. He was found one year to the day of her getting kicked out of the house she had been living in, and hoarding in, for over 30 years. She thinks maybe her deceased brother doesn't want her to live in this shelter. She feels guilty that he died, thinking that it is because he wronged her so much by kicking her out of her house last year. As I stood there, leaning on my pick-up truck and listening to her, my mind traveled to my own life and research. Coming to the conclusion that my mom has suffered tremendous abuse, and I am grateful that I have turned out as well as I have. Many former youth in care still must struggle with the poverty, instability, and mental health issues of their families their whole lives. The problems in the family don't end when you remove the child. Family is for life, family lives in our bodies, is embodied with our memories. Family shapes our identities, our coping, our compulsions, and what we see as possible or even inevitable for ourselves.*

*I'm writing this introduction to situate myself, and to make vivid to the reader the emotionality and temporality of this research topic. This personal story is an immediate and real reminder that the pain of messed-up families for former youth in care is often a life-long, tenuous, and difficult relationship. The artwork created in this project is a mere exploratory snapshot in time of where and how these youth thought about their present life situation in the summer of 2016.*

The practice of autoethnography emerged as a way to re-engage qualitative inquiry, following much reflection and discussion of how to improve in social research the 1980's and 1990's. Writing concerning the situatedness of knowledge and the impracticality of universal narratives (de Certeau, 1984), the power of stories to share knowledge, and a desire the fuller acknowledgement of the relationality between researcher and subject beyond simply during fieldwork all lead to the development of autoethnography as a method of qualitative inquiry (Conquergood, 1991). As well, strong critiques of how traditional research practices reinforced narratives of gender (Rose, 1993), race (hooks, 1992), and class (hooks, 2000) further illustrated the need to situate the position, relationships, and background of the researcher as values included in the production of knowledge. Phrased as auto-ethnography, auto/ethnography, or autoethnography, it seeks to understand social and cultural experiences by thoroughly portraying and analyzing personal experiences. Autoethnography can be a process and a product all at once.

I am inspired and interested in the additional depth autoethnography can provide to social research (Butz & Besio, 2009), while simultaneously quite wary of becoming so reflexive that the research speaks more to personal development and experience than social insight. With this balance in mind, autoethnography in this project will be practiced in terms of some personal check-ins and check-outs, as well as discussion of the art I created during the project. In these ways, I hope to reap the reflexive benefits of placing this research in its social contexts, personal emotionality, vocabulary and concerns to heighten understanding, while also maintaining the bulk of research inquiry and space for the work of the co-researchers.

## **2.2 A Northern Feminist Position**

I am a white, woman researcher in my early 30s. Born and raised in the west end of Toronto, on the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and the

Mississaugas of the Credit River. I acknowledge these territories out of respect and gratitude for my ability to live, love, and work here. I have lived experience in the child welfare system in the suburbs of Toronto which fueled my initial interest in this research subject. Having lived in five foster and group homes, as well as numerous placements with my grandparents, I have insider knowledge of the child welfare system in southern Ontario that informs my positionality.

However, I cannot only enter this research on the grounds on this insider knowledge. For I am also an outlier among former youth in care. While my past bears true for increased risk and actual manifestation of homelessness, welfare, drug addiction, obesity, depression, anxiety, and self-harm among other negative life experiences likely projected for former youth in care (Dregan & Gulliford, 2012; Office of The Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth, 2012; Raising the Roof, 2009; Snow, 2006, 2008), I have also graduated from high school and university and am undertaking graduate studies (Turpel -Lafond & Kendall, 2007). This means I can't rely just on my lived experience, as an assumption of I know what it is like to be a youth with multiple placements. My experience is also temporally different from my co-researchers due to my age. In this sense, my lived experience is a stretchable narrative, a story that can ground my work and help to build trust with co-researchers by clearly communicating why I care and am curious about this subject.

My positionality particularly influenced which communities I choose to conduct research in and with. I am from Toronto, and know it better than I will know any other city simply from having grown up here. I have been visiting the Yukon Territory since 2004, and living in the Yukon Territory since 2008. In these cities of Toronto and Whitehorse, I felt adequately prepared and knowing enough "key community members" (Guyette, 1996) and organizations to facilitate Participatory Action Research projects. The Yukon is where I feel at home, on the land of the Kwanlin Dün, the Ta'an Kwach'an, (Whitehorse) and the Tr'ondek Hwech'in (Dawson City).



Since my research is rooted in community relations, these relationships continue even after the formal research fieldwork is completed, and these connections and understandings facilitate dissemination and discussion of findings, insights, and further questions and future research.

Particularly in Northern rural and Indigenous communities, there is a trend of southern researchers extracting data (Simpson, 2013), and then leaving to continue their careers elsewhere. Follow-up might be provided via email, but often the researcher benefits exponentially more than the participants from the research process and product. I have seen this extractive methodology practiced at conferences in Whitehorse time and time again. I follow the call of research in the North by Northerners (Canadian Polar Commission, 2014; Bell & Komarinsky, 2014; Graham & Korsmo, 2002). While I was not born in the Yukon, it is my home now. This call for work in the North by Northerners is about creating positionality within research itself, which is a response to feminist researchers calling for better context, communication and understanding in who is doing research where, and why.

I identify as a feminist researcher, and while my methods section does not explicitly cite a feminist framework, a feminist framework is always there. This is evident in who I cite, in how I consider and challenge traditional knowledge production, in assuring a facilitated space for individuals to work in a manner that they feel most comfortable, in the flexibility of the research process, in the commitment to paying people for work not always considered work, in the commitment to youth and valuing their experience, in the commitment to a diverse and valid statistical representation of the youth in care population in each research community, and in the need to place this work in its social context.

Before I end this section on positionality, I would be remiss if I did not declare my biases. I am inclined towards believing youth and their knowledge as valuable, especially in systems designed for them in which they often have little say, power or agency. Many times, I

was asked whether I wanted to collaborate with social service and/or child welfare agencies on this project, but my research commitment was first and foremost to youth in order to prioritize a collaborative arts-based examination of the embodied experience of transience within the child welfare system. Future research that seeks to inform policy more directly, would need to be engaged with a broader array of stakeholders.

Lastly, I am also predisposed towards appreciating and valuing the power of art. As a practicing artist including, but not limited to, sound, performance, and installation, I believe in the ability of the arts to provoke discussion, reflection, and voice unconventional experiences in evocative ways. The arts offer a way to combine arts-based research methods with Participatory Action Research and Indigenous research methods. My artistic practice and my child welfare experience are my entryway into the space my methods create.

### **2.3 Mixing Methodologies and Mediums and for Desired Effect**

Youth under the care of child welfare services have experienced multiple traumas and marginalizations, often coming from poverty and homes with abuse, and neglect. Through the addition of the social ruptures of placement bouncing, this leaves youth in care and former youth in care in vulnerable social positions. Youth in care are quite frequently the subject of research, as opposed to being the producers of research. Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a method challenges the researcher-researched hierarchy, creating knowledge that values the lived realities of traditionally excluded people in society. Emerging from critical pedagogy and grassroots activism (Freire, 1970), to adopt PAR is to adopt a political standpoint that aligns with often oppressed and marginalized groups. Engaging community members through ongoing collaboration throughout the research process, PAR develops and values relationships with those most affected by the research, desiring social change. Taking research beyond the academy

(Cahill & Torre, 2007), the action component of PAR is integral to the method. In this project, a pre-determined action was the public art show, though space for other actions as directed by the co-researchers was always possible. In this way, I sought to create a space that empowers young people to learn about research practices and to shape this project in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them. Advocacy groups including Youth In Care Canada (formerly National Youth in Care Network) (2003) continually express that youth deserve more say in child welfare policies. By adopting Participatory Action Research as a method, these desires for more say can be honoured. Moreover, current best practices in youth in care and former youth in care research suggest that cultivating belonging via improved and additional peer relationships is integral to improved youth life outcomes (Snow & Mann-Feder, 2013).

Given the significant over-representation of Aboriginal youth in Canadian foster homes and group homes, (Statistics Canada, 2011) and the fact that one project occurred in Whitehorse where this number is unofficially much higher (some estimates are as high as 80%; King, A., personal communication, January 19 2016), it seems only appropriate that this work be guided by Indigenous research methods. Indigenous research methods are made up of multiple epistemological and ontological beliefs, with a common theme of relationality throughout. My approach draws strongly from Wilson (2008), who emphasizes that research is ceremony, good research should change you as a person, and that relationality and relational accountability are central to Indigenous research practice. Understanding my accountability to youth participants has led me to work with youth participants as co-researchers. This has also driven me to design a research project where youth capacities are enhanced by the very nature of the research process. Relational accountability has led me to ensure that youth are compensated for their time adequately, as well as making counselling available to youth, if this work brought up issues they feel they could benefit from talk therapy. In a sense, Indigenous research methods strongly frame

my ethical approach and research design. Anishinaabe scholar Margaret Kovach (2009, 140) states that learning is felt, and that “meaning making with Indigenous inquiry involves observation, sensory experience, contextual knowledge and recognition of patterns. Her work (2010) also describes the importance of storytelling in research with Indigenous peoples, which arts-based methods can help to accomplish through a variety of mediums.

Arts-based research methods is broad term that encompasses numerous others, including research-based arts practice, a/r/tography, and critical arts inquiry. While there are slightly different practices and philosophies associated with each of these, I chose to initially frame my work using the most commonly used and inclusive term of arts-based research methods (ABR) to describe the methods used in this work. ABR can make meaning through narrative, poetry, performance, theatre, dance, film, visual arts, and music, and be used at any and all stages of the research process, from idea generation, exploration, presentation, to dissertation (Leavy, 2008). Like all research endeavours, ABR seeks to develop new insight and knowledge that is relevant and applicable. What is so different about ABR is that theory and practice are more entwined, a living research praxis is created with the arts that acknowledges the body, the language of metaphor, emotions and imaginaries through exploring pressing social research questions. Theatre of the Oppressed drama workshops (Conrad, 2010) and Photovoice (Castleden, Garvin, & Haa First Nation, 2008) have been some of the most commonly used community arts practices in Canada. Arts-based research excels at exploratory, descriptive and process-based research topics (Leavy, 2008), which my study of youth in care and the embodiment of placement bouncing most certainly is.

When working with a group that has experienced such a lack of agency in their lives, it is important to listen to their voices included already in research that demand they have more say (National Youth in Care Network, 2003; Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth,

2012). Arts-based research methods in a PAR framework facilitate agency including: the ability to choose mediums, projects and actions; the opportunity to collaborate or work independently; and to be as deeply personal or as abstract as one wishes. Through these research methods youth are telling their story in their own way on their terms (Finley, 2008; Leavy, 2008).

Speaking of their own terms, the decision to allow co-researchers to work in the mediums of their choice was integral to the politics and practice of this work. I sought to not only hear what participants had to say, but the how they wanted to say it was valued as well. The medium still is the message in many senses (McLuhan, 1967). Due to the numerous art resources and supplies offered at both youth arts partner organizations Splintered Craft and SKETCH, it was inspiring to see participants develop new skills. Many co-researchers came to the project identifying as an emerging artist in a particular discipline (e.g., dance or painting/collage) and used the research as an opportunity to explore and create works in new mediums for the first time (e.g., hip hop, installation, and silkscreening). In my analysis of the art works produced by the co-researchers I place the images of the art and the artist statement prior to my own writing as a way to give co-researchers primary authority on their work. This methodology of opening up the creative practice to be self-selected in any art medium challenges arts-based research methods, as usually the lead researcher selects one or several art mediums, often for ease of research design. I believe the strength of the art in *Moving Home* is in part due to the ability of co-researchers to address and explore the complex issue of the embodiment of transience in the medium of their choice.

In each project, I wanted one collective work to emerge, ideally from the group as a way to illustrate both shared experiences as well as the individual creative expression of the artist co-researchers. This happened in Toronto in two ways, with a collaboratively designed show flyer (although not all participants participated) and a backpack installation. For the installation, each co-researcher was given a white backpack to decorate as they saw fit, exploring the themes of

movement, what we carry with us and the time there were in care. In the Yukon, a group work idea did not emerge from the group, so I proposed one in the last several days of the project. This piece was called *Knowledge Production*, and we each designed an academic certificate stating what we got and accomplished in the project.

#### **2.4 Comparative Design and Community Partners**

Child welfare falls under provincial and territorial management, with differences in policy across Canada. By exploring and comparing two experiences of youth in different regions in Canada with different child welfare systems – Ontario, run by nonprofit Children's Aid Societies and the Yukon, administered by the Territorial Government – this research project seeks to better understand the commonalities and differences of experiences of youth in care. As this project is interested in the Canadian child welfare system as a whole and the possibilities of embodied transience it may produce, I coordinated two research projects, one in Toronto, Ontario and one in Whitehorse, Yukon. Toronto in this case represents urban and suburban realities of the child welfare system, and Whitehorse represents northern and rural experience. The Yukon has the fourth highest per capita amount of youth in care, following Manitoba, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories, illustrating that child welfare is a northern issue (Statistics Canada 2011). This project is interested in the Canadian child welfare system as a whole and the possibilities of embodied transience it may produce. While each province and territory manages child welfare slightly differently, by having two sites, one southern and urban and one northern and rural, a more diverse yet representative data set was collected that permitted an exploration of the differences that these distinct spatial locations may have on youth experiences of transience, belonging and resilience.

In order to coordinate the project in two locations, multiple partnerships were created both in Toronto and Whitehorse. It was important to work with as similar as possible organizations in both communities so as to maintain consistency in the research process, goals and outcomes. I obtained funding from the Children and Youth Advocate's office of Ontario and the Yukon and partnered with the non-profit organizations SKETCH and Skookum Jim Friendship Centre via Splintered Craft as site hosts.

SKETCH Working Arts is a space for youth living on the margins and in Toronto to come make art, take part in workshops, programming, connect to resources and grow their career and business ideas. SKETCH has been an active community arts organization in Toronto for 20 years. My connection to SKETCH is that I was a former street-involved participant, and employee. I have known the organization for 14 years, first participating in their drop-in programming when I was 17. SKETCH has expanded over the years, and they now have a Collaborative Platform to administratively support youth-led projects through which my research project operated. SKETCH provided administrative support, and assisted the project through schedule planning, promotion, graphic design, occasional workshop facilitation, space, and access to specialized arts tools and resources.

The Children and Youth Advocate's office of Ontario provided the full funding for the Toronto portion of the project. This financial support totalled \$17,000 and included honorariums for co-researchers, and funds for food, bus tickets, art supplies, counselling, the art show, SKETCH's administration fee and space rental, and my own coordination fee. In return, the Advocate's office requested public acknowledgement of their support, access to the final data, and an-in person presentation to discuss findings. They have further committed to supporting research dissemination including a curated art show from the project.

The Office of the Yukon Advocate for Children and Youth provided \$10,000 in funding for the full Yukon project, for the exact same items as the Ontario office. They too requested public acknowledgement of funding, a lunch visit with co-researchers to explain the youth services and advocacy they offer, a preliminary research presentation to coordinate with National Day of the Child in November 2017, access to the final data, and an in-person meeting to discuss findings. The Office of the Yukon Advocate for Children and Youth is also interested in supporting research dissemination.

In the Yukon, my on-the-ground organizational research partners in Whitehorse were Splintered Craft which is a project of Skookum Jim Friendship Centre. Splintered Craft is a drop-in arts space for youth 16-25, open several evenings a week. They offer a music space, silkscreening, painting, crafts, silkscreening tools and numerous workshops and events. They donated their space to the *Moving Home* project during the day and for the art show, as well as let us use their art supplies. Additionally, they helped promote the project and the art show. Splintered Craft and Skookum Jim Friendship Centre requested their logo on all our Whitehorse posters as acknowledgement of their support.

#### **2.4.1 Beginnings: Recruitment and Selection**

Recruitment of co-researchers in Toronto and Yukon began three weeks before the start of each project through a multi-pronged approach. A recruitment poster was designed by SKETCH's graphic designer, Pallavi, to align with their in-house poster format. Focusing on place, each poster's main image was a photograph of the respective city. I modified it with different colour washes to make it more youth-friendly. Paper posters about the research were hung on notice boards at numerous social service, public and youth agencies. Electronic versions of the posters were also distributed through the email networks and listservs of funders and



partner arts organization. I also shared the posters on my personal social networks, and contacted youth workers across Toronto and the Yukon in addition to having one-on-one informal conversations with youth in the arts spaces in the weeks leading up to the project. In Whitehorse, a CBC radio One interview provided an additional unforeseen opportunity to promote the research project.

SKETCH's graphic designer, Pallavi, designed the Toronto poster to align with their in-house poster format. Focusing on place, each poster's main image was a photograph of the respective city. I modified it to use two different colour washes to make it more youth-friendly, so there were three versions total. Pallavi shared the graphic design files, and I hired a graphic designer to maintain the format for the Whitehorse poster.

A conscious decision was made to not list the honorarium rate on the poster, as it is unusually high (\$80 per day, paid weekly) and I wanted youth participants who were interested in the art, and the theme, not primarily the financial compensation. However, whenever the poster was sent out via email to social workers, the details of compensation were provided. Early on in the design process it was decided to pay a considerable honorarium for co-researchers participation. This was done to establish that their contributions were valued, and to move beyond research that only offers small gift cards at stores the youth might not even be interested in. Paying them with actual money instead of a predetermined grocery or cafe card also respected their autonomy. The actual rate ended up being lower than originally intended, as it was the maximum daily honorarium rate from the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth in Ontario, which was \$80 per day. For full participation in the project, co-researchers earned \$800, paid weekly in cash or cheque.

In terms of recruitment, this honorarium seemed to improve interest and reduce attrition. In Toronto, there was a waitlist of three potential participants. Additionally, all participants stayed

for the duration of the two-week projects, which is notable considering SKETCH's regular closed programming usually only maintain two-thirds of participants by the end (SKETCH, 2014), (Splintered Craft is too new to have documented retention data for closed programming at this time).

The email application to express interest in Moving Home was very simple, and consisted of three questions: 1.) What type of art do you like to make? 2.) Why are you interested in this project? and 3.) How many placements have you experienced? Most applicants did not answer these three questions fully in an organized manner, though the medium question was almost always answered at least partially. Invariably, it is necessary to be flexible in research design, and with this project in particular to accommodate issues including computer access, literacy, and emotional trauma.

All interested former youth in care, save for one in Toronto (interviewed by phone), were interviewed in person following their email application to assess their eligibility, discuss project details, and answer any questions they had. This in-person meeting allowed me to get to know the co-researchers and their needs, including what art supplies they desired, their work schedules, and any food allergies they might have. Building an initial personal foundation facilitated a smoother start to the collaborative portion of the research and permitted lessons learned from Toronto to be applied to Whitehorse.

Incorporating feedback (in-person and through an anonymous form) as well as Sketch staff, helped improve the Whitehorse project. After the Toronto iteration of the project, I realized that I needed an assistant/co-facilitator, to help with meal prep, art supply runs, and general co-facilitation and support, and so I hired a recent MA graduate student in arts therapy to co-facilitate mornings with me in Whitehorse. Toronto co-researcher feedback also included a bigger focus on healing, a stricter selection process, and more discussion and incorporation of self-care

practices. While the dynamics and size of each group are different, these revisions to project design were incorporated by having an arts therapist on hand, a full morning workshop on self-care, as well as daily self-care activities leading up to the show, having an Elder open and close the ceremony with prayer, and only interviewing youth in-person before accepting them into the project as a way to honour the request of co-researchers for more rigorous selection.

#### **2.4.2 Co-researchers and Communal Knowledge Production**

Co-researchers in this project are former youth in care 18-30 who had experienced multiple placements in the child welfare system and were interested in exploring how moving around so much has affected them. They need not identify as artists, but it was important that they be willing to use the arts medium and materials of their choice to explore and create work that reflected their thoughts, emotions, and responses to the question. In the project, there was a wide variety of arts practices, skills and interests. The research component of the co-researcher title refers to youth participants producing their own knowledge in the way they want through afternoon independent studio work aided by morning discussions. The “co” refers to the process – we completed this work together and the youth had the right to question, make suggestions, and modify activities in a way that best suited them and their particular art-as-research work. That said, simply framing youth participants as co-researchers did not erase power differentials. I designed the entire project, decided the overall theme of artistic exploration and handed out paycheques on Friday.

There are challenges in all group work, and potentially more so when you combine 5-11 people in a room with the only thing in common being multiple placements in foster homes and group homes. As a group, the co-researchers embodied a wide variety of art skills, temperaments, mental health issues, and social norms. I found the Toronto project too large to manage on my

own, and with all of the project administration I had less time to get to know the co-researchers by simply existing and creating in the same space. This was also my first time coordinating a project with 10 people, and lateness, while often understandable given lengthy public transit commutes, severely detracted from the group workshops in the morning. In Toronto, there were also personality clashes that arose between co-researchers, and while we had a talking circle to try and discuss and defuse those tensions, it was still my responsibility to manage and negotiate those tensions.

The next month, the Whitehorse project went smoothly, without any tension at all visible from my vantage point. I don't think that the project redesign eliminated the possibility of group tension, rather Whitehorse was a smaller project by half. Place deeply impacts knowledge, creation, and collective knowledge production. In Whitehorse generating a group cohesiveness came easily, as youth already knew each other prior to the beginning of *Moving Home*.

Each project ran Monday to Friday, five hours a day including a lunch break, for two weeks. While these projects ran in similar arts-based youth centres with music studios, visual arts and crafts areas, and silkscreening set-ups, in Toronto, *Moving Home* ran concurrently 3 days a week with dozens of other programs, while in the Whitehorse, Splintered Craft was booked exclusively for the project. This is a comparative project, and these socio-spatial differences and how they potentially impacted the works created is an important point of analysis explored in further chapters. As a geographer, I cannot ignore the effect of place on emotional relations, group work, and knowledge production.

What follows is a daily summary of activities, focusing on the morning discussions to understand how art as research was framed, how the project was designed to promote artistic skill development and experiences. Every activity on this schedule was purposeful in design, to promote critical thinking and reflection on youth in care, transience, embodiment, art making, and

research in general. Every afternoon was usually spent with co-researchers undertaking independent studio work.

The first day began with an introduction to each other, the project, the space and a discussion of art as a research method. A group discussion was facilitated on what is research, how it is done, how can art be research. The afternoon included a tour of the space to see what art supplies and tools were available, and then co-researchers were free to begin creating. This day was intentionally simple and to get co-researchers thinking about their role, and acquainted with the space and other co-researchers. In Whitehorse, following group introductions, Ta'an Kwach'in Elder Frances Woolsey, a former youth social worker herself, came to open up the research with a prayer. This ceremony was an important addition to the research process as it provided a valuable sense of grounding and contributed to group cohesion.

The second day opened with a longer check-in, talking a bit about our in-care experience as connected to transience, and identity as connected to place. This led into a mapping activity, inspired by the map *Who Am I Where* (Solnit, 2010) that expressed all the contingent identities of a singular brown, gay, middle-aged male in San Francisco. A variety of maps were brought out from the personal to the resource industry, and we discussed what power relations existed behind them, and maps as a tool. Then co-researchers were asked to map out their own story of transience. The activity was primarily done using collage techniques, but paint, stickers, drawing and yarn were also used. There were some concerns expressed that I would be keeping these maps or judging them, and I assured co-researchers that these activities were simply to get them thinking critically about the topic by having a visual representation of their movements, and that these would not be included in the art show or thesis unless they wanted them to. Because of the broad background of transience within this group, I had to spend a lot of time seeking additional maps from Europe, the U.S. and specific Canadian suburbs that were not large enough to make a

meaningful representation on the generic Canada-wide maps I had purchased. In both groups, this morning had a more sombre tone due to discussion of child welfare experiences, even despite my best efforts to make it tactile and work through it using the materiality of art. For lunch on both days, there was a guest, In Toronto, Sonya, a staff member at Sketch, and in the Yukon, Annette King, the advocate and Bengie Clethero, the deputy Advocate who came to express their thanks for the youth doing this work and how important it is for theirs. (Unless otherwise noted, every afternoon was independent studio work)

On the third day in Toronto, there was a check-in activity on what makes you feel at home. This was meant to have a light self-care aspect. Activities such as listening to music, cooking a good meal, decorating walls were examples that were mentioned in order to initiate discussion on what is home, how does one make a home and feel at home. However, that topic didn't seem to be of much interest, and instead a conversation unfolded on how transience affects former youth in care, touching on relationships, job insecurity, and housing. Thinking of transience as a spectrum, many identified with a "gypsy" or "traveler" lifestyle, and a few co-researchers emphasized that they utterly hated moving and tried to avoid it at all costs. While talking, co-researchers began to create a flyer for the art show. This planned activity ended up being revised for the Whitehorse project. In Whitehorse, co-facilitator Gen Gagnon facilitated a workshop on self-care, focusing on what one's "all-good" place is. She described her MA final project – a bank of self-care ideas generated from community workshops – as the check-in and co-researchers were invited to pick the ideas they liked best. Co-researchers were then encouraged to work on a representation on their all-good place that they felt comfortable sharing.

On the morning of the fourth day, the opening activity combined research, art, and movement. Co-researchers were asked to research how movement is depicted in the medium of art they are working in. Picking their three favourite or most interesting examples, and sharing

them with the group until we had a huge whiteboard filled with varieties and understandings of movement across over a dozen mediums. There was varied levels of interest in this. Some co-researchers, well-versed in the arts, enthusiastically shared some of their favourite artists and musicians. Some saw it as a task without much of a point. Others, while hesitant at first, loved some of the art they found, or what they learned about their chosen artistic medium through the research. The goal of this was to think artistically and critically about visual, performance and musical culture and what depicting movement in a certain way means, as well as creating a collaborative resource co-researchers could return to if needing guidance or inspiration.

The fifth day was “Field Trip Friday”. This research was conducted in the summer, and I had been keeping young people inside all week. Friday was designed to include visits to galleries, lunch out, and then the afternoon off to do an activity that inspires, and report back on Monday (Day 6) as we would be discussing inspiration. Toronto’s trip was a visit to the Art Gallery of Ontario. In Whitehorse, we went to the Yukon Arts Centre, where they had a handful of shows up, and to Arts in the Park where we met with local artist Michel Gignac who was making art using recycled materials to build representations of Yukon myths.

The second week of the project began with a check-in regarding the inspirational activity co-researchers had done on Field Trip Friday. This led to a discussion of the varieties of ways one can find inspiration, and a greater understanding and appreciation of artistic ways of being within the group. This activity was intended to inspire a busy second week of art production and to generate respect and understanding for what and how others work, research and create.

The seventh day was left open and unplanned, to add space and flexibility to the project, save for an artist lunch guest. On the eighth day, an artist statement activity in Toronto was facilitated by Naty Trembly, a program coordinator at SKETCH (the 4-page worksheet handout is

attached in Appendix C). The worksheet (listed below) included four questions that informed every single artist statement:

1. *Think about why you do what you do.* How did you get into this work? How do you feel when work is going well? What are your favorite things about your work? Jot down short phrases that capture your thoughts. Don't worry about making sense or connections.
2. *Make a list of words and phrases* that communicate your feelings about your work and your values. Include words you like, words that make you feel good, words that communicate your values or fascinations. Be loose. Be happy. Be real.
- 2.b) Once you have a nice list of words assembled you may also pull out you 2-5 favorites then look them up in the dictionary, and/or thesaurus to see if you find some new & related words that can also be added to your list!
3. Answer these questions as simply as you can.
  - a. What is your favorite tool? Why?
  - b. What is your favorite material? Why?
  - c. What do you like best about what you do?
  - d. What do you mean when you say that a piece has turned out really well?
  - e. What patterns emerge in your work? Is there a pattern in the way you select materials?
  - f. What do you do differently from the way you were taught? Why?
  - g. What is your favorite color? List three qualities of the color. Consider that these qualities apply to your work.
5. Write five sentences that tell the truth about your connection to your work. If you are stuck, start by filling in the blanks below.
 

When I work with \_\_\_\_\_ I am reminded that \_\_\_\_\_

I begin a piece by \_\_\_\_\_

I know a piece is done when \_\_\_\_\_

When my work is going well, I am filled with a sense of \_\_\_\_\_

When people see my work, I'd like them to \_\_\_\_\_

The ninth day involved preparing for the art show. A short workshop on mounting, and putting together a group art show by CUE was done in Toronto. Co-researchers were asked to think about what they needed to mount or hang the work they were creating in the studio, as well as continue to work on their pieces and artist statements.

The final day included a closing ceremony, either co-facilitated by SKETCH Staff or Elder Frances Woolsey. Co-researchers were thanked for their hard work, provided with a dessert, and asked to fill out anonymous feedback forms via Google Docs. Our final checkout was considering one thing we will be carrying with us from the project.

## 2.5 Digital Capture: Documentation and Data Collection

Documentation of the art works created was an important component of Moving Home. This was primarily done via digital photography, field notes, and co-researchers sharing arts-based activities if so inclined. At Splintered Craft, we were using a flipboard to make a note of



each day, and since it was the second iteration of the project I was able to remind myself more often to keep all these process-related ephemera. As the project followed the same format, this is also a useful tool for understanding the fieldwork's momentum. Documentation of the final works and show were done by multiple photographers/videographers, a co-researcher photographer, and myself. These photos and videos were shared with all the co-researchers who submitted an artist statement via a Google drive folder.

The final data collected, aside from the process documentation notes above, were simply a copy of each work and an artist statement, ideally one per work or series. However, since the show was voluntary (2 co-researchers in Toronto did not participate), and to accommodate those who might not have felt their work was what they had intended it to be, an artist statement on what one worked on, intended or thought about during the project was also acceptable, along with an image or copy of the work in process.

## **2.6 Action and Impact: Art Shows and Media Attention**

The art show in this project is the key action of the PAR-informed research process. In this case, encouraging the public to reflect on the issue of embodied transience among former youth in care for most likely, the very first time. The art shows were also a celebration for accomplishment for co-researchers, and an opportunity for them to showcase their work. In this sense the art shows functioned on multiple scales of personal, group, and public: as a tangible personal goal for co-researchers to work towards; as a team-building activity with co-researchers working towards a common goal; as a public forum to provoke discussion and reflection on the experiences of embodied transience among young people; as a political statement expressing their thoughts and feelings on this issue; and as a celebratory event that friends and family could attend.

The art shows were also a potential money-generating opportunity. The artwork of co-researchers was theirs to sell, gift, discard, or keep for themselves. In Toronto co-researchers talked with Sonya Reynolds who was organizing vending at the Rad Grad show to figure out how to price their work (Rad Grad is SKETCH's annual celebration and culmination of the Community Artist Leadership program, and occurs every June) Sonya has over a decade of experience coordinating vending at SKETCH events and suggested standard prices. I also encouraged some co-researchers to price their work higher, considering the cost of the materials, the mounting, let alone the hours of work. Of significant note is the stark difference in prices of art work for sale between the Toronto art show and the Yukon. In Toronto, 80% of co-researchers who presented in the art show put a price tag on their work. In Whitehorse, a mere 20% of co-researchers was interested in selling work. These differing socio-spatial understandings and applications of art will be explored further in later chapters.

The site of presentation (location of art shows) and the site of artistic creation were the same in both projects, which makes the analysis simpler from a visual methodological perspective (Rose, 1990). This dual presentation-creation space also allows for the public to more fully connect with the arts practices, as well as promoting awareness of the community partners who supported *Moving Home*. This connects strongly to the goals of Indigenous research methods which emphasize community benefits and building and maintaining mutually respectful relations, even after the data is captured (Wilson, 2008). The three art shows were one-day only events, not as a design intention but rather due to the busy nature of the partner organizations and their need for programming space.

The SKETCH art show was done at the same time as their Rad Grad event, which meant that over 400 people were in the studio and had the opportunity to see the show. The art show at Splintered Craft had over 100 people attend, and the second Yukon show at Riverside Arts

Festival in Dawson City had over 80. As the goal of art-based research is to provoke conversation (Barone & Eisner, 2011), and the goal of PAR is to have an lived-experience informed action as an ethical commitment to social change (Cahill, 2007), and the best practice for engaging with former youth in care are peer-based programs (Snow & Mann-Feder, 2013), all three of these goals have been realized through the collective success of the art shows.

In addition to the three art shows, the research project as a whole has also received significant media attention with three separate interviews on CBC Radio One, including once on Metro Morning in Toronto which has been frequently rated as the top morning radio show in the region (Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, 2004). While media and media attention might not be considered a method or impact, when working with PAR and arts-based research methods it actually is. These methods are concerned with creating awareness and opportunities for discussion and reflection through various means, and media attention is one way of achieving these goals with much wider audience outside of academia. These combined methods, then, are not only a significant change in knowledge production, but also knowledge dissemination. A full list of media coverage and links is attached in Appendix D.

Whether and how the child welfare system in Canada is creating more transient subjects is a social issue that warrants discussion, and this project has garnered seven news media articles (print and online) and radio interviews about it, the co-researchers and their art, and the nexus of social issues and communities that the child welfare systems in Canada impact. While there can be many critiques of media representation, this significant amount of public interest in a Master's-level research project illustrates that these combined methods and questioning of embodied transience are touching on an issue with broad social resonance.

### *2.7 Checkout: What Went Well Today?*

*The most frequently-used checkout in the Moving Home project was inspired by Positive Psychology tools (Seligman, 2012). In a circle, ending the day, each person mentioned one thing that went well that day. Due to the sensitive nature of the research subject material, the intention for the checkout was to ground participants in a positive experience before they left the studio.*

*One thing that went well for me today is that I have finished drafting this chapter. 8000 words on a screen to sum up over a year of research design, methods, challenges, and practice. Before you leave the space of this page, consider, what is one thing that went well for you today?*

## CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

### THE PLACE OF YOUTH IN CARE IN GEOGRAPHY: FROM GEOGRAPHIES OF MOBILITY TO CHILDREN’S GEOGRAPHIES AND EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES

#### 3.1 Check-In: An “all-good place.”

*Close your eyes and take five slow, conscious deep breaths, in and out. As your mind calms, consider what your “all-good place is”. What place, memory, imaginary, or Escheresque-mashup of good times resonates with you and makes you feel that everything is okay and you are alright. After reflecting and deciding on the place, think about how you want to represent it artistically. What emotions and sensations do you feel and where in your body do you feel these? What images, sounds, or smells do you associate with this all-good place?*

*Below is my collage that I created during the project. It depicts the quiet wooded trails around Whitehorse where I walk daily. I always feel good physically and mentally after an hour walk on these trails with my dog. In season, raspberries are an added delight on the trails and also my favourite berry. This check-in was chosen for this chapter because this literature review is the conceptual “place” that I am approaching my work from.*



Image 3.1 All-Good Place, Amelia Merhar, 2016

### 3.2 Overview of Theoretical Framework

Academic research on youth in care has largely been undertaken within the disciplines of Child and Youth Studies, Sociology, and Social Work. Few human geographers, if any, have sought to examine the lived experiences of youth in care. However, youth in care have complex and multifaceted lives that could speak to many interests within geography's sub-disciplines, such as: unique and challenging constructions of home; how child welfare perpetuates the state; the long-term effects of frequent moves and (re)constructions of home; the spatial displacement of low-income and young racialized bodies within cities and suburbs; and the child welfare system as a "caringscape" (Atkinson, Lawson & Wiles, 2011). Given the paucity of geographical scholarship on youth in care, specifically from a Canadian perspective, in this research I weave a theoretical framework that combines geographies of mobilities, children's geographies, and emotional geographies to understand the unique lived realities and responses to placement bouncing of this important and marginalized group of young people.

Mobility is the reality of contemporary life, whether it be commuting, traveling on vacation, or how ideas are moved between people. Geographies of mobilities have developed from an original primary concern with transport and circulation, to now include all forms of movement (human and nonhuman) as diverse as dance, migration, labour, driving, and policy mobilities. Research on mobilities questions the boundedness of identity as rooted to place (Cresswell, 2010), and also looks at immobility, stopping and stillness in relation to place. There is additionally a call for increased mobile theorization and methodologies to better connect research to lived practice, so as to not always privilege the sedentary and bounded (Büscher & Urry, 2009; Cresswell, 2006).

Mobilities – what they consist of and what they mean – have been theorized in a number of ways including as relation, an orientation to the world (Adey, 2009), as a broad theory of urban

social patterns with meaning and effects to be found in their rhythms (Lefebvre, 1992), and as privilege when conflating travel with enhanced perspective (Kaplan, 1996). Mobilities have been studied in differing contexts by geographers, such as from the scale of the body in the walking interview (Jones & Evans, 2011), to LGBTQ neighbourhoods as moorings shifting across Sydney (Gorman-Murray & Nash, 2014), and mass tourism framed as a performance of mundane mobility (Edensor, 2007). All this scholarship is united by a focus on movement itself as the object of research, as opposed to viewing movement simply as tertiary to the established space and place.

The mobilities turn in the social sciences (Sheller & Urry, 2006) has encouraged geographers to look at mobility for mobility's sake alone, instead of movement as transport, as simply a way of getting to and from places. Mobility is infused in this research project, entitled *Moving Home*, as it is focusing on the issue of movement within the child welfare system, and seeks to understand the embodied realities of living in government care and experiencing repeated displacements. The politics of mobility (Cresswell, 2010) inform an understanding of who is moving, and how they are moving, and where they are moving. As Cresswell (2010, 18) states, "mobility involves a fragile entanglement of physical movement, representations, and practices. Furthermore, these entanglements have broadly traceable histories and geographies". The political dimensions of mobility can be appreciated in many ways with respect to children in care, but most especially through the disproportionate number of Aboriginal youth in care in Canada. Buliung, Sultana, and Faulker (2012) have called for geographers to explore youth mobility further using a wide variety of methods and theoretical frameworks. By asking youth in care about their experiences and inviting them to participate actively as co-researchers using arts-based research methods, this project responds to Buliung et al.'s (2012) call while also incorporating an understanding of the politics of mobility and a focus on the mobilities of

placement bouncing in the Canadian child welfare system. Not only is this project valuing youth voices concerning a unique multifaceted embodied experience of mobility, but it also brings excluded voices into geographical knowledge production (Cahill, 2007).

With the goal of looking at mobility for mobilities sake in conjunction with the understanding that mobility is practiced and lived, this research focuses on the embodied practices and outcomes that relate to frequent moves of home as a young individual whose identity is in formation. This research is an exploratory and emerging approach to applying geographies of mobilities, inspired by interesting work by nonmobilities geographers (Gorman-Murray & Nash, 2014) as it fuses this focus on movement, within an embodied, longer-term context. There is much to learn from former youth in care concerning the ontological impacts of placement bouncing. For example, do former youth in care experience increased transience and movements of home and school, and if so how are these experienced, embodied and performed? Do these repeated moves within the child welfare system generate an experience of discomfort with stability and all that it entails? Or, perhaps conversely, an increased personal desire for stability, as these young adults exit the child welfare system and begin to create their own lives on their own terms. The potential responses to these questions are not mutually exclusive, and both relate to a lived and embodied reality that has yet to be explored from a geographical perspective. Human geographers, while not having yet studied the particular residential mobility experiences of youth in care, have explored the lives of children and youth in a number of ways that frame this work within the sub-discipline of children's geographies.

Children's geographies encompass childhood and youth from infant to age 25. Most research has been done with children and young people 614 (Valentine, 2003). In the global North, a common way of understanding this period of childhood is as a time of innocence and freedom from the obligations of adulthood, with common childhood experiences including



daycare, school, spatial and transport/movement restrictions imposed by adults for safety, and financial dependence on caregivers (Valentine, 2003). As a newer field of study that has had less time to cover all the permutations of youth, children's geographies has perpetuated the norm of children being raised by their parents, and the research has largely been conducted in the U.S. and U.K. With regards to the child welfare system in Canada, as De Leeuw (2009, 123) points out, the idea of childhood has been systematically and historically applied to Aboriginal peoples, but "little attention, though, has been paid to historic or social discourses that relegated groups of people to a perpetual state of truncated childhood while simultaneously removing their children in order that those children mature into adults who embodied radically different cultural traits than their ancestors". This enacted and imposed childhood complicates a non-racialized and neutral child-subject, as often written about in the children's geographies literature. Exploratory work with former youth in care has borne out the importance of Indigenous spirituality to belonging for former foster youth in Canada (Corcoran, 2012), however, coming from a psychological perspective it has not fully addressed the spatiality, movement and embodiment of placement bouncing. Given the disproportionate rate of Aboriginal youth in care, (48% of youth in care while only 4.5% of Canada's population (Statistics Canada, 2011)), the Indian residential school system and its negative impacts on culture, family, language, community, and personal lives are correlated and implicated to the high rate of Indigenous youth in care (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

Following the period of childhood, youth, ages 14 to 25, is understood as a subsequent liminal period (James, 1986; Sibley 1995) as legal abilities for more adult tasks including the ability to work, drive, vote, consent to sexual acts, purchase alcohol and tobacco range (James, 1986). These acts focus on youth as a biologically age which implies certain capabilities at a certain biological age. However, youth is also a performative, processual and relational identity

which makes it more elusive to define (Valentine, 2003). This research will employ a definition of youth that extends from 18-30, as a way to explore transience and identity formation as potential co-constitutive factors, while not leaving the lived experience of care placements so far behind as to fade from memory.

Youth transition is a recent and emerging area of children's geographies (Butcher & Wilton, 2008; Hopkins, 2006; McDowell, 2002; Valentine, 2003; Worth, 2009). Many children's geographies theories of youth as transitional period base their understanding on Beck's theory of individualization, in which a young person begins to define their identity in opposition to their parents through choice of studies, work, peer groups, and hobbies (Beck, 1992). Within children's geographies, the exact boundaries of this transition between the states of childhood and adulthood are difficult to define (Holloway, 2014; Valentine, 2003; Worth, 2014). This period of transition is not inherently linear, with aspects of youth, childhood and adulthood existing simultaneously (Valentine, 2003). For example, youth can be achieving norms of adult individualization such as work and sexual partners, while still living at their parents' home, and of course, we are always someone's child in a relational sense. This makes childhood itself an ongoing process, and lens through which to view the world (Valentine, 2003; Worth 2014).

Employing from children's geographies the understanding that youth is a transitional period, and that identity is relational, this thesis focuses on the lived experiences of the multiple housing, school and relational transitions that exist for youth in care. The assumed concepts of a normative home (and not a foster or a group home) and regular school attendance are strongly present within the discipline. Even when research focuses on youth with disabilities, (Skelton & Valentine 2007) non-normative in and of themselves, those experiences are also qualitatively different from the youth in care experience.

Within children's geographies, very limited research has been done exploring the unique realities of youth in the foster care system, an analysis of the food practices in residential care settings in Scotland is the primary geographical contribution I have found. This work emphasized the complexity of living in a home that is simultaneously a workplace, a near-total institution and a home, and the authors note "the complexity of the residential home with its overlapping spheres of 'public' and 'private' and the often uneasy juxtaposition of different spatial arenas can mitigate against the creation of a family-like environment and a sense of belonging" (Dorrer, McIntosh, Punch, & Emond 2010). The authors conclude that for residential group homes to be youth spaces, adult actions and predefined outcomes need to be balanced with those initiated by the young persons living in this home-workplace-institution. Such an understanding of the multiple identities of the places of foster and group homes exemplifies Massey's (2005) notion that place is a process, multiple, and without enclosure. Considering the relational identity of youth and youth itself as a period of transition, the reality of living in multiple homes which are themselves multiple home-workplace-institutions (let alone the different experiences of each of the youth, staff and foster parents) illustrate that child welfare in Canada is spatially rich, and full of sites and practices that require further study.

Considering the importance of home as a site of daily life (Blunt & Varley, 2004), these repeated moves that youth in care experience are thus inherently emotional. These young people living the realities of placement bouncing incur as yet unstudied emotional geographies. Emotions have an important role to play in maintaining geography's critical edge (Anderson & Smith, 2001). We experience life through the body, the body is a place and scale, and emotional geographies are one of the newer additions to the discipline (Davidson & Milligan, 2004). Building from embodiment as studied in social and cultural geography (Nash, 2000 and Longhurst 1995) emotional geographies explore the felt understandings of the individual

experiencing and performing the socially learned emotional language of the body as well as how we articulate emotions colloquially including spatial signifiers such as close, distant, high, low. “Our sense of who we are is continually (re)shaped by how we feel” (Davidson & Milligan, 2004, 524). How we feel relates to where we are, who we are, and what kind of emotional acts we are culturally allowed and encouraged to perform (Ahmed, 2004).

Geographers have looked at the spatiality of emotions across a number of sites including the body (Longhurst, 1995), the home (Milligan, 2005), the primary school (Hemming, 2007), total institutions (e.g., prisons and psychiatric wards in hospitals) (Philo & Parr, 2000) and suburbs (Nayak, 2010). Different theoretical approaches concerning emotions include their role in “sensible” development (Wright, 2012), and better understanding U.K. pub culture so as to facilitate successful health promotion policies (Jayne, Valentine & Holloway, 2010). This latter approach moves beyond the dichotomy of pathologizing drinking medically and the socio-cultural effects of drinking, to seek to understand how people feel throughout the practice of drinking. In so doing, it achieves a middle ground that helps to suspend judgement while simultaneously seeking to better understand lived emotional experiences. Such an approach – that asks first how an experience feels – is one that will inform how I study youth in care and what I choose to focus on. By asking first how does this experience feel, this allows for a grounded interpretation connected to lived and embodied experience.

As with the mobilities and the children’s geographies literature, geographical scholarship on emotions does not yet speak specifically to the lived experiences of youth in care, let alone to the specificity of the Canadian context. While there have been special issues of *Emotion, Space and Society* on both children’s emotional geographies and emotional geographies of moving/migration, (in 2013 and 2015 respectively), they either tend to focus on moving transnationally and diasporic emotional landscapes, or on childhoods and activities wherein

placement bouncing does not exist. At present, the closest that the emotional geographies literature gets to understanding placement bouncing is through research on homelessness.

Given the large proportion of youth in care who end up homeless (Raising the Roof, 2009), emotional geographies of homelessness are a strong starting point for an early youth in care emotional geography. Robinson (2005) explores embodied grief in young homeless people and how these homeless youth relate to place, suggesting that the difficulty of past home life and lives still shape relations to place and the body. In this analysis, understanding embodied grief over loss of home and abuse within it, is key to understanding potentially destructive behaviours like drug use, which can also be understood as a way to make the body-home more comfortable to inhabit for homeless youth. Experiences of homelessness are multiple and varied. With respect to Indigenous experiences of homelessness in Northern Canada, Christensen (2013) poses that 'spiritual homelessness' (Keys Young, 1998) results from rapid socio-cultural change that is strongly connected to a sense of home and belonging. Seeing the body as living out grief over loss of home as well as the body-as-home are two productive ways in which my research questions on belonging and self-care connect to experiences and intersections of homelessness and Indigeneity, particularly in my Whitehorse case study.

My application of the concept of mobility to youth in care emotional experiences of placement bouncing is an innovative and effective way in which to bring three different bodies of scholarship into critical dialogue. My study of the emotional impacts of repeated moves over the period of a youth in care's life explores the tension between emotions and embodiment, and seeks to understand when and how emotions materialize into embodied practices. Such a consideration of the long-term lived experience of repeated moves is a productive question to ask given that for many, lives are seemingly more transient, mobile and fluid overall (Evans & Reid, 2014; Sharma, 2014)

### 3.3 The Context of Transience

There are many scholars and artists who assert that the world today is more fluid and fast, and life more precarious than ever before for certain bodies (Bauman 2013, Butler, 2006, Braidotti 2011, Coupland, Obrist, & Basar, 2015). Whether due to globalization and increasing capitalist pressure (Bauman 2000, Braidotti 2011) changing subjectivities in a post-911-era (Butler 2003), or the speed at which technology is transforming our brains and social relations and expectations (Coupland, Obrist, & Basar 2015), it is important to acknowledge these broad economic, social, political, cultural and technological factors before delving into the artistic expressions of embodied transience from former youth in care in order to place transience in its context. Even in a more fluid, fast and precarious life, transience as exemplified by residential mobility in children is associated with multiple poorer health outcomes (Jelleyman & Spencer, 2007), yet different bodies experience this mobility in different ways. What follows is a brief discussion of recent research of urban Indigenous mobility in Canada to understand this population that makes up almost half of *Moving Home* co-researchers, followed by a consideration of residential mobility across the lifespan to understand general baseline data, and, finally, a review of youth homelessness research in Ontario with youth exiting the child welfare system. By addressing some of the larger forces shaping the child welfare system, I hope to provide a broader context for an analysis of the embodied transience experienced by former youth in care.

Indigenous peoples living in urban centres experience more frequent geographic mobility (CMHC, 2002). Synder and Wilson's research in Winnipeg with urban Indigenous peoples "demonstrate[s] mobility is an intergenerational phenomenon, influenced by colonial practices" (2015). This intergenerational aspect of residential mobility is of important note, as it contrasts strongly to general population-based residential mobility studies that often do not consider this

data. “Residential mobility” is the term most closely connected with the idea of *Moving Home* from the field of housing studies, and there are relevant works demonstrating the nuanced negative impacts of residential instability upon children, as overall movement is associated with poorer academic success unless moving from a low to high-income neighbourhood (Roy, A., McCoy, & Raver, 2014) or that the mere imagining of a more mobile lifestyle includes sadness and loneliness with an increased desire to extend the social network (Oishi, et al. 2013). Many of these studies on residential mobility are short-term, and that’s why long-term trajectories are especially valuable. The life-span biography work by Coulter and Van Ham (2013) suggests a number of important findings on long-term residential mobility including that: it may take multiple moves to resolve housing disequilibrium; low-income people are *less* likely to act on their moving desires; immobility is the norm after the age of 30; and there are long-term negative psychological effects to always wanting to move. Coulter and Van Ham’s (2013) case study covers a period of 17 years, while interesting, assumes an autonomous neoliberal being exercising choice instead of an interdependent intersectional subject, and moving as a desire for better housing options as opposed to resolving or living out an inner discord of embodied transience. However, are these findings related to residential mobility applicable for the (most often) low-income former youth in care? As homelessness, shelters, incarceration, and addictions treatment were not considered as valid housing categories in their own right, it seems once again that very vulnerable and complex subjects with experiences of systematic transience are being ignored. These transitions from for youth in care from system (such as child welfare to shelter) to another, from one place to another emphasize how many systems young people are involved in through the duration of their transience.

Nichols (2013), completed research in Ontario with former youth in care exploring the notion of “signing out” at age 16, doing repeat interviews with youth, shelter workers and social

workers. The immediate transition from in care to independence is complicated by the overlapping of youth definitions across different jurisdictions and child welfare agencies, as well as a profound lack of understanding from young people of the institutional provisions and legality of the care-leaving process. This is compounded by the unwillingness of agencies to deem older teenagers crown wards, and the overlap of shelter services providing care for youth in care. This research illustrates that while “signing out of care” and being done with it are often expressed by young people in Ontario, the reality is much more complex; many youth who felt they had “signed out” in fact did not understand the legal responsibilities, and ended up being taken advantage of by partners, and family members adding them onto their welfare cheques, and thus inadvertently negatively impacting their own eligibility for their own social assistance. Nichols concluded that lack of understanding and systems navigation was such a huge issue for former youth in care, and that secondary and postsecondary education may be the only way to stop the cycle of transience especially homelessness, for this particular group. Snow (2013) concurs, using peer-based support to assist former youth in care in achieving academic success, seeking to move beyond the 5% post-secondary graduation rate for former youth in care in Canada.

Relating the longitudinal studies described above to *Moving Home*, a third of the co-researchers at some point moved during the project, and several co-researchers were living in youth shelters at the time, as well several often leaving during the day to attend court dates, probation meetings, and moving on to addictions treatment during my contact with them. In order to protect confidentiality due to the small sample size (15) and the desire of many youth to identify themselves instead of being anonymous, I will not be discussing many details except to note that former youth in care, co-researchers included, experience transience through an interaction with a variety of systems particularly shelters, addictions treatment, and criminal justice, and not simply residential mobility as the moving of home. With a fuller understanding of



the general context of transience in the modern world and the specific systems and institutional transient realities of former youth in care, I now move to elucidate down to the scale of the body and embodiment, to see how this transience is lived, felt, and performed in the art of the co-researchers.

### **3.4 The Embodiment of Transience**

“The body is a lived space where the consequences of violence are felt” (Bennett, 2005, 60). This quotation aptly describes an art performance as emotional, lived, spatial, and carrying long-term effects. The violence that is felt in the body can be an immediate reaction, or an ongoing lived experience triggered from past trauma, or even self-inflicted in a combination of comforting but ultimately destructive coping mechanisms including drugs and alcohol as a way to make the body-as-home more comfortable (Robinson, 2005). The body as the most intimate and personal of spatial scales is the site of much social science and humanities research. In this section, the perspective shifts from acknowledging experiencing multiple placements as a young person in care as an inherently emotional and disruptive spatial experience, to seeking to know how to approach and consider embodiment itself, the embodiment of transience, and embodiment in visual and performative autobiography in my analysis.

The body and embodiment have been studied by feminist researchers for decades, often focused on (but not limited to) exploring particular embodiments of experienced by racialized bodies (Nayak, 2011; Veninga, 2009), gender, (Braidotti, 1994; Colls, 2012) fatness (Colls & Evans, 2014); chronic illness (Moss, 1999), and queerness (Bain & Nash, 2006; Gorman-Murray, 2009). In this scholarship, the body is home and a meeting place, but it can also be an unpleasant, awkward, and alienating one. There is also the framing and tension of the body-for-self, and the body-for-others, within and post-structuralism phenomenology respectively (Gonzalez-Arnal,

Jagger & Lennon, 2012). While how bodies lived for the self are of course relationally connected to the bodies-for-others concept, the perspective of this knowing of embodied transience is rooted in the self and the self's understanding of the body.

The body as used in performative autobiography in *Moving Home* in such mediums as self-portrait photography, spoken word, music performance, and personal textile creation are pulled from the personal archive and illustrate the different ways the self and bodies can produce and share memory (Taylor, 2003). Feminist thought reminds us that performed critical autobiography works are not simply truth telling, but a partial, embodied positionality that is performed with room for the audience to connect, enter and reflect upon (Lather, 1993). The disruptive and pedagogical possibilities of audio-visual performative autobiography have been theorized about (Simon, 2005), and Hesford (1999), stresses that the risks of embodied artistic self-disclosure is greater for marginalized bodies, and to consider how identities are framed, particular in academic and knowledge production activities to move beyond simplistic identity politics. What, then, does a performance of audio-visual artistic autobiography expressing embodied transience look like, sound like? How is the body and this transience represented in a variety of mediums? Are there unique representational challenges to the temporal compression of the effects of years of moving homes in the child welfare system into a single art piece or series?

Over time, comes embodiment, which can lead to resistance (St. Pierre & Rodier, 2015). In a sense, the very act of performative autobiography against the state's provision of child welfare services is resistance, declaring this more vulnerable body as worthy of listening to, and through this research project, as a carrier of important knowledge. Berardi (2011) emphasizes that marginalized bodies feel the effects of devouring itself, and the power of untimely bodies under the horizon of precarity (St. Pierre & Rodier, 2015). A staff member at SKETCH (where I ran the project in Toronto) eloquently stated that movement work and body work is incredibly important

for healing and resistance. Poor people have no capital but their bodies, so they take from them in terms of sleep, of food, of whatever they can in order to survive. He also stressed the importance of body and movement work in acknowledging trauma and empowering to move beyond it (personal communication, Oct 15 2016). If bodies can be interpreted as expressions of resistance, so too can health and self-care be interpreted as anti-capitalist acts. Thus, the artistic performance of embodied transience created inadvertently through state child welfare failings is an act of resistance, and even more so when resistance is itself a theme in the representation of the lived embodiment of transience.

### **3.5 Resilience as Resistance, and the Vulnerability of Resistance**

One of the most immediate themes emergent in the work of co-researchers was the desire to survive, the desire to give back to other former youth in care, and the desire to beat the odds stacked against them in life. These desires express a multitude of relationships and experiences. They presented artistically as song lyrics, as striking collages, as a photo series, words silkscreened on a shirt, or written on the body. This immediate presence of this theme required additional readings on resilience, resistance, and vulnerability as a way to better understand the work produced by co-researchers.

Resilience as a term originally stems from ecology, explaining how systems respond to disruptions, shocks and damage. Presently resilience as a term is touted to be beneficial in everything from international development to child welfare and self-care. In this sense, the word has supplanted sustainable as a “buzzword”, instead of sustainable communities, resilient cities and resilient young students are spoken of. York University’s counselling department presently offering a resilient coping workshop. Resilience is how subjects are to “be” in this precarious modern world (Evans & Reid, 2014).

Resilience in the psychological personal sense is the inner ability to deal well with shocks and trauma that are impossible to predict. With regards to young people who lived the trauma of broken families and ended up in the Canadian child welfare system, resilience is measured as the mainstream success of the young person such as stable housing, good employment, academic success, despite the tremendous difficulties in their lives. There are strong critiques of this idea of resilience, tying it into the offloaded responsibility and entrepreneurial of neoliberalism (Evans & Reid, 2014). That instead of government building up and repairing the broken social services, we are instead pushed to cultivate the eminently resilient individual. It is on the subject and their responsibility alone to survive, adapt and overcome difficulties. Further critiques include that this idea of resilience is framed so individually, and that resilience for Indigenous communities in particular, is tied to colonization, the land and spirituality (TRC resilience as assimilation). This focus on the individual ignores the relationality of resilience, the bonds that we all possess that can alternately lift us up, hold us steady, or weigh us down. Another take on this focus on the individual to the attachments that sustain them is “cruel optimism”. This is defined by Berlant (2011) as holding onto ideas that are hurting you. This cruel optimism is manifest as attachments, and the desire to sustain these attachments. The object within this cruel optimism is a cluster of promises, and the feeling of hope connects as a social relation organizing the present. The concept and practice of personal resilience is imbued with hope extending from the self. Expectations of resilience can be cruel optimism because the conditions under which certain attachments no longer make sense work against the flourishing of the people. Attachment is a structure of relationality in Berlant’s notion of cruel optimism, but resilience is so often framed as personal skill, a hard but ultimately successful journey through adversity.

Evidence of this tension between cruel optimism and resilience can be seen in the case of homeless former Canadian youth in care who desire relations with family as more likely to

experience homelessness than youth who have severed these relational attachments (Serge, Eberle, Goldberg, Sullivan, & Dudding, 2002). People who born into a precarious world have different response to precarity than those who presumed they would be protected (Berlant 2011). Expecting resilience from people without significant material control over their lives (i.e., minors in care) is cruel in and of itself.

Earlier I wrote about time, leading to embodiment, leading to resistance (St. Pierre & Rodier, 2015). Vulnerability and time begin this equation, vulnerability comes before resistance. For example, poverty, dispossession, and displacement over time may lead to resistance, and may manifest and be acted out by the body (Butler, 2015). Resistance is also a way of mobilizing vulnerability, especially in the context of group activities like protests, petitions, or a social justice themed art show. However, winning a battle, personal or collective, doesn't mean one is no longer vulnerable. Vulnerability and precarity are not the same. The definition of vulnerability cannot be reduced to what we willingly don't want. In seeking to reduce vulnerability, mobilization and resistance through embodiment occurs which is performative and simultaneously relational. While identity is performed, performativity is not completely free of the discourses that shaped one growing up (Butler, 2014). Bodies and minds exist in multiple temporalities (St. Pierre & Rodier, 2015), and attention to this is crucial when seeking to understand the present lived effects of past experiences for former youth in care.

Resistance is an interesting concept, a way to frame personal survival if not success in opposition to oppressive others. These others include child welfare agencies as a whole, specific social workers and group home staff and unsupportive teachers, all mentioned in conversations with co-researchers. A conscious decision to seek a positive outcome not just for oneself, but as a demonstration of personal power against oppression as a relational connection to resilience, albeit one that is driven strongly by negatively predicted outcomes instead of hope for a better future.

Lastly, when considering resilience, resistance, and vulnerability, a temporal question is left unanswered. Does one ever stop being resilient? Can a middle-class person be resilient, (since resilience is thought of as achieving a conventionally successful and comfortable life for former youth in care) or is resilience as presently framed inherently connected to oppression, disadvantage, and thus a shifting set of scales based on lived experiences of gender, class, race, sexuality, ability? With this more nuanced view of resilience, as something that people possess who lack power to deal (freely) with the situations wrought by those in more power, and that resilience and or as resistance does not erase vulnerability, the connection to relational, interdependent and the material conditions that we share that make movement possible shall be explored.

### **3.6 The Self-Care of an Ethics of Care**

Drawing heavily from Victoria Lawson's (2007, 2009) and Joan Tronto's (1993, 2013) work, geographies of care and a feminist ethics of care frame *Moving Home*'s methods and research focus. Lawson in particular challenged radical geography to become a caring geography (2009). Caring geography is a political and active approach to this research, inclusive of emotions, connections, and the body, and inherently challenging contemporary social organization, as compared to the very descriptive scholarship of children's geographies (Holloway, 2014; Valentine, 2003). Framing foster care through an ethics of care and geographies of care makes care explicit and upfront, and illuminates the lack of care that systemic issues like prevalence of placement bouncing exemplify.

Focusing on placement bouncing and the emotional experience of it, questions of belonging arise due to the repeated moves of home and school. Snow et. al., (2013) noted that for former youth in care, belonging is actually more often noticed in the absence of itself, which calls

into question practices and a definition of belonging in general. If belonging is more often noticed in its absence, then these experiences not belonging, and the embodied practices of trying to belong (Veninga, 2009) warrant attention and exploration. Cultivating feelings of belonging in work with former youth in care is now considered best practices in social work, particularly when the work is peer-based (Mann-Feder and Snow).

This peer connection and belonging tie in strongly to understanding practices of self-care. As mentioned earlier with regards to resilience, several co-researchers desired to give back to the youth in care community, to let them know they would be all right in the end, and that they can survive this, even offering tips for self-care to get through rough days. While only a third of co-researchers created a visual or text submission for a zine for current youth in care, this initial research topic manifested as a theme of its own. Initially, questioning the self-care practices connected to embodied transience and placement bouncing for former youth in care was intended to be useful for youth in care who are currently experiencing placement bouncing. This once again ties in with responsibility and relational accountability (Wilson, 2008) and critical geography study that produces work relevant to specific communities in a way that values those communities through the process, results, and sharing of the research. While my enthusiasm for the concept of self-care has dampened the more I have read concerning neoliberalism and responsibilisation (Peck, 2001), understanding broader cultural trends of the shift for caring for others to self-care so as not be a burden, means this theme can be explored with more awareness.

### **3.7 Summary**

Bringing together three streams of geographical thought, children's geographies, geographies of mobilities and emotional geographies, all of which have not explored the experiences of youth in care in Canada has made for an extensive literature review. These sub-

disciplines have framed the theoretical approach in major ways, acknowledging that youth exist in a space of transition and have unique ways of interpreting the world (Holloway, 2014; Valentine 2003; Worth, 2009), that movement is worthy of studying itself, and that movement of bodies is inherently political (Cresswell 2010; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Lastly, emotional geographies add the all-important connection to the felt reality of inhabiting spaces and interaction between spaces and the emotional self (Davidson & Milligan, 2004).

Research from Social Work, Sociology, Psychology and Youth Work fills in the gaps in geographical literature on former youth in care (Corcoran, 2012; Dregan, & Gulliford; Fallis, 2012; Nichols, 2013; Samuels, & Pryce, 2008; Snow 2008, 2009a, 2009b). The fact that these young people are the most vulnerable group of young people in Canada is noted, yet also stunningly contrasted by the activism present in this community, as young people from care, especially in Ontario, have accomplished significant policy changes (Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, 2012). The former youth in care activist community-building is seen as an enactment of a feminist ethics of care (Lawson, 2007; Toronto 1993) as young people are giving each other what they need, a sense of community and more opportunities amidst the fractured lives they grew up with.

The element of resilience in these lives of significant displacement is worthy of critique, as valuing individual resilience without interrogating the power behind it the social structures that force marginalized bodies to adapt and become resilient merely reinforces neoliberal capitalist policies without challenging them (Evans & Reid, 2014; Peck, 2001). Resilience through transience of homes and schools while growing up is a very particular form of survival that might create unique self-care practices, ones that could be shared with youth presently experiencing displacement in the care of child welfare. Transience and experiences of it are not spread equally among the populace, which connects again to mobilities theories, and the politics of moving



bodies, most of which are racialized in child welfare system in Canada. Indigenous research on relationality, storytelling and has shaped this framework out of respect for the land this work is conducted on, as well as to best conduct research with the co-researchers, half of whom identified as Indigenous (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008).

Bringing this all together at the scale of the body, how is movement from the past carried on, lived and felt in the present? How does the embodiment of transience shape the future as well? Responses to these questions have been created in art by co-researchers and presented publicly at three art shows, soon to launch a fourth. There are many aspects to consider in understanding the embodiment of transience, and the next chapter explores this concept in-depth.

### *3.8 Check-out: Learning*

*What is one thing you learned today? Why does it stay with you, what is interesting, useful, or exciting about this new piece of information?*

*I have left this personal check-out on learning to my revision stage. It is July 2017, and I am learning everyday how easy summer fun can draw me away from writing, revising and citing. I thought this would be an issue, which is why I planned on finishing a semester early. I won't however say no to camping with my cousin for the first time, or Dolly Parton choir performances, or arts council grant deadlines. Work-life balance is a goal achieved over time, not a place one reaches. Isolation rarely improves my work, though the idea of the solitary writer still has a strong presence in social imaginaries. This learning isn't something I only learned today, but I am very aware of this lesson and ways to balance life, art and writing as the submission deadline for this thesis is next week.*

**CHAPTER FOUR:**  
**THE EMBODIMENT OF TRANSIENCE: FEELINGS, RELATIONS, AND  
 MOVEMENTS**



Image 4.1. *Recognition*, Sophia Nahz, 2016

*4.1 Checking-in with former youth in care: Recognition*

*“I asked participants in this project to portray, just for a moment, what made this project relevant to them. Whatever struggles they had been through, the battles they had fought to make it so that they could be here, involved, attempting to portray experiences in care, through art. There*

*was no right or wrong pose, no prize to achieve. What you see here are survivors of a system, individuals amongst tens of thousands who deserve recognition.”*

*May they all find their homes and their peace” S. Nahz (Complete Artist Statement)*

The collage photograph that opens this chapter is a powerful, palpable representation of emotional embodiment from the *Moving Home* project. The photography series *Recognition* includes all Toronto co-researchers (save the artist Sophia Nahz) and this presence in numbers magnifies the compelling nature of the research subject through the emotionally-charged bodies of the co-researchers and facilitator. I chose this piece to introduce this chapter because while seeking common themes in this collective body of work from former youth in care in Canada, this photography series depicts the range of responses and emotions from individual co-researchers. It serves as a powerful and provocative entry into the art of co-researchers and as a reminder of the multiple factors that can shape, inform, or deny experiences in the world. Former youth in care are not a homogenous group; they do not react exactly the same way to similar experiences of multiple placements. When asked to portray what brought them to the moment of the *Moving Home* project in *Recognition*, some stare coolly and with judgment, making direct eye-contact with the viewer, some reveal hurt in their eyes, and some refuse to meet the gaze of the viewer, instead staring down at the floor perhaps lost in their own inner world of memories and emotions. The widely differing range of negative emotional responses, exemplify the isolation many former youth in care face as they transition out of the child welfare system. Shanna, a member of the Youth Leaving Care Hearings, (a project in Ontario and the first of its kind in Canada that took submissions from 200 former youth in care) speaks about the differences in experiences, the emotional landscape that former youth in care inhabit, and the gaps in supportive policy. “Some young people told us about good experiences in the system, but others – and the statistics – tell us a different story. Through the report, we have created a vision for the change that we want to see.

Rather than children and youth feeling vulnerable, isolated and left out of our lives; we want to feel protected, respected, supported and so much more.” (Our Voice, Our Turn, 2012, 1). Taking this quotation as the goal of former youth in care activists, at the arts-based research portrait photo series, *Recognition* do these emotional struggles depicted on the co-researchers ‘look protected, respected, supported and so much more’?

The desire for the emotional struggles of former youth in care to be recognized is declared in the artist statement, “What you see here are survivors of a system, individuals amongst tens of thousands who deserve recognition” (S. Nahz, 2016). Recognition is also enacted through the exhibition of the series, creating a space, albeit a small one, for public recognition and acknowledgment to occur. These combined strengths of collective co-researcher presence, the portrayal of individual emotional perspectives, and enactment of artistic intent all make this a resonant start to this chapter’s consideration of embodiment.

As not all readers have lived experience in the child welfare system, consider your own entry into this thesis for a check-in similar to the one the co-researchers performed in the photos above. Reflect on something you actually had no control over, that ultimately shaped your life in unforeseen and perhaps as-yet unexplored ways. Where and with which features of your face could these emotions be conveyed? If you were looking at a photo of yourself expressing this felt past, how would it look?

Holding this personal experience of embodiment and emotions, the past imbuing the body with present feeling, pay attention to the aliveness and vulnerability of staying with uncomfortable emotions. How easy is it for the mind to wander, check your cellphone, or skip the check-in altogether? Exploring personal embodiment from (potentially) traumatic narratives is difficult emotional labour. With some care and presence to the difficulty and tensions of the task at hand, I will now explain how the concept of embodiment of transience was shared with co-

researchers through several open-ended prompt questions at the start of this research project. The questions were designed to facilitate co-researchers connecting past movement in the child welfare system, to current day social and geographic mobility, with his/her/their ever-present body and feeling(s).

1. How do you think moving around so much, having multiple placements in group homes and foster homes, has affected you?
2. How do you feel about moving now in your life?
3. What sort of people is the child welfare system inadvertently creating through so many placements?
4. What might you still be carrying with you from this experience and how do you carry it?

The first question broadly introduced the research topic, and the second offered a more concrete and focused example. Many, but not all, co-researchers readily self-identified with terms such as traveler, gypsy, always moving, or having wanderlust early on in the project, even going so far as to say they applied to participate in the research precisely because they have wondered about their frequent movement themselves and wished to learn more. Connecting these expressions of mobility to lived experience in the child welfare system, the third question posed was more socially-oriented and critical of child welfare practices. The third question strongly resonated with co-researchers as their lived experience has made them “system-wide” (Liang, Boileau, Vachon, & Wilton, 2016) and they were quick to share stories, ideas, and examples of their thoughts on what sort of people the child welfare system creates. Not wanting to research or promote a former youth in care versus the Children's Aid Societies dialogue, as this project is concerned with youth voice and embodiment particularly, co-researchers were then asked to connect this lived experiential knowledge to their bodies for question four. Co-researchers were

asked to consider the body as a home, as the home we always have, and what we carry with us all the time.

When asked by co-researchers for an example of embodiment of transience, I shared a realization that I have had concerning my own body. I explained that I had spent some time homeless, sleeping outside every night, subject to the elements, other people, and the police. I'd tense up at night when I went to sleep. That tensing, my dog, and my knife were my protection when I slept. Fast forward to five years off the streets, and I was hired for my first job with full health benefits where I could begin getting Registered Massage Therapy. Only then, in session did I realize that even years after I had been on the streets, my body was still tensing up every night, as if to still protect myself. My body had learned a habit that was useful at the time of homelessness and transience, but now that habit was maladaptive – causing me ongoing physical pain and stress. Together these four questions and my personal anecdote framed the way co-researchers were invited to consider their bodies as they began their explorations and excavations of personal history.

Embodiment has been researched in many ways, and the ways in which experiences of, and in, our bodies contributes to our sense of self has several major threads. The body can be seen as a marker of social identity, making it “visible” (Fanon, 1967), or created through “disciplinary practices” (Foucault, 1977) to meet and conform to ideals, as well as the body and its actions as being performative (Butler, 1990, 2011). The potentially more transient body of a former youth in care lies across these ideas of embodied selves, as the social identity of a former foster child is invisible when out of the child welfare system, and that instead of conforming to social ideals of “settling down”, has been inadvertently sculpted to conform to an unideal lifestyle of geographic instability, contradictorily in a world that is accelerating and more transient than ever before (Basar, Coupland & Obrist 2015; Evans & Reid, 2014). The body is performing and acting out

learned behaviours of movement across space and time, from homes, to relationships, to moving away from emotions within the body itself (Robinson, 2005).

Bringing together this invisible social identity, and the individuality of experience in the child welfare system, while understanding the lack of power and agency that facilitated multiple placements, these now -independent young people perform socio-geographic movement that carries emotional weight. *Moving Home* queries repeated patterns of socio-geographic movement as self-directed by former youth in care due to moving schools between schools, homes, and relatives becoming more of a constant in their lives than stability. The embodiment of transience can thus be viewed as a lingering bodily habit inadvertently learned and reproduced while in care. In this sense, embodied transience can be seen as a lived and embodied habit, that challenges ideas and practices of (dis)embodiment (Coy, 2009). This tension between embodiment and disembodiment runs through early conceptualization of the mobility of former youth in care. Is movement directed away from the traumatic past, while re-creating the instability of it a form of comfort? Is movement enacted towards an idealized and hopeful future because the present is too painful to stay in, and movement while with its own struggles, feels emotionally liberating, as described by writing on as suggested by writings on “the Geography Cure”, a colloquial term in the Alcoholics Anonymous community referencing the habit of addicts to externalize their problems and to view their current geographic location as what is holding them back from moving beyond their addiction (Nissen 2013; Wilton, DeVerteuil, & Evans, 2014). The commonalities and discursiveness of the geography cure and hopeful self-directed movement as a manifestation of embodied transience are analyzed in greater depth later in this chapter. In terms of residential instability, mobility can be luxurious to those choosing to travel frequently in comfort, oppressive to those forced to leave their homes, and an ultimately unproductive habit for alcoholics seeking a cure. In these examples of moving homes, different bodies experience time

and place in uneven ways, due to racialization, gender, (dis)ability, age, sexual identity, class and many other intersections of identity. All of these intersecting identities affect where one would travel for leisure, who is more statistically likely to be forced out of their home, and who is more likely to be an alcoholic (Raphael, 2016). Mobility is thus intersectionally entangled, an individual narrative, and multi-directional. Embodied transience for former youth in care then in an individual distillation of processes, fluxes, flows, habits, and opportunities.

Coordinating peer-based groups for former youth in care is considered current best practices (Snow & Mann-Feder 2015), and this peer-based work adds another layer of flux, flow, habit and opportunity in terms of the movement of ideas. Different art would have been created, if there had been different co-researchers, different conversations, or if the art had been created wholly independently. Examples of how peers influenced artistic production include collaborations and new explorations of artistic mediums for certain co-researchers. Additionally, there is a force of creativity within the two groups of co-researchers and materiality of the youth-focused and friendly creative spaces that engage with the messiness of artistic inquiry (Askins & Pain, 2011). While this peer-based work can be beneficial in terms of collaborations and the discussion and refinement of artworks, it can also detract and influence the art/data due to the vulnerability of sharing the details of personal embodiment in a group of peers one has just met.

Marginalized bodies cannot fully ever escape the “risks of self-disclosure” present in visual autobiography (Hesford 130, 1999). While the art created for *Moving Home* was not required to be directly autobiographical, the diverse group of co-researchers drew on their own lived experience to begin their explorations of the theme. I do not know what was held back out of fear of self-disclosure, however it is highly probable that certain ideas were deemed too risky to share publicly. This potential self-censoring is not necessarily due to the group-based nature of the work, it is also informed by the knowledge that the art had the opportunity to be shown



publicly and would be analyzed and findings presented within an academic context. These all-important social sites where art as research can generate conversations and reflections can also shape the emotional depth and vulnerability of the material that initiates the conversations.

These conversations within the arts-based research process occurred with 15 co-researchers; 10 in Toronto and 5 in Whitehorse. The total group was made up of 8 cis-gender female-identified co-researchers, 6 cis-gendered male-identified co-researchers and 1 trans male-identified co-researcher. The group had strong First Nations, Metis and Inuit representation, with 70% of youth identifying in full or with mixed Indigenous heritage. This is an accurate representation of the colonialism present in the Canadian child welfare system today, as 48% of youth in care presently are Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2013). In Toronto, the group makeup accurately portrayed uneven urban racialized poverty of the city and the ongoing racism in the Children's Aid Society of Toronto. In *Moving Home*, 40% of youth identified as Black in full or mixed heritage, and while the city of Toronto has a Black youth population of 8%, 41% of youth in care have one or more birth parents who identifies as Black (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health & Children's Aid Society of Toronto, 2014). Because the co-researcher sample was small, and what was shared was very personal and revealing, I have chosen to not delve into a thorough intersectional analysis in order to maintain the confidentiality of co-researchers. Confidentiality exists with an added ethical tension in this research due to the nature of artists wanting (and deserving) recognition for their work: some co-researchers chose to use artist names when crediting their work, and many decided to be identified with their full names. I have chosen to focus on the art and the artist statements, and I place the images of the art before the analysis as a way to foreground the youth voices that *Moving Home* seeks to amplify.

I begin my arts analysis with the feelings, emotions, and bodies expressed in the art as a way to explore the connection between the work produced in *Moving Home* with existing

research on former youth in care in Canada. Following this, I explore the relations present in the art to better understand the sense of belonging that former youth in care feel, focusing on relationships to others, homes, and socio-natures, the latter being a very interesting and unexpected theme that emerged collectively. I conclude this chapter's study of the representations of the embodiment of transience with an analysis of the movement depicted, referenced, and performed, untangling temporality, direction, and the emotions of the expressed movements. The felt precedes the verbal and visual, and the embodiment of transience begins with an understanding of emotions and the feeling body.

#### **4.2 The Feeling Body: Emotional Portraits and Complex Collages of Bodies**

There are as many ways to consider the feeling body as there are feelings, multiplied in factorial by all the different kinds of bodies that exist. With the addition of the temporal, the possibilities expand again. In this section, the art of co-researchers in Toronto and Whitehorse is explored through the emotions represented, the bodies and parts of bodies depicted, with a keen eye for noticing how and by whom.

Returning to the check-in activity, *Recognition*, stands as a powerful example of the emotions motivated by self-reflection upon the experience of the child welfare system in Canada. Not a single portrait of the ten depicts anything that could be described as a positive facial expression. These negative, plaintive and avoidant faces correspond with the well-established projected outcomes of former youth in care which include increased likelihood of substance use, smoking, obesity, homelessness, mental health issues, poverty, single parenthood, incarceration, and lack of educational attainment (Dregan & Gulliford, 2012; Office of The Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth, 2012; Samuels & Pryce, 2008; Snow, 2008; Turpel-Lafond & Kendall, 2007). As they condense feeling from years of child welfare experience into one expression,

several faces look almost accusatory or judgmental, and given the above data, such expressions are justified. Three co-researchers choose to not even meet the eye of the camera.<sup>1</sup> The individuality of the emotional responses hits the viewer harder than words alone. Past and present are captured in an instant. Of note, half the co-researchers in *Recognition* choose to cover themselves in some way, with hats or accessories. Covering the head can be interpreted as a way to increase sensations of psychological safety, by separating from the world (Kaiser, 1997). Even in the act of recognition, a measure of protection is required for half the co-researchers, and two of the co-researchers avoid meeting the camera's eye and wear a hat. However, as Sontag (1973, p. 23) cautions, "Photography implies that we know about the world if we accept as the camera records it. But this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from not accepting the world as it looks". The series title and the creation of this space for these faces in pain, exists with tension from Sontag's statement to the need and desire to be heard. Showing these faces is important because an identity as a former-youth-in-care is invisible, but it is also a label that when publicly articulated carries stigma. This project asks for recognition and the simplicity of the standard photo print size (4"x6") represents the type of recognition that is sought for these bodies of former youth in care, a common and basic one. By presenting this series publicly, this work is successful at embodying recognition itself.

---

1. I myself was one of them. Through my thesis I am still seriously considering how this experience has impacted former youth in care in general, and individually, including myself. One single expression seemed a daunting task. I knew being a foster kid made me feel bad about myself as a child, less than all the other kids at whatever new school I was at. So I looked sad, and down, and inwards, intending to portray that I am still thinking about this, and that it has weighed heavily on me emotionally.



Image 4.2. *Positive/Negative* by Starchild Dreaming Loud, 2016

A similarly themed and stylistic mixed media portrait from the Yukon was created by artist Starchild Dreaming Loud, entitled *Positive/Negative*. Displaying the body from the chest up as in *Recognition*, Starchild Dreaming Loud's mixed media portrait combines black and white and colour photographs that are glued in alternating strips onto canvas. There are nine words written on the face on each portrait, and also nine strips of photo collage. Both portraits are bordered by black and white prints on the outside. These lines of photos are not inset, rather the black and white is on top of the colour, an addition. The 'real' youth, their life and body is shown to exist behind these black and white bars. Given the incredibly high rates of incarceration amongst Indigenous former youth in care in Canada (Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, 2011), the allusion to bars, the real vibrant body, the real person existing behind, beneath something merely black and white, is a powerful one.

In both photographs, the artist's mouth is taped over. On the first image, "SPEAK UP" is written in black on the white masking tape, and in the second image the saying "NOT HEARD". Surrounding the tape saying "SPEAK UP", the words believe, forgive, home, love, laugh, family,

hope, heard, live are written on the face, collarbone and upper chest. Surrounding the phrase “NOT HEARD” in the second image are the words lost, forgotten, hopeless, nothing, unwanted, alone, scared, broken (and one unintelligible word) are inscribed in similar places on the body of the artist. Of note, is the choice of the phrase not heard to communicate the negative. Instead of expressing fear of speaking up, confusion at what to do, the tragedy *is in not being heard* that creates the negative. Such a statement correlates strongly to what other former and current youth in care in Canada are, and have been saying, for years (Ontario Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, 2012; National Youth in Care Network, 2003) – their desire to be heard and to participate in decision-making about their own lives. Additionally, if the viewer pays careful attention, the colour portions of *Negative* are less vibrant, the eyes are more plaintive, and the size of the body is also slightly diminished.

Continuing attention on the body as depicted in *Positive/Negative*, there is the interesting interplay between what the artist will permanently display on their body through tattoos, and the words they wrote carefully with black eyeliner in the mirror backwards on their body to create this work of art. Rigid skulls with a large red rose and green leaves (no thorns) face each other on the breastbone; together they illustrate life and death, beauty and bones, and the new coming and growing from the old which is another way of saying positive and negative. The fact that these tattoos are facing each other inwards towards the body could mean that these connections and cycles are known deeply within the body. Are these tattoos such a part of the artist's body and identity that they did not consider the implication of showing them publicly? The photos could have easily been cropped, if only the written text on the body was part of the art. The inclusion of pre-existing body art exploring the dualities of life and death, positivity and negativity, in an artwork depicting the body in duality with the same themes in mixed media, challenges the notion of body as blank canvas. Biddle (2003), in her study of Aboriginal women and art in Australia,

challenges the idea of skin as mere surface, and declares skin as culture itself. If skin is culture, then baring it can be interpreted as a complex and intersecting demonstration of pride and vulnerability.

Lastly, when considering *Positive/Negative* the use of collage and layering is an example of gendered body representation that surfaced in the *Moving Home* projects. Female-identified co-researchers were more likely to depict, mention, reference, and/or use the body in their work, at a rate of 2 to 1 (analyzed as number of co-researchers interacting and presenting the body artistically, not cumulatively, as some co-researchers were prolific in artistic production and others choose to create one piece for the project). Not only were female co-researchers more likely to depict the body, but when they did, it frequently included multiple mediums or expressions, such as collage, a series, photos with a poem to represent the complexity and entanglement of emotions, relations, and attachments. All these multiplicities displayed what Mol (2002) describes as the body not as a single entity, and skin not as a container, but bodies extending and connecting to other bodies, practices and technologies which in turn affect other bodies. Male-identified co-researchers also depicted the body via collage, painting and spoken word presenting multiple layers and entanglements, they just did so less overall.



Image 4.3. #MOOD series by Jessie Stone, 2016 (relative size represented)

An interesting example of the multiplicities of self is expressed in three acrylic portraits, created by artist Jessie Stone (Image 4.3). The two female-presenting and one male-presenting paintings portrayed from the neck up were expressed as facets of herself that she was learning to see and meet through this peer group work. The artist is of mixed racial heritage and the portraits are of a First Nations woman, a darker-skinned woman, and a black male. The self-portraits do not actually look like the artist in real life, they are instead of characters she partially embodies and felt compelled to paint. These allusions to self-portraits each incorporate an additional object. The First Nations woman is adorned with a feather in her hair, the darker-skinned woman wears earrings that are shiny buttons, and the black male has raised dreadlocks made out of paper-mâché. The feather, a symbol of flight, plays with the idea of movement. By presenting the body in multiple mediums, personalities and collages, the co-researchers are expressing the complexity of relations and feelings that exist not only in the site of production (i.e. the process and place of the art-making) but also the site of representation, the body/their body (Rose, 1990). The body is not ever actually singular, there are layers and different parts of us that come out at different times, even as we inhabit the same body, the same clothes, with the same voice, all on the same day. Many bodies are considered untimely, especially ones that do not fit certain restrictive characteristics. “Fat, for example, slows movement while quickening judgment ... for a trans\* teen seeking reassignment, the temporality of endocrine systems tenses in relation to the temporalities of bureaucracy, the medical - industrial complex, and transphobic violence” (St. Pierre & Rodier, 2015, 6). This untimeliness of bodies is not only relating to a singular supposedly autonomous body, but bodies with distinct declared multiple personalities as well.

The 2-1 gendered body representation, while occurring in a small group, can be seen as evidence of a greater female awareness and comfort situating identity, knowledge and emotions within the body. In both the Toronto and Whitehorse groups, it was more common for women to

express the body and use it as a signifier. Additionally, in terms of the physicality of the body within the project, when co-researchers considered withdrawing they were cis men. When co-researchers participated daily in the project but did not present in the final art show, they were also cis men. A group of 15 co-researchers working in multiple mediums is too small to do a gender-based analysis, there are so many variables of racialization, ethnicity, age, class, sexual identity, amount of times spent in different foster homes, present life experiences, and education. However, the amount of work produced by female identifying co-researchers suggest they feel more comfortable connecting emotions and the body, which is already known outside the small study due to cultural and gendered norms that delegate who can feel what and when (Ahmed, 2013). Whether seen through micro-practices of the self and bio power or eating disorders, feminism, the body and exploring embodiment have long been subjects of significance to feminist researchers (Bordo, 1993; Braidotti, 1994; hooks, 1992; Wolfe, 1990). However, it is interesting that female-identified co-researchers tended to better *understand the question and portrayal* of embodied transience from moving around so much as a youth in care.

In contrast, men interacting and depicting the body less could be understood as a performed binary of masculinity as many young men have been socially educated to be less connected to their bodies and their feelings. Potentially this translates into these young men acting out more often than women, as their bodies may feel less comfortable as ‘homes’ (Christianson, 2013; Robinson, 2003). Through outwardly directed action – violence, consumption of alcohol or drugs – one can temporarily escape the body, the sensations, the unwanted feelings and the body can be made a more comfortable home to inhabit, if only for a short time (Robinson, 2003). In order to understand gendered and collaged body representations more fully, work from a male-identified co-researcher will now be explored.





Image 4.4. *Late Bloomers*, Nicholas Ridiculous, 2016.

Two collages, together entitled *Late Bloomers* from artist Nicholas Ridiculous use text, bodies, and flowers cut from magazines to convey their messages. Interestingly, this work is one of a minority that depicted multiple bodies within the same image. The harsh quotations in black and white, with a handwritten font contrast to the bright blooming flowers which are always situated behind the individual body. The male body steps upon the quotation “the good, the bad, and the artist”. The collage with this quotation depicts a dark, plain room on the bottom, a black and white chain link fence above to the left, a young cartoon of a woman folding in on herself, and an older male squatting in the flower above the title quote. The flowers suggest outward movement, brightness, positivity, joy, but the physicality of posture presented is anything but. The artist statement defines these images and bodies as the tension between the dark and grimy pasts, “and the beautifully flawed people we are growing into and becoming... We are flawed, we

are beautiful, we are ugly and endangered” (Ridiculous, 2016). So once again this work depicts the negative feelings prevalent through this analysis of feelings so far in this section, situating them in the past, and the positive bloom in the present and future. This present bloom is troubled by flaws, ugliness and being endangered. The use of collage, black and white and colour, shows the complexity of bodies, memories, and feelings. The title *Late Bloomers* references the uneven and differentiated time that former youth in care experience and occupy. Perhaps they are “late” because others did not have the time for them, to stay and keep them in their house, to be open to witnessing a slow unwinding process of trauma that also takes time to move beyond. At a time when 42% of Canadians 20-29 and live with their parents (Statistics Canada, 2015) and former youth in care (depending on the province or territory, are fully independent at 18-25), no wonder the temporality of “blooming” occurs later for former youth in care. A staggering 82% of children in care have diagnosed special needs, be it mental or physical health (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2008), and these serious needs take a significant time and effort to address, and are a huge factor in the multiple placements and disruptions of home and school that youth in care experience.

It is a profound feeling of rejection to be moved to yet another home. The term “placement bouncing” coined by the National Youth in Care Network (2003) implies a springiness and lightness that belies the painfulness of living it. The commonplace phrase used by foster parents, social workers, and group home workers alike to justify moving a young person to another placement is, “it’s just not a good fit” (Snow, 2008). Is it really about fitting in or does the move have more to do with insufficient youth resources and supports? Youth in care can be understood as untimely bodies (St. Pierre and Rodier, 2016), bodies who experience excessive movement because they lack power and experience the uneven cultural forces and politics of temporality that drastically impact their ability to stay in one home (Sharma, 2014). When the

placement is “not a good fit”, the foster parents or group home workers may desire a child or youth who is easier to deal with, who consumes less of their time and energy. This is not to ignore that fact that many youth in care are incredibly difficult to live with, and that some homes are indeed better equipped to deal with youth in crisis than others. Youth in care have high rates of mental health issues (often complex diagnoses), bear the emotional turmoil from their birth home, remember the experiences of placements (both positive and negative), and develop the increasing feeling of rejection that can occur from being moved once again. These above factors are the basis for the negative emotions that were created in the past through movement and lived in the body at present, and that are shown in the portraits and collages described above. The emotions represented by former youth in care such as sadness, hurt, defiance as in *Recognition*, the complexity of the body and identity as displayed through Jessie Stone’s multiple self-portraits, the tragedy in not being heard in with system as shown in *Positive/Negative*, all are backed up by the abundance of research on (not as often *with*) former youth in care.

Youth in care make up 0.5% of the Canadian youth population (Statistics Canada, 2011) yet 68% percent of the youth homeless population have come to the streets from a foster home, group home, or youth centre (Raising the Roof, 2009). These homeless youth are now living in public space but being moved around frequently still, most often through interactions with the police. Of the former youth in care involved in *Moving Home*, 5 of the 15 co-researchers moved during the total 4 weeks of project time, and 3 co-researchers lived in youth shelters. The feelings, emotions and bodies represented in the above artwork grounds this data collection in expected emotional responses from this group of young Canadians with difficult pasts.

The experience and lived reality of placelessness that I am connecting to the embodiment of transience has also been linked to experiences of addiction specific to alcoholics (Gesler, 1992) and a theory that the increasing rates of addiction are a response to rapid societal change and

increasing mobility under neoliberal capitalism (Alexander, 2010). Placelessness, the body in relation to place, and how this illustrates belonging is the second major analytical thread of this chapter. However, feelings and bodies do not exist in isolation, truly feelings are the product of relations and interactions with others, positive and negative, in the past, present and the future. In this upcoming section, the body is considered in relation to other people/bodies, homes and socio-natures. Are the bodies depicted alone or with others? What does alone look like, and who and what are the others? When considering the body in relations, I begin by exploring the body in relation to other people and bodies and then consider where the bodies are located in the art. Particular attention is given to representations and references to homes/lack thereof, since my conception of embodied transience starts with the home. Lastly, I explore the body in relation to socio-natures, as representations of land, nature, the stars, and even the planet and galaxy itself were a strong collective theme that emerged in analysis.

### **4.3 The Body in Relation(s)**

In critical human geography, space is relational (Massey, 2005), and in youth geographies it has been suggested that relationality must be grounded through lived space (Worth, 2015). In this project, the lived space is the body-as-home. *Moving Home* is also framed by Indigenous research methods which acknowledge the relational and honour it, privileging the ontology of humans as social and our social relations flow across multiple networks (Wilson, 2008; Brown & Strega, 2015). Positive, continuous relationships have been shown to be crucial for youth surviving in the child welfare system, as well as continuing to provide support as youth age out of care (Snow, 2013; Snow and Mann-Feder, 2013). Embodiment is posited as inner while transience is most often thought of as an experience that occurs outside the body. Therefore, exploring the inner and the shifting outer landscapes of transience are crucial

dimensions for understanding this ongoing interplay of bodies in motion and the lingering embodied habits that may result. Representation of bodies in relation will be considered in three ways. First, the body in relation to other bodies, as a way to see evidence of connection, belonging, and relationships. When moving home and school frequently it can be difficult to maintain close friendships, especially during the identity-forming childhood and young adulthood years. Second, the spatial dimensions of body with respect to groundedness, wholeness, and fragmentation. Third, the body in relations to landscape and nature. Representations of nature emerged as a very strong theme most notably in the Whitehorse project which where all co-researchers identified as First Nations, Inuit or Metis, but by no means was identification with nature and natural phenomena exclusive to northern and/or Indigenous co-researchers. Representations and identification with the natural world will be explored looking at Indigenous knowledge and ontologies, as well as querying what do former youth in care gain from this identification with nature.

Out of all the art produced that depicted full or partial human bodies, the majority was partial bodies (often from the chest/shoulder up as in *Recognition*, *Positive/Negative*, and Jessie Stone's portraits all described above). Furthermore, these abundant partial bodies were also more likely to be depicted as the only human figure in the image. Of the work that featured individual bodies, 90% were alone. Co-researchers could work in any art medium they wanted, and collaborate with other co-researchers, and yet the co-researchers' bodies were almost always the only human figure in the image. Because co-researchers were asked to value and consider their lived experience as the starting point for exploring the long-term effects of multiple foster and group home placements, this could be why the bodies are so often alone. While embodiment is intimately individual, relationality involves multiple others, and this next work by Bethany Papadopoulos is an excellent example of a grounded, full body that also is filled with partial

bodies.

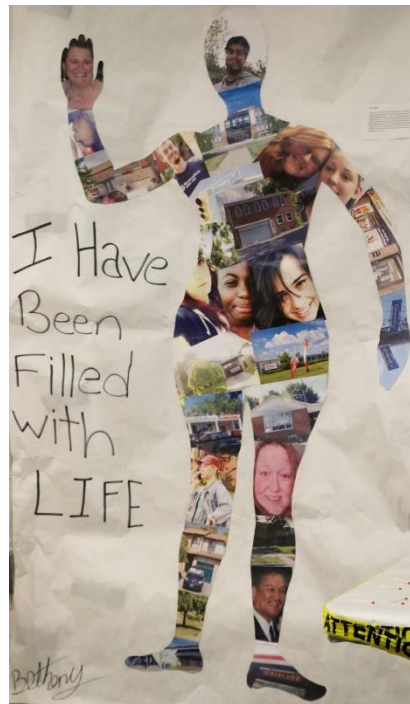


Image 4.5. *Collage*, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016.

Feet hovering above the floor, the body is in fact the traced outline of her body. Inside the contours of the body of the artist are filled with cut and glued photos of group homes and relative's homes and the friends she had in those neighbourhoods. Next to the body is written “I Have Been Filled with Life”. One of the few robustly positive depictions of embodied transience is also a profoundly personal expression of relationality, as this body is presented as a container for all these relationships and memories. The artist statement connects transience, relationality, and art-making to freedom. “Why am I an artist?<sup>2</sup> Because I like to make art for the people who don't know how to express themselves as freely as I have learned to. I like to make people feel things that they don't know how to feel. Being an artist has individualized me as a person, and

---

2. Why am I an artist, was one of the prompt questions for the artist statement creation workshop. The workshop outline and worksheet are attached in Appendix C

given me a unique take on my experiences and reality. Through my transience, I have discovered new places and embodied a new persona. I have met people who have changed my lives forever, just as I have influenced many relative lives forever. Through my ventures and exploration, I have found myself; I have found a person I am proud of and I have discovered a home for myself, in myself. I cannot be kicked out, go AWOL from or be abandoned at or leave the home that I have created for myself through all of the experiences I have encountered. Why am I an artist? Because I am free. (Papadopoulos, 2016)". Bethany's body-collage was one of very few visual art pieces that depicted homes.

Art mediums are so different in terms of time and effort, and individual artistic practices vary (e.g., writing and recording a full song with backup singers, a drawing, a collage). I alternate between analyzing frequency of thematic content in all the works produced and explained through percentage, and through measuring how many co-researchers engaged with a specific theme, in an effort to equally value the contributions and production of knowledge. Some co-researchers were quite prolific in their artistic production, and others created one single piece during the two weeks of the project. The theme of homes represented is defined by a visual depiction of a standard North American dwelling, be it a house, apartment, or a room. With regards the presence of homes in the collective body of work in *Moving Home*, 3 out of 15 co-researchers visually depicted a home or room from the inside, or explored/represented what goes on in group homes. The presence of homes depicted visually from the outside was also quite low, with only 1 co-researcher portraying homes from the outside, and in a critical way, mocking the idea of home produced by moving around so much. When considering homes referenced in performance and musical works, engagement with the theme of home is defined by use of words such home, house, and room. A total of 3 co-researchers referenced home lyrically/in spoken word. Altogether, nearly half of the co-researchers depicted or referenced home, and this included

explicitly portraying the lack thereof that they were still searching for. Interestingly, the performance and musical works, of which there were 5 in total, had a much higher engagement with the idea of home than the visual works, even though visual works outnumbered performance by a ratio of 6 to 1. There were 36 total works (many of which were series) produced in *Moving Home*, 9 artworks/performances engaged with representations or references to a home. Home, a concept co-researchers used for less than a third of work, is not necessary to represent embodied transience, because it is the absence of a place and a home that produces the feelings and habit of it. Former youth in care are known to experience a lack of belonging due to frequent moves of homes and schools (Snow, 2013). As bodies, as explained in *The Feeling Body*, are almost always depicted as partial and alone, and most of the work does not spatially ground bodies in or in front of a home, where are these bodies placed, spatially and relationally?

Bodies while alone in human form, frequently were shown exist in relation to nature, and nature was very often closely intertwined with culture. Nature here is defined as landscapes of forest, mountains and the presence of animals and plants. Nature even extends to the clouds, stars, the planet, and the galaxy as referenced by the co-researchers. As the Indigenous identity of the co-researchers was nearly half (7 of 15), it is important to consider their relationship to land as land is a critical component of cultural practices and identity. In what follows, the work of three Indigenous co-researchers is analyzed with particular consideration given to the interplay of nature-culture body-nature.





Image 4.6. *Thoughts* (left) and *Inner Workings*, Michelle Charlie, 2016

Michelle’s pencil crayon drawing, titled *Inner Workings*, is described in the artist statement as, “my secret room of my inner workings of everything, what I feel, what I see everywhere, on everything”. This room is floating in space, with arrows in all different directions depicting movement. There are plants, flowers and the drawing has been done from several different perspectives, so something is always upside down, or tilted. Skulls are present as well, as a partial female form. The background of the room is blue and as it moves upwards on the page becomes, the moon and stars. The room of inner workings has several sections including a tiny door to a cinder block basement (which seemingly depicts graves with smiling faces on it), a bed, and a grey giant hole in the floor, with black downward facing arrows opening up into the rest of the drawing. A pink room with sunflowers swirling around sits above the cold basement called “la la la land”, and alludes to daydreaming as a way of inner workings. Daydreaming is another theme that emerged in the works of art produced by co-researchers and will be discussed in

greater detail in Chapter 5. *Inner workings* is a title that is active and present-timed. The title is not saying inner mind, or inside my head, or my bedroom in care. Rather this drawing is a sharing of inner processes, and this room is described as a secret in the artist statement, even though shared through art in this project. Blue is use by the artist because it represents such a spectrum of emotions, baby blue, happy sky blue and depressing dark rain which they mention in their artist statement. The viewer does not know whether this room represents a foster home, a childhood bedroom, or an artistic fusion of real and imagined; whatever the source of inspiration for this room, much can be gleaned from the relationality of this space. Michelle Charlie's work is an excellent representation of the body in space and the body connected to nature. In her other pencil crayon drawing, entitled *Thoughts*, a youth-elf exists like most bodies from the chest up, with a small smiling wolf face behind it. This artist uses wolves in several of their pieces, as they are part of the Wolf Clan of the Kaska First Nation. With regards to landscape, in this case there is no background colour or horizon line; rather the line of the page exists as the edge of the drawing, but the wolf is spatially behind the youth. The artist statement implores that the youth-elf is sad about the state of the world, "My drawing is sometimes on what I think and how I might or want to live my life in this world. The overflowing emotion in this youth's eyes told me the world's secrets and struggles, no one is safe, no one is in danger. We are all one." Michelle's drawing, *Thoughts*, represents the feeling body, but also a body feeling in relation to the world. This wolf represents a fusion of identity, culture and nature, reinforcing humanity's wholeness.

Continuing with the representations of wolves and First Nations Clan identity, and the interplay between culture, nature, and bodies, considering what is not-human but represents human(s) in Indigenous culture is filled with nuances. A human body depicted with an animal body of their clan from a First Nation's is not alone in the same sense as a solitary portrait. An animal body painted alone without background, or a horizon line, is also alone yet imbued with

the culture, history and memory of many. Artist Rachel MacIntosh created one such painting during the project and that was done in a Northwest Coast style. This style of art uses form lines, and curved shapes including ovoids, U shapes and S shapes. Mainly used by Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Kwakiutl, and increasingly Coast Salish peoples, art produced in a Northwest Coast style primarily depicts real and fantastical animals, often placed within each other, using the colours red and black, and sometimes yellow and blue (Holm, 1965).

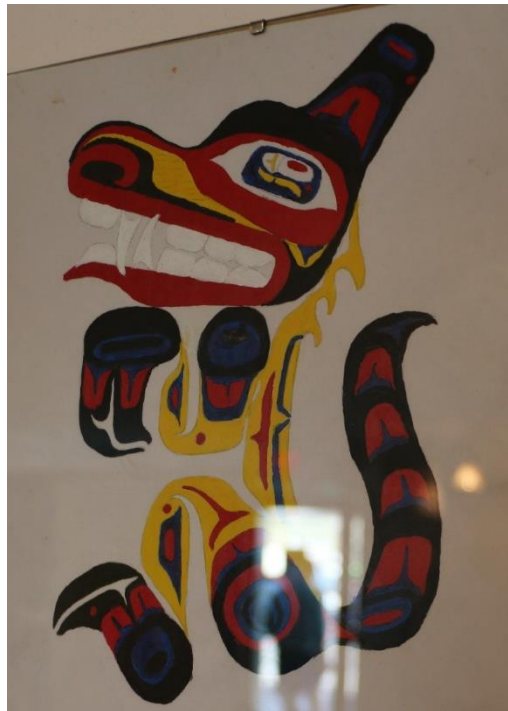


Image 4.7. *Wolf*, Rachel MacIntosh, 2016.

Rachel's' artist statement was brief, referencing her culture, stating succinctly that, “I chose my piece because the wolf is my culture. I used acrylic paints and worked with the movement of the art materials.” The process of “choosing” for Rachel also involved searching for Northwest Coast style images on the internet and then modifying them as an artist, using an outline then making it specific. This was done predominantly through changing the colours, the location, bodies and presentation of smaller animals that exist inside the larger wolf body. This

this way of working is taught locally at the Northern Cultural Expressions Carving studio. While in First Nations culture collectively certain art and songs are considered proprietary (Evans & Boswell, 1999), in this work, because the artist is significantly modifying the presentation of the animal, this way of working is more about developing a practice.

I am broadly interpreting a variety of imagery in the collective body of art in *Moving Home* such as the moon, stars, planets, clouds, comets, forests, and mountains as nature and the natural world. Animals, due to their clan reference in First Nations culture, are a separate subset of natural imagery that is profoundly cultural in identification. Of note, the images of nature portrayed all corresponded to the actual landscapes in and surrounding the places of the research, Whitehorse and Toronto. For example, neither the ocean nor the desert are represented in any of the work. However, vaster representations of the natural world such as the planet, the moon, and the stars were present in both co-researcher groups. Clear identification with the stars as described by Toronto co-researcher Elijah is not only a relation expressed by Indigenous-identified co-researchers. This excerpt below is from a spoken word performance by Elijah M, which was co-presented with a painting.

Lucifer fell to hell on a shooting star  
 that is the fate of anyone who questions authority  
 but my veins mimic the earth  
 I carry flame and force and will  
 stars go dim, planets erode, galaxies disintegrate  
 one day I will shed these earthbound bones  
 and return to a home cast in starlight  
 but for now  
 I will devote myself to proving my mother right  
 by channeling the awe and the might of the stars.



Image 4.8. *Cosmic Diaspora*, (in-progress pic) Elijah M, 2016

The artist describes their intention and practice in this project as instinctual: “I challenged myself to come back to a medium that I experienced trauma in through my journey through youth homes. The invisible themes are self-forgiveness, letting go of expectations, and just allowing myself and my art to be what they are: imperfect, perhaps unfinished. I used spoken word to inspire an oil painting which reflects the birth story my mother told me growing up. I was always told I fell from a moonbeam into a potato patch; which was probably a reference to my ginger hair and Irish heritage on my father's side, whereas all my siblings had black or dark brown hair. It was both endearing and distancing, which falls into pattern with the rest of my mother's emotional responses: polar opposites and no grey area. As I grew older the distance increased until I finally was moved into the youth care system, which is reflected in the space between cosmic bodies.” In this work, titled *Cosmic Diaspora*, the artist identifies with the stars because of the familial story of birth, and decided to use the visual representations of space as distance. As space itself as incredibly distant, truly the furthest one can be away from another on earth, the use of space in this multimedia work is all about emotional distance and the distance is huge, and

cold. By using a story that defines them as an outsider, in diaspora even within their own family in the child welfare system, and making it into a positive through identification with the natural, the last two lines of the poem above compellingly posit the benefits of identification with natural forces as a way to feel powerful.

Nature and vast natural forces such as the stars, the galaxy, the moon, the planet Earth, as well as representation of the local landscapes respective to each co-researcher group in Toronto and Whitehorse, emerged as such an interesting and unexpected theme throughout this arts-based research project. In Whitehorse, the musician Beats Planet Kid has images of stars and a galaxy on his album cover, and Starchild Dreaming Loud used a background of stars for *Positive/Negative*, Michelle Charlie's *Inner Workings* has a background of stars, and also depicts the moon. Furthermore, the only artist who chose to identify as Anonymous drew a planet, mentioned the cloud and a higher order in the Whitehorse group piece which was the production of academic certificates, entitled *Knowledge Production*. Out of the 5 co-researcher certificates in *Knowledge Production*, one depicted a wolf, one the mountains, and one the planet and clouds. In Toronto, there is Elijah's work as discussed above, the hopeful images of a forested road turning from black and white into colour from and her mixed media painting of the cloud and stars from Sophia Nahz, the healing jewelry using specific stones and feathers designed by Singing Thunder, and the flowers blooming in Nicholas Ridiculous's *Late Bloomers* collages as some but not all of the representations of nature.





Image 4.9. *Knowledge Production*, Yukon Co-Researcher Group Project, 2016 (Note wolf, planet and mountain imagery).

What is meant by the co-researchers collectively connecting themselves to something larger and temporally vast as earth systems, the planets, and the stars, and socio-natures (Swyngedouw, 1996)? The galaxy, the planet, and the stars and are vast moving constants, even mountains emerge and erode over time. Are former youth in care, through the habit of embodied transience turning to identify with the largest spatial home possible, that also is always moving?

In research with young people concerning ideas of home, and leisure activities in a globalized and technologically connected world, an idealisation of nature emerges as a place for leisure that permits quiet reflection (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001). What can we learn from the frequently hypermobile former youth in care in an increasingly technologically dependent and seemingly fast-paced world (Basar, Coupland & Obrist 2015; Evans & Reid, 2014). The multiple representations of the vast expanse of the universe by co-researchers suggest

a recognition of something new in this idea of embodied transience – a scalar reach that extends beyond the earth itself to its place in the universe. This identification with outer space might be about defining home as a broader, the broadest, idea of home that is always there, and always moving as well. Harvey (2000), linked the flourishing of research and interest on the body and globalization occurring simultaneously as a way to ground discourse against the forces of neoliberal capitalism. Through a nuanced understanding of the body as a site of resistance, (Butler, 2014) the body as existing in spatial and temporal relations must be grounded, even when the concern in this case is on repeated movement of the body becoming an embodied habit. I turn next to exploring the movement aspect and expressions of embodied transience, as former youth in care are moving on individual paths, yet within unique social worlds and imaginaries.

#### **4.4 Movement: Freedom, Forgetting, and Hope**

In the first round of data analysis, many qualities of movement expressed in the art produced were considered. These included querying the forms of movement, speed, fluidity, and colours used to represent it. Questions were raised about how the quality of movement was represented, and what the choice of medium contributed to the expression of movement? While the mobilities paradigm values studying movement for movement's sake (Sheller & Urry, 2006), it is important to consider with reference to embodied transience, what is one moving from, with, and towards? When is the movement depicted, and what is the sense of time and place connected to this movement? Studying the emotional directionality and differences in temporality of embodied transience allows for a greater understanding of the lived and felt experience. After considering the many qualities of movement as described above, what emerged from my interpretation of the works of art were not statements concerning speed, fluidity, or quality of movement. Instead, movement can be seen clearly in the art as feelings and states of being, in line



with the original intention of seeking to better understand the emotional geographies of former youth in care at the scale of the body in the present.

Because the events that co-researchers were asked to reflect upon occurred in the past, the temporal dimension remains central to analysis, as does the idea of untimely bodies. Different bodies experience the many temporalities of modern life as widely varied as sensuous leisure or as a stressful weight upon the chest (Sharma, 2014). The cumulative foster and group home placements that sculpt embodied transience are of course selectively remembered, and we are more likely to remember the bad instances in our lives than the benign and mundanely positive (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Neither every day in care nor every new placement is necessarily traumatic, but the trauma is more likely to be remembered than the mundane everyday practices and routines. The present thoughts about the past, are part of specific stories we tell ourselves and others as we perform our identities, and these ongoing narratives change and are socially constructed (Pasupathi, 2001), which means that the art produced through exploration of personal narratives has been influenced by the collective nature of the research process. While art produced in arts-based research is presented as a finished product, it is always created in a particular place at a particular time (Williams, 1977). Furthermore, adding the element of temporality to the body carrying (and repeating with or without awareness of the process) the experiences of frequent socio-geographic movement is potentially another embodied manifestation or expression of the compression of space and time as defined by Harvey (1990), critiqued and expanded upon by Massey's theory of power-geometry (1994). Thus, an attention to how the future is alluded to emotionally through the art is crucial because it is in this present/future where embodied transience as a habit is actually touchable and can be altered, strengthened, relaxed and/or observed.

Movement towards the future emerged through the art presented as a way to forget the

pain of the past. Movement was described as an action full of hope in artist statements, song lyrics, and spoken word, actively seeking a better place to be. This hopeful socio-geographic movement aligns strongly with the colloquial phrase “geography cure” as coined by the Alcoholics Anonymous founder, Bill W. (1946). This “cure” refers to the idea that all will better if one (frequently someone with a substance addiction) can simply move to a new place and have a fresh start. The Alcoholics Anonymous community also terms this process of frequent movement “addiction geographical”. Their teachings support the idea that wherever you go, there you are, thus a fresh start and freedom from addiction in this sense begins from within. When considering embodied transience and the practice of it, by externalizing the problems and emotional issues as other and outside the body, the body is in complex tension between what it knows and is comfortable with (frequent moves, being new, novelty) and the emotional depth, intimacy, and connection that staying in one place demands. There is nothing especially unique about romanticizing the future, and other locations. The phrase, the grass is always greener on the other side is a tired cliché, yet it still can ring true. However, when connected to an escape from a traumatic past that involved frequent movement and the repeated practice of frequent movement in the present, this is more than a basic human cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962). Movement as *freedom-from*, representing freedom from the past as in forgetting, and avoidance of emotional intimacy by starting over again again through novelty of moves, travel, relationships is one significant form of movement expressed thematically in the work. Movement as *freedom-to*, in this case freedom as hope for a better home, a home, a better life in the future in a is the other significant emotional attachment to time. These emotional temporalities can occur simultaneously in a person, and an art piece. Freedom has been defined by Bogues (2012) as a process, as a lived practice that never fully materializes for the oppressed. With this in mind, expressions of movement as freedom are understood and explored below with several examples from the

Toronto and Whitehorse co-researcher groups, as well as my own personal experience.



Image 4.10 *Patched Skirt*, Amelia Merhar, 2016

I wore the patched skirt depicted in Image 4.9 for a year and a half, while I was a street kid in 2005-2007 from Montreal to Vancouver, down to Los Angeles, across the southern States to New Orleans, up to Milwaukee, over the New England and back to Toronto. It is a tactile example of embodied transience, and the punk aesthetic of it strongly connects to movement as freedom. The skirt is one of my most valued items from my past. I have kept it for over a decade, wondering what to do with it. The skirt only became art by my decision to display it publicly with an artist statement. During the process of collective research in Toronto I realized I did not need to create a piece, I already had one. The punk clothing aesthetic tries to free itself from the restrictions of mainstream society – a 9-to-5 job, a mortgage, bills to pay, and familial responsibilities. The patches represent a politics of freedom from and disdain for conventional consumer society, a desire to identify as different, and to re-use and fix things instead of throwing

them away. Particular patches represent places I have been (New Orleans post-Katrina, a moose in Vermont, railroad patches from rail lines I have hopped), gifts of fabric from friends and lovers, and favourite brands of alcohol. The patches crowd this skirt, held together by dirt and dental floss (the preferred sewing medium for punk patches as it can be burned instead of tied, is very strong, and is given out for free at drop-in centres). While clothes protect the body, when one wears a single item every day, that item becomes part of one's identity – almost like a second skin. Through wearing certain patches in a certain way, other punks can tell things about each other before they even speak. To put a patch on a piece of clothing that does not actually have a hole is frowned upon socially, unless done in a particular manner in a particular areas and items of clothing. The worn-ness and the level of patches then in this skirt attest to how well-used and authentic this skirt is. In the traveling crust punk community I was a part of, “housies” (who are punk-presenting youth with homes) were derided for their lack of being a real punk by falsely portraying the street lifestyle with unearned patches and pre-made punk clothing. Essentially, for buying into the image of punk but not the politics, thus missing the point of the subculture entirely (Clark, 2003). Crust and street punks exist in overlapping tensions between living on the excesses and or remnants of capitalism (e.g., dumpster diving, food banks, spare change, social assistance) and critiquing it. Through mocking what one does not have, in a sense the punk is seeking to reject mainstream society (as they define it) before it rejects them. The crust punk scene in particular has been explored as a social imaginary of “apocalyptic rhetoric and dystopian performatives” (Roby, 2013). The patched skirt, an expression of punk aesthetic, then is a solid representation of movement as freedom-from social expectation.



Image 4.11. *Untitled*, M.T. Ness, 2016

An artist in the Toronto project also worked using textile patches on a vest and pants, only these patches were particular to the metal bands they listened to. In the metal music community, the placement of the patches on a vest indicates a lot about the person, including the bands that have influenced them the most. The metal patched vest is what one wears all the time, every day, and especially to metal shows. The vests can be called battle vests (Clifford-Napoleone, 2015) (referencing moshing at shows as the battle), though from my personal experience in this scene that term is not often used in the crust and traveler subculture.

In this artist's work, there is the metal band vest, which states music influences to the

outside world, and the patched pants that represent how the artist lives. The patches on the pants are more functional than aesthetic, it is an aesthetic, political and economic choice to patch clothing in a visible location. The choice of materials, in this case leather are used to ensure longevity of the pants. The extent of patches needed to maintain the pants represents their extent of use, and this demonstrates the movement of freedom-from restrictions of conventional society in the lifestyle of traveling subculture. However, homeless and traveler youth are not simply reacting to poverty, homelessness and in this case interaction with the child welfare system. Many of these youth are actively seeking adventure, while often replicating patterns of transience from their childhood.

Travel to new places can be a form of distraction. Time is spent getting to know a new place rather than staying and learning to work through personal and emotional conflict. “Adventure only occurs when tensions have become so violent that they gain mastery over the material through which they realize themselves” (Simmel, 1997 p.232,). Adventure of the body in motion provides an escape, and intense feelings of aliveness (1997). In migration research (Lankenau et al, 2008) this particular traveler sub-group of the homeless population, turned out to be an unintended 60% of the sample population. Transience was never considered as self-directed, and movement for the sake of movement. Instead, Lankenau et al. (2008, p. 73) concluded that these youth only traveled to escape police, seek money and better drugs, even when direct quotations from youth suggested otherwise: “Being on a train in the middle of nowhere and you got nothing on this side, nothing on that, side, the only thing that’s been touched is the railroad tracks you’re on. And you look up in the sky and you’re in the middle of nowhere and there’s a million stars. I just like the scenery and the beauty of this country”. This quotation clearly showcases the adventure, and the freedom-from restrictions of society, and freedom-to of possibility in the traveler subculture.

These textiles of travel are strong examples of freedom-from and freedom-to. With the addition of the adventure of travel, and the thrills and feelings that intense experiences such as hitchhiking and train-hopping provide, movement is not merely reactive or comforting, but a thing to do for itself. Frequent movement cannot all be characterized as “freedom from”; it is debatable how free one really is, existing on panhandling, squeegeeing and drop-in centres just to survive. Co-researchers also referenced the frequent moves and traveling of transient life as negative, and as a way to forget the past, which is really another form of freedom from, and freedom towards a future where they feel better.

The nuances of transience and freedom are many within this particular population of former youth in care. In *Streams*, a powerful spoken word piece from the Toronto co-researcher Zula, she plays with this idea of movement as forgetting, but says it is an unsuccessful effort. With the line “the ways of the wind ain't freeing me”, she describes the trap of embodied transience – trying to be free but still full of negative memories of the past. Directly following this line, she says:

my momma gripped the bottle and daddy tried to kill me  
who to trust when the wise ones become the children

when you're hungry,  
abandoned  
in the wild

it's a strange world  
and it's a battle

I see you  
I wish you seen yourself

you say things you don't mean just to walk  
over bodies  
to smile is to show weakness



Image 4.12. *Streams* -Live Performance Still-, Zula, 2016

While there is so much to focus on in this powerful piece, starting from “the ways of the wind ain’t freeing me” and moving to “I see you (pause), I wish you seen yourself (pause),” this lament for a past self who was caught up in traumatic memories is not necessarily the forgetting aspect of movement as freedom-from. This actually represents a self-awareness concerning movement as a flawed practice of freedom (Bogues, 2012). The strength of the younger self that the present self can see in the present moment and wants to share, because they think it's worth being said, in public, on a microphone in a packed room. The spoken word performance concluded with the line, “you are safe in your body”. Saying one is safe in one's body however is a different practice from emotionally feeling that way.

In this example *Streams*, movement is a way to appear to be tough, to do battle, and to survive in a hard world. Movement as freedom-from a difficult past is not moving forward



emotionally. This revealing spoken word piece troubles the power (as expressed by the punk traveler) subculture as freedom-from as adventurous, by referencing the hard realities of movement and the ongoing process of the past intersecting with the present. The next photographic series also demonstrates a sensitive self-awareness of the emotionality of the past in the present, using staged photos to explore and portray the landscapes of home as related to movement.

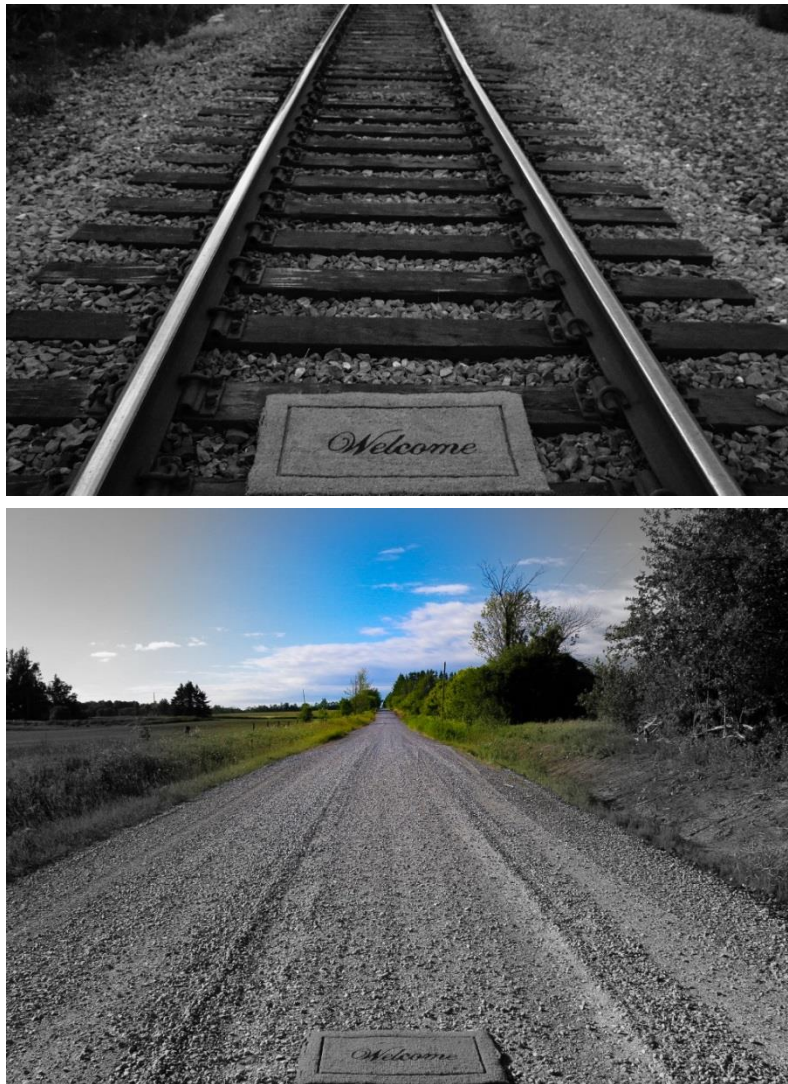


Image 4.13. *Welcome Home Series 1, & 5 (of 5)*, Sophia Nahz, 2016

The second photo series from artist Sophia Nahz, *Welcome Home*, indicates the types of landscapes that could all be home but are not really. Home presented is anywhere, nowhere, airports, abandoned houses, train tracks, by placing a welcome mat in these locations. The simplicity and familiarity of a welcome mat on less than welcoming landscapes illustrates the type of relationship to home(s) that placement bouncing produces. The welcome mat is always placed at the bottom of the frame, in the centre. There are five photos in this series, four black and white and the last image a centre of colour appears, off in the future, down the road in the distance. There is a light and that light is placed in nature, ahead, at the end the final piece and that is when things hopefully get better in the future.

Nahz's (2016) artist statement describes the emotional experience and struggle “Whilst in care, I was forced to see a lot of different places as home. I was welcome where nobody should have slept, I was welcome to travel to the next place, I was welcome to four walls and a roof which would house nothing but abandonment. I was always welcome. The thought that I would one day find a place worthy of being welcomed to was the only thought that carried me. Travelling between these 'homes' came hand in hand with a magnitude of emotions, which I eventually became passive to. That apathy served we well ten years ago, but for my present, it does nothing but hinder me. *To see movement as passive is welcomed when on the move. To see stability as an oddity once your roots are down, that just lays ground for chaos*” (emphasis added). The artist statement and imagery exemplifies many themes of analysis, including hope for the future, positive depiction of nature, and a self-awareness of the emotional turbulence of embodied transience. Nahz's next and final photo series continues to use images of nature, and corresponds to earlier discussions of the dominant representations of bodies by female-identified co-researchers, and framed as portraiture.



Image 4.14, *Start, Go, & Land*, Sophia Nahz, 2016

Nahz's third black and white photo series is a poem about movement with images, entitled *Start, Go, Search, Fall, Land*. *Start* corresponds to a photo of a tree looking upwards; *Go* with a rearview side mirror from a car; *Search* with a partial shot of the top of a house; *Fall* with raindrops suspended on a railing with bars; and *Land* with a closeup selfie of the artist. From the artist statement Nahz explains the inner difficulties of embodied transience as the past is conflated with the present, "every day, I battle the white noise I carry from my past as it tries to distort my present. To find happiness is not the same as allowing yourself to experience happiness. To have a home is not the same as being content to live in it. When I am home, I am happy. When I am happy, I'll let you know", (2016). One of the emotional tensions of embodied transience is letting oneself feel okay in one place, and feeling comfortable in potentially learning to stay. Home as a singular place and the finding of it is often placed by former youth in care in the temporality of the future. In Nahz's photographic check-in at the beginning of this chapter, the action of finding home is placed in the future, as the artist statement to *Recognition* concludes with saying (with reference to all former youth in care), "May they all find their homes and their peace".

The movements of former youth in care are complex, in direction, motivation, and temporality. Seeing freedom as an ongoing practice (Bogues, 2012), and the embodiment of transience as an (dis)embodied habit (Coy, 2009), within the politics of mobility (Cresswell, 2010), allows for a new way of considering the frequent movements of former youth in care as not merely subjects of poverty and oppression, but active agents in their increased mobilities, living with varying plateaus of self-awareness as to why the moving of home is not an emotionally neutral or circumstantial occurrence. With the concept of movement as freedom-from; these artists are reacting against the child welfare system and difficult life circumstances, and movement takes them away, through forgetting and spatial distance and newness. With the

concept of freedom-to, hope is also strongly present, movement is not only in direct response and directionality away from the child welfare system, but rather toward a home and a hopeful life in the future, similar to the geography cure as outlined by AA (W, 1946). This frequent movement can sometimes hold an element of liveliness and adventure, as exemplified by the punk traveler subculture. The understanding that bodies in motion stay in motion until the force of resistance slows them down is Isaac Newton's First Law of Motion. The analyses stated above then is not radically new, but does uniquely focus on the emotional and embodied scale of past movements of home as experienced in the present and where they are placed in the imaginaries of the future for former youth in care in Canada.

#### **4.5 Summary and Conclusion**

The emotions performed by the bodies in the art produced in *Moving Home*, while varied, were predominantly negative, reinforcing the dire projected outcome for former youth in care. A gendered representation of bodies in art also emerged, with female-identified co-researchers using the imagery and language of the body at a rate of more than 2-1. Additionally, bodies were frequently illustrated as complex and layered – collage and multiple portraits of self in a single series were common ways of expressing nuances, conflicting emotions, tensions of embodied transience.

Bodies were frequently alone in terms of the human figures present in the work, though this could be due in part to co-researchers entering the work through their own lived experience. The presence of nature and in particular an identification with nature as a moving constant outside the body, often seen with imagery of stars, the planet, the moon, and the galaxy, was a surprisingly theme that emerged collectively from the group. This theme suggests that former youth in care are identifying with the largest home possible – the universe – as a way to ground

themselves against not feeling at home in a particular place, and this speaks interestingly to Harvey's idea of the surge in embodiment research and literature connecting to globalized capitalism (2000).

Movement represented and described in art was a mix of freedom-from the child welfare system and a traumatic past, freedom-to follow one's dreams, adventurous travel, and a hopeful pursuit of a better life. Movement forward was sometimes directly described as seeking a home placed temporally in the future. The optimism that former youth in care have of one day finding a place that they can and will call home will be discussed in the next chapter, as hope emerged as fuel for resilience which is practiced consciously by former youth in care as a form of resistance.

#### *4.6 Check-out: Hope and Wanting.*

*Consider something you are hopeful for, that you have been wanting badly for a long time. Years. Notice how you feel in your body emotionally as you consider this hope and wanting. Now, stretch out your arms, reaching forward towards this hope of yours. Hold this pose. How does it feel to physically take up the pose and stretch yourself in wanting? Does this physical awareness change anything for you?*

**CHAPTER FIVE:**  
**RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE: INDIGENOUS ONTOLOGIES & PRACTICES**  
**TOWARDS HOPEFUL FUTURES**



Image 5.0. Moving Home Art Show, Whitehorse, YT, *Emotional Geographies of the Yukon*, Amelia Merhar and Gen Gagnon, 2016

### 5.1 Check-In: Body of Water

*This check in was done with the co-researchers, and it was a great activity to get a visual feel for where each person was at that morning. Reading is a solitary activity, so replicating the check-in here doesn't translate as well as in group work. However, it is still a part and process of the work that facilitated the art in Moving Home and helps the reader get a feel for the practice. If you were to describe your present state of mind as a body of water, what body of water would you be? And where would you be? A pond, a tidal wave, a waterfall, a mud puddle, an ocean?*

### 5.2 Introduction

Resilience is the skill of bouncing back from adversity, shock, and trauma. The concept was originally used in systems ecology to describe the ability of ecosystems to respond to adverse events (Holling, 1973). Resilience is now used to describe activities and projects as broad as self-care and coping workshops (York University, 2016), a manner of engineering (Woods, Leveson, & Hollnager, 2006) and caring geographies and city planning (Lawson, 2009). Resilience as a personal social capacity is not an uncontested term, and critiques of it are often in a neoliberal context including neoliberal downloading, the subject shaping themselves instead of focus on positive, inclusive systemic changes (Evans and Reid, 2014). A main critique of resilience highlights the politics of asking the people with the least power to adapt to and do even more work.

While I agree with these critiques of resilience, I still use the term because my background in community development has taught me to look for the successes within adverse social and economic situations (Heath & Heath, 2010, Sirolli, 1999). These successes can be studied and potentially expanded upon, as they are locally-developed ways of practice that already work. In this case, former youth in care who are doing well can offer crucial and needed



information on how to best support this group of vulnerable young adults now and into the future. In this research, resilience is understood as the ability of young people who have had difficult life circumstances to beat the negative statistic that are projected for them. Survival and creating a life that is somewhat stable, healthy, and creative in a compassionate and self-aware way, using a variety of embodied practices and habits. Resilience as seen in *Moving Home* is actively tied to hope, the practice of it, and the belief in a better future. What is particularly interesting in the references and presentations of resilience in *Moving Home* are that they are not exclusively tied to a hopeful future. Instead, resilience is often grounded as an act of resistance. The body and its dreams, actions and hopes are depicted as resisting the state child welfare system through various ways including; defying it, leaving it, trying to forget and/or proving it wrong. This defiance is thematically strong in the works discussed below, using artistic mediums as diverse as silkscreened t-shirts, hip-hop, and dream-catchers. This begs an interesting question that I do not yet have the answer for: is resilience stronger when grounded in resistance? Or weaker, because it is caught up in a battle?

In order to understand resilience as resistance, querying the vulnerability of resistance (Butler, 2014) gets closer to teasing out the meaning of this practice. Resistance is a way of mobilizing vulnerability, and creating more power, often by the strength in numbers, such as protests, petitions, and direct actions. Winning a political battle doesn't mean one is no longer vulnerable though. Resistance is practiced on an individual and collective level in various ways, from self-care as warfare (Lorde, 1988) to actual warfare. In resilience as resistance, which comes first? According to Butler, vulnerability comes first, contrary to other ideas of resistance (2014). Poverty, dispossession, and displacement lead up to the mobilizing of resistance. On the scale of the body, resilience and resistance are tangled up and alive. The body is the only capital that poor people have, and thus the only bank they can withdraw from in terms of sleep, food, and the time

needed for self-care practices (Diego, 2016). The body and embodiment then is a crucial site to explore in terms of resistance and how it is practiced. In seeking to reduce vulnerability, Butler asks us to question how the body works and to strive to understand particular embodiments of resistance (2014).

If we accept that part of what a body is, is dependent upon other bodies, then resilience as resistance becomes relational, expansive and reflexive. Caring geographies and emotional acknowledge this connectivity quite well (Atkinson, 2013; Smith, Davidson, Cameron, & Bondi, 2009) and while they have yet to focus on youth in care as a research population, many insights from work with other communities inform the analysis in this chapter. It is important to emphasize that ideals of autonomy as wholly independent bodies is to treat bodies as masculinist infrastructure (Butler, 2014). Using feminist and Indigenous research methodologies that value relationality, lived experience, and the goal that research as a good practice should change oneself as a researcher (Wilson, 2008), this chapter teases out the social reproduction connected to embodied transience.

Beginning with Indigenous ontologies and representations I explore expressions of resilience as resistance in *Moving Home*. The first section focuses on the prevalence of Indigenous culture present in the work of former youth in care as Indigenous ontologies of resilience as resistance, not merely resisting the state in terms of child welfare, but as a much longer and ongoing resistance against the state and colonization. Separated into two major themes, urban isolation/alienation and practices of resilience as resistance, a comparative analysis of the two sites Toronto and Whitehorse is interwoven throughout the chapter. The second section explores resilience as resistance in both projects, with sub-sections discussing self-care practices, focusing on the emergent theme of daydreaming and hope. It is hope that fuels resilience, and hope that helps to realize it. Hope too is explored critically, as hope is not merely pure, innocuous

and good. It can hurt to hope too hard, too long, and sometimes the attachment of and to hope is delusional (Berlant, 2011). The final sub-section explores the enactment of hope among former youth in care and giving back to other youth in care as a potential practice of an ethics of care (Lawson, 2007; Sevenhuijsen, 1998), placing the *Moving Home* project itself as a manifestation of that. Using the contributions from the zine and the data illustrating that young people in care tend to become activists for former youth in care, this practice of giving back is examined critically, querying not only the current youth in care who benefit, but the actual emotional release, connection and belonging that result from trying to build a community where community through placement bouncing has been so very fractured. In this sense the *Moving Home* project, coordinated by a former youth in care is seen as a collective manifestation of resilience as resistance.

### **5.3 Indigenous Ontologies & Resilience as Resistance**

Emergent in the work of the Yukon fieldwork were expressions of the galaxy, the land, the stars, the planets, and numerous representations of wolves. It is common for non-Indigenous researchers to pose research questions to Indigenous communities, and then have responses that reference connections to the land, culture and nature, as “Indigenous knowledge is interrelated with territory, kinship, identity, governance, economy and education” (Altamirano-Jimenez & Kermoal 2016, 3). This illustrates the profound difference of a knowledge system, and a value system. Conflict can develop between non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities particularly when non-Indigenous researchers seek to categorize and objectify traditional knowledge (Kendrick, 2003).

Pualani Louis, (2007) outlines the use of Indigenous knowledge and how the academy can make space for this discourse, including how non-Indigenous researchers can respectfully

incorporate them into their work with Indigenous communities. Johnson and Murton (2007) analyze Indigenous geographies and stress that representations of nature must not be analyzed within an exclusively Western framework. Not only is there still academic discussion of how to respect, incorporate and facilitate co-existence for Indigenous Knowledge with Western epistemology (McGregor, 2004), the knowledge that has been produced has privileged the male voice and experience for decades, thus reproducing only a fragment of traditional knowledge, epistemology and ontology (Altamirano-Jimenez & Kermoal, 2016). Altamirano-Jimenez and Kermoal emphasize that while there are broad similarities within Indigenous Knowledge, the local and the land are so crucial to shaping this knowledge that the work of the Yukon First Nations, Inuit and Metis artist co-researchers must be situated particular to their cultural communities, First Nations, and clan.

Given the serious emotional nature of being in foster care and group homes, attention to shifts in public discourse about Indigenous subjects from the colonized to the victim (Million, 2013), is necessary. Million explores the premise of the therapeutic nation in the Canadian Indigenous context, warning us to not view Indigenous suffering and the public sharing of it through ideas of victimhood alone, which is a distraction from ongoing settler-colonial relations, issues of power and land (Coulthard, 2014; Million 2013). Such work without awareness could perpetuate a portrayal of wounded victimhood without actually questioning or challenging power relations. A shift in research practices with regards to accepting multiplicities of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, and questioning how care is given and received in communities and publics can further elucidate the complexities of embodied knowledge stemming from difficult experiences of multiple placements in the child welfare system.

*Yuuyaraq: The way of the human being* by Harold Napoleon is a booklet that powerfully explains that it is truly the great death, the loss of people, and the *not speaking of it* that lead to

colonialism, including present-day disproportionate amounts of Indigenous youth in the care of child welfare. Through *nallangaruku*, (Yupik for “not talking about it”), colonialism is seen through the lens of the emotional and spiritual devastation the new illnesses brought by explorers and settlers (1996). Because this project is interested and seeing things temporally, going back a little further explains more deeply why colonialism happened. Diamond explains in *Guns, Germs and Steel* (1998) that the diseases brought by settlers devastated North American Indigenous populations, leading to present day relations and social issues. Adding in a psychological, emotional, and Indigenous cultural and spiritual approach as Napoleon (1996) does better maps out just how communities that were so strong now while still existing in the face of many past efforts to assimilate, experience such social issues. Appreciating a more fulsome history helps bridge this work from the co-researchers to the current conversation in Canada, on Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women, the Idle No More Movement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the responses and resistance to Canada 150, because this work and these co-researchers are not autonomous, ideas move and are relational as well.



Image 5.1. Dreamcatchers Series, Starchild Dreaming Loud, 2016

Speaking of Indigenous rights, resistance, and movement, dream catchers are all of these. Originally from the Ojibwe culture, dream catchers grew in creation and use as the Pan-American Indian movement gained social and political clout in the 1970's (Lokensgard, 2007). Starchild Dreaming Loud's series of four dreamcatchers is art that actually moves, that connects to the embodied act of dreaming, memory, and gift-giving. This artist made dream catchers before the research project, though only during the movement research workshop did they study online the history of the craft and the story of its unity building among Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. There were three dream catchers and one dream catcher/canvas hybrid. The *Staying Connected* series were created as gifts for others, (I was gifted *Staying Connected: Two*). Using traditional First Nations red and black colours, beads and feathers and featuring an interesting technique of a double dream catcher (two rings inserted into each), these craft artworks are meant to hang in the window to catch dreams, the bad ones that is. The good dreams are allowed to flow through the webbing of black sinew. In this sense, movement in these works are simultaneously a negative and a positive; when the dream catcher moves, it is catching the bad dreams, and stillness represents either no activity or the passing of good dreams. In terms of analysis of the medium choice, this series implies that when you are still, the good may enter your life. This is statement by the artist, and also by the culture and craft based meaning and history. Such craft-based knowledge and cultural traditions is another example of why being open to co-researchers working in whichever medium they want is crucial to hear their thoughts on the embodiment of transience and their inner experiences.

The public presentation of the art challenges knowledge production, and the existence of the art itself is a critique, because most of it is critical thematically of the child welfare system even when imbued with hope, in this case gift-giving and good dreams. Brecht memorably stated "Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it". By creating art that

aligns with cultural traditions and practicing them by gift-giving, Starchild Dreaming Loud is expressing and practicing their own worldview and social imaginary. Resilience as resistance here is represented in the ongoing cultural practice of the craft medium. Art can provide a critique of reality by visualizing the possible (Lefebvre, 1991), and dreaming here suggests that so much more is possible.



Image 5.2. *Fuck your feelings*, Singing Thunder, 2016

Resilience as resistance by Indigenous-identified youth is not only presented in traditional forms of art, nor always apparently imbued with hope and gift-giving in *Moving Home*. Toronto co-researcher Singing Thunder's two silkscreened t-shirts were made with simple text-only designs; the words describe what sort of people the child welfare system is inadvertently produced through repeated placements, and the artist statements further elucidate the

manifestation of resilience as resistance. This art is wearable, meant to be seen, not just in a gallery but created to be sold and to express dimensions of the wearer.

“In an unbalanced world, a person’s empathetic nature is exploited. Depleted from treating others the way I want to be treated, I made this shirt for the same reason airplane emergency procedures advise me to put on my own oxygen mask before putting on another’s... in a selfish society, caring can get you killed! With warmest regards, Fuck Your Feelings - Singing Thunder”. Chapter 4 explored negative emotions and lack of connection to others present in the artwork. This shirt and artist statement is an example of the difficulty of caring for others and finding ways of coping. Even within the artist statement the caring is still present, as the t-shirt slogan comes “with warmest regards” (Thunder, 2016). The social critique is strong; society is selfish, and the world is not balanced. This work speaks to the body-as-capital for marginalized young people as discussed above (Diego, 2016), there is only so much one can take from oneself before becoming exhausted. The placement of the words on the chest form a boundary over the heart, the centre of caring.

The word fuck is one of the most versatile words in the English language, and employing it in art makes it both colloquial and full of reference. The T-shirt colours will not be analyzed, as the t-shirts were the ones that were available at SKETCH to use. The fonts were chosen to accentuate different twists on this statement. Whether glittering gold, or green robotic text, *Fuck Your Feelings* emblazoned on a t-shirt is a bold statement, and the artists statement is a vulnerable one that delineates a struggle and a boundary for self-preservation and care. In the honest and open vulnerability, that strength is resilience, and the statement is resistance. Lastly, this shirt, hanging in my office has been commented on repeatedly, many colleagues remark on how they love it and would like a copy of it. T-shirts are an art medium that can be worn – it covers the body and is a standard element of consumer-culture. Singing Thunder’s description of an



unbalanced world finds resonance in Shelley Niro's "The Shirt". On permanent display at the Art Gallery of Ontario, stills from the original video depict an Indigenous woman in a series of t-shirts (9 panels), and eventually the shirt is worn by a white woman, while the Indigenous woman herself is topless, and clutching her arms to cover herself. The final words on the t-shirt are “and all I got was this t-shirt,” (2003). T-shirts here are relics of memorabilia and tokens of consumer culture of leisure travel. These shirts can be seen as what youth are left with from their “trip” through the child welfare system. Their souvenirs are the ongoing emotional issues that Singing Thunder depicts in the work above and below.



Image 5.3 *Trust Issues*, Singing Thunder, 2016

“Often when we meet another, we put up a front of desirable qualities. What if we skipped past the honeymoon phase and went straight to the irritatingly honest and possibly unpleasant parts of ourselves? My name is Singing Thunder and I have trust issues”. Using an older keyboard-style emoji and the words “trust issues”, this t-shirt clearly states a major emotional aftereffect of experiencing multiple placements. *Trust Issues* is once again art as activism, challenging the viewer (and wearer) to be better people by being more honest about

where they are coming from, at the beginning of relationships. The power in being upfront, provokes and mobilizes the vulnerability admitted in this work, and ultimately using vulnerability -not as resistance-, but as connection. The resilience in this work in the ability to be heartfelt and share, given a difficult past. By creating the space to reflect, the artist is using their experience to facilitate awareness of emotional trauma and lingering consequences that shape present-day relations. Finally, that Singing Thunder's artist statement is handwritten attest to the individual and handcrafted nature of the work, and the desire to be seen as independent and different.

There are many other examples of First Nations, Inuit and Metis co-researcher's art in *Moving Home* that speak to this idea of cultural resilience, and resilience as resistance, and many have been discussed in earlier thematic analyses. Starchild Dreaming Loud's previously discussed piece, *Positive/Negative*, is also an example of Indigenous Ontologies and resilience as resistance. This is evident in the desire to speak up, and being grounded in a different broader temporal frame (galaxy/stars as background). Michelle Charlie's and Rachel Macintosh's work in the Yukon continued to depict their clan identity, *Wolf*, is also a presentation of continued cultural practice and resilience, despite many moves away from their birth family. There are other nuances in understanding resilience as resistance beyond cultural survival, and craft-based artistic practices.

In fact, resilience as resistance truly emerged as a stronger theme in the Toronto work, partly because it had twice as many co-researchers and thus data, but also because there is more displacement and thus alienation produced in the urban child welfare systems. Approximately 70% of youth from Toronto proper who enter the care of the Children's Aid Society in Toronto are placed in neighbouring Peel and Durham Regions (personal communication, Goodman, Oct 16, 2015). This means not only a new home, but a new school, and community.

### 5.3.1 Resilience as Resistance - Toronto



Image 5.4 *From A Different Point of View*, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016

“The imagery, represented through silkscreening, has inspirational intentions which allow the readers and consumers to think critically. This design shows how perspective is key in judgment. With the design thoughtfully placed upside-down, and the images of eyes in the font, it shows reversed concept that everything is always seen the same” (Papadopoulos, 2016). This work illustrates that youth in care have a different point of view, and that it is worthy in its own right. By virtue of placing it on a t-shirt means that it should be seen, continuing with the earlier artistic expressions seeking recognition (Nahz, 2016). Focusing on the perspective being upside down, and the multiple eyes, the multiplicity of experiences and perspectives in one situation. Through asking viewers to reflect on their perspective, it makes space for more voices including those of former youth in care to be heard. Resilience as resistance here is shown in the acknowledgment of the many different perspectives, instead of being locked into just one.

Considering temporality here, the words “from a different point of view” means coming from the past, towards, and in a different point of view. This represents a different temporality for former youth in care, like Nicolas Ridiculous’ work, *Late Bloomers*. From a different point a view, but towards what, is a-yet unanswered question for this work.



Image 5.5 NOT Jus7 An07h3r Numb3r, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016

“The imagery, represented through silkscreening has an inspirational intentions which allow the readers and consumers to think critically. This design captivates the concept that we are all unique individuals; however, our individuality can be hidden to some and must be discovered through critical analysis and observation. The use of numbers as lettering was my personal take on the quote and gives a clue that even though we are unique individuals we are still just a number in the corporate system.” As in Singing Thunder’s *Fuck Your Feelings* and *Trust Issues*, Papadopoulos’s t-shirt employs the consumer aspect of clothing to get their messages across. All four t-shirts from Toronto co-researchers focus on the individual as they strive to connect with others and seek recognition. This might be because experiences in care in a large city like

Toronto seems to augment feelings of loneliness and isolation. Whitehorse as a community is so small that all the five co-researchers already knew each other, some had even lived in the same group home. This was not the case in Toronto, only a few youth previously knew each other and that was only because they had been previous SKETCH participants. There is then a potentially stronger tension between the individual youth in care in an urban centre and surrounding suburbs defining themselves in opposition to the larger child welfare agency that decides where they live, over and over. The alienation produced with care placements in Canadian urban centres hits harder, because there is greater spatial and social displacement overall.

In terms of work more related to the experiences of Toronto youth in care, Fischer describes the interplay between anomie and powerlessness (1973), and Boudreau, Keil, & Young, from a neoliberal governance point of view suggest how Toronto must soften neighbourhood boundaries and social practices to lessen further alienation (2009). For former youth in care, it is known that the later they enter care and the more placements they have, the worse their life outcomes are projected to be (Dregan and Gulliford, 2012). One caring adult can make a great difference in a young person's life, but those links are harder to keep for youth in care with curfews, dependant on suburban public transportation that can make a 20 minute drive a 3-hour multi-bus ride (this comes from my own experience in a Brampton group home going to school in Mississauga). To protect and care for themselves, many former youth in care described engaging in the solitary practice of daydreaming.

### **5.3.2 Daydreaming as Self-Care**

In current practice in women's shelters, building on the skills of resistance cliets have already demonstrated helps build confidence as part of response-based practice (Richardson & Wade, 2008). For example, imaging escaping an abusive situation is now seen as a form of

resistance, and acknowledged as such to women in order to honour their skills and desires pre-entry into the shelter system. Daydreaming takes one out of the body, to an imagined place. It can be practiced on public transit, when bored in school, or most often, in the bedroom. In these cases of women in abusive relationships, or youth in foster or group homes they don't want to be in, daydreaming is a safe, free and readily available form of resistance. It is a way to keep the spirit of resistance alive, through a practice of daydreaming hopeful futures.

Daydreaming was referenced in many works in *Moving Home*, while not always mentioned or clearly defined as self-care, the practice presented itself repeatedly. The spoken word lyrics from Zula in *Streams*, "... I know your fantasy is what keeps you alive but there's more living to do/ground the things that you daydream about fearlessly/you are safe in your body" (2016). In this quotation, daydreaming is tied to what keeps a young woman alive throughout care, a place where she can be fearless. In Michelle Charlie's *Inner Workings*, the internal and physical spaces of daydreaming are merged and illustrated referencing a bedroom and called "La-La Land". Dreaming in Anonymous's *Knowledge Production* was through their certificate being an honour and award for keeping their head in the clouds. Sophia Nahz also used clouds to symbolize dreaming and troubles therein with hope in her work, *Many Things are Made of Silver*.

"Sometimes our glimmers of hope fall victim to the clouds that move us. The optimism we are conditioned to perceive through cliché, can become the very thing that takes us captive. Held prisoner behind our realities, we may be forced to find our silver-lining elsewhere. The stars represent every dream, every aspiration, every goal my clouds have settled beneath whilst carrying me from place to place, from 'home' to 'home'. They say to look for the silver-lining. I say, as I have drifted within these clouds – Many things are made of silver" (2016). This work referencing dreams, not just as daydreams but as hope, and troubles the idea of optimism in

difficult circumstances, aligning with Berlant's theory of Cruel Optimism (2011). The silver in this mixed media painting is actually barbed wire. Barbed wire is generally used to guard property, and prevents entry, or at the very least makes it painful for the unwanted to obtain access.



Image 5.6. *Many Things are Made of Silver*, Sophia Nahz, 2016

Instead of only seeing self-care as a self-regulating external action, such as an activity like a bath, calling a friend, or a walk, seeing daydreaming from the inner and geographical point of view opens up the practice in new ways. Imaginary geographies, in their explorations of the fictional worlds created in literature as well as the ways in which we imagine the geographies of our worlds (Bailey, 2004; Duncan & Gregory, 2002; Said, 2000), daydreaming has not been much explored as an explicit self-care practice among youth in care. Even its excessive end spectrum of maladaptive daydreaming has only a few researchers working on the subject which they claim is severely under researched (Bigelsen, Lehrfeld, Jopp & Somer, 2016).

If daydreaming as represented in *Moving Home* is a self-care practice and a form of resistance against the child welfare system, and the hopeful futures it imagines a manifestation of resilience, what is the possible critique here? How could imagining a better present in the future not be hopeful and good? Daydreams are funny in that respect, they can comfort us when we need them, but fade away when we don't. Self-care habits are fluid, requiring different practices at different temporalities, different spaces, and places and homes, with the additional variability of what one can use as a resource for self-care. Listening to music is often seen as self-care, and research shows that for young people, the bedroom and music is a very particular form of self-care and placemaking, especially when living with parents with substance abuse issues (Wilson, Houmøller & Bernays 2012).

The song *Moving On Home* is written and performed by Oddane Taylor, featuring Nicholas Ridiculous for a verse, and Bethany Papadopoulos and Singing Thunder as back-up vocalists. The beat (Drake-Style Beat No. 3) was used, then further developed at SKETCH's in-house recording studio. The beat firmly situates the song in Toronto:

... if life is what you make it then I really got a chance  
 that's my motivation if they tell me that I can't  
 so tell me that I can't man, tell me that I can't  
 they told me what I can't and look what it made me  
 chase the dreams I'm living and they told me I was crazy  
 now they ate their feelings cuz my dreams came true  
 moving on home to a penthouse view

moving on home moving on home  
 waited my whole life just to be free  
 moving on home moving on home  
 to find the person I was meant to be

moving on home just to be free  
 nobody told me it be easy  
 I would be damned if I don't try  
 I would damned if I give up  
 I would be damned if it breaks me  
 if it doesn't break it will make me  
 had to make some choices I am grown now



fam turned their back I'm on my own now  
 (-Oddane)

CAS think they had me blessed, naw,  
 rewind clocks never set, pause  
 fast forward just to forget loss  
 play it cool living off of vet sauce  
 foster parents never caring, another cheque cashed  
 Buncha sinners just staring just to watch us crash  
 don't know where we're going but we're going so fast  
 on the road to forget this broken down past  
 moving on home but we ain't made it yet, we ain't made it yet  
 we ain't never been some rich kids  
 just a statistic conditioned to fail  
 but Id risk it for a biscuit, yeah  
 cuz I'm hungry in the jungle,  
 fuck the silver platter  
 did you hear my tummy grumble  
 man it doesn't even matter  
 so we moving on home but let's not pretend  
 the only home I have is inside my head  
 the only time I chill is after i'm dead  
 (Nick)

*Moving on Home* is a very strong example of resilience clearly defined as resistance.

Given that four co-researchers perform this song, it summarizes how former youth in care define themselves in opposition to social workers, and illustrates how that can propel themselves forward, at least for a while. Lyrics such as; “that's my motivation if they tell me that I can't” and “they told me what I can't and look what it made me/ chase the dreams i'm living and they told me I was crazy/ now they ate their feelings cuz my dreams came true” clearly express that being told negative things in care can be interpreted as a challenge to succeed. Of course, saying such hurtful words to youth in care goes against all best practices in social work policy, in reality many private group home do not require actually staff to have educational backgrounds in social work. Nicholas’s lyrics describe the emotional reality of having people paid to house young people, “foster parents never caring, another cheque cashed/Buncha sinners just staring just to watch us crash” state from personal experience the feelings of just being a way for people to make money,

as well as the feeling of being expected to fail in front of them, like a spectacle. He goes on to say “we ain't never been some rich kids/just a statistic conditioned to fail/but I'd risk it for a biscuit”. Here the self-awareness of the statistics on youth in care are stated, but the lyrics move forward, with a certain amount of hope, and risk in seeking more from life. The chorus of the song plays with the name of the project and it ties movement to a practice of finding oneself, and finding freedom. The song *Moving On Home* is also a strong example of movement's freedom-from and freedom-to, speaking about movement as forgetting, and as fast-forwarding, and freedom as a practice as discussed in Chapter 4 (Bogues, 2012).



Image 5.7- Still from performance of *Moving On Home*, Oddane Taylor, 2016

Resilience as resistance in *Moving on Home* also places the burden of change on the individual – these four former youth in care are now independent young adults. While self-actualization and following one’s dreams are personal endeavors, actual systemic change is needed to ensure youth do not experience such significant displacements of home, community

and school. This focus on the individual in the work of the Toronto co-researchers (compared to more references to family, culture, and nature and community in Whitehorse) exemplify the differences of the in-care experience between urban/suburban and Northern/rural sites. This results in a stronger theme of resilience as resistance with the urban/suburban co-researchers, as youth feel more isolated, the focus on survival is more of an independent venture. Place thus affects the experience and perspectives of (former) youth in care, but also the art produced through arts-based research methods. Place also impacted the idea of what is and what it is for, as 80% of artists chose to price their work for sale in Toronto, and only 20% did so in Whitehorse. Rent is comparable in both cities, (food more expensive in Whitehorse) so it is not solely an economic factor that lead to this practice of pricing or not pricing art. Indigenous ontologies, gift-giving and the cultural nature of the work produced in Whitehorse also played a role.

#### **5.4 Hope, Giving Back, and an Ethics of Care**

Caring geography is a political and active approach, inclusive of emotions, connection and the body, and inherently challenging contemporary social organization (Lawson, 2009). The political heft of a feminist ethics of care neatly answers the questions stirred in the critical geography debate surrounding a normative call for social justice, (Olson & Sayer, 2009) remarkably without actually listing and defining what those tenets are for everyone. By acknowledging us all as human beings who give and receive, need and provide care at different times in our lives, this approach imbues a measure of equality and renders the differentials of power more horizontal rather than vertical. Power still of course matters, but an ethics of care provides a way to respond to human needs as needed, without the moral high ground and cultural relativism debates that comes with defining a list of universal and/or normative human rights. Coming from seeing the value in a feminist ethics of care and the lack of care that systemic issues

like prevalence of placement bouncing exemplify, the practice of former youth in care giving back to current or other former youth in care will now be explored through the work in *Moving Home*.

One of the most embodied and moving in the literal sense art performed was a dance performance by Bethany Papadopoulos, was to a clip of spoken word of First Nations artist Shayne Coyoacan was a previous work that she modified and improvised on the spot for the art show. The animated film for "To This Day" has over 21 million views on YouTube and was released in 2013 (YouTube, 2017). Coyoacan describes his intention with the anti-bullying spoken word in an interview, "My hope is [that it] would reach some of the people who were just out there looking for something to get them through another day. When I wrote the poem two years ago and people started coming to me because they just needed to talk after hearing it, I realized this is not a Canadian problem or an American problem, it's everywhere...I believe the bullies must be forgiven. That's how we heal".



Image 5.8. Still from dance performance, Bethany Papadopoulos, 2016

"Contemporary dance is used to portray feeling and emotion as well as represent a story to the audience. Through this piece, "To This Day" by Shane Koyczan, I have put into motion the long-lasting effects that abuse, bullying, abandonment, and attachment has on children and youth

from their childhood right up until adulthood. The representation of forgiveness, letting go and peace resonating through the ending of the piece as the artist portrays the release of negativity and signs off “B-E-A-U-T-Y” in sign language to represent individuality and self-love.” In this performance, Bethany is using her skills as a trained dancer to communicate positivity through adversity to other youth. While bullying is experienced by many young people, the invisible social identity of being a youth in care, often entering a new school mid-year with a shaky story of family illness to cover up the real more frequent reasons for being apprehended in to care of familial abuse and trauma is a target for bullying, being the “new kid”. In her dance, she enacts a release of negativity, seeking to express that there is beauty and self-love is valuable.

Zine submissions for a group *Moving Home* piece (5 in total) also focused on self-care, and letting current youth in care know that they will eventually be okay. The zine was a project that youth decided to submit to, one-third of the co-researchers participated. Elijah wrote a self-care section, “Self-care is something that's going to greatly improve your quality of life if you make a habit out of it. You mind and body are your anchors in times of transience. ... You deserve to be safe and happy. Anyone who tells you otherwise is wrong”. Using their lived experience, co-researchers voluntarily sought to give back to their fractured community of youth in care, sharing their stories and what has helped them over the years.

The desire to give back in the community of former youth in care is very strong. I am the third former youth in care OPACY has funded at the graduate level in the past three years working on the various social issues and long-term effects of growing up in foster and group homes in Ontario. There are over 500 former youth in care who identify as activist for youth in care in Ontario (Our Voice, Our Turn, 2012). These activists have founded networks, staged protests, public hearings, designated May 14 as Youth in Care Day and accomplished other

significant policy changes through their work including extending the age youth can stay in a foster home up until 25 years of age.

By building this community, youth are creating what they need, and giving it to those that need it, essentially operating as activists on an ethics of care, and creating a caringscape. It is said colloquially that you learn what you know by teaching others. Former youth in care, by giving back to their community through trying to create more of one, can concretize a variety of experiences into something positive and affirming. Former youth in care with lived experience giving others (current or other former youth in care) what they think they need, benefits both parties as the givers have the space to reflect and contextualize their experience, and the youth in care gain mentors in a profoundly transient and displacing system. These activists are resisting the status quo of Canadian child welfare practices. By being strong in their own vulnerability, voicing their resilience, and volunteering to give back to others presently in need of reassurance, new and positive relationships are formed. One such project is the Voyager project in Toronto, based out of the Social Work program at Ryerson. Former youth in care mentor younger youth in care through undergraduate studies, as this population had only an average 5% post-secondary graduation rate. Movement and music including drumming are purposefully incorporated to try to instill a sense of rhythm in these hyper-mobile and displaced young people.

## **5.5 Summary**

Resilience emerged as a form of resistance against experiences in the child welfare system, and most former youth in care co-researchers were well aware of the negative projected life outcomes for their community. The research initial interest in belonging and self-care practices for former youth in care were found to be evident in the activism of the community overall through ongoing literature review, as well as the expressed desire of co-researchers in

*Moving Home* to make a difference and connect with current youth in care through the zine project. Giving back to the broader youth in care community through positive messages and sharing the possibility of hopeful futures also came out numerous art works and artist statements. Seen through the lens of a feminist ethics of care, young people are creating the community they need, and this project is situated as of that ongoing community-building and activism.

### *5.6 Check-out: Communities, Identities, and Giving Back*

*What community are/were you a part of that you give back to? What does it feel like to remember giving back? What emotions surface, and where in your body? Are you still engaged in this practice presently? If no, why not?*

*The image on the next page is a zine contribution from *Moving Home* by Nicholas Ridiculous, written as a letter. The letter is imbued with the practice of giving back, and includes earlier drawings and art created by the artist co-researcher. It also is an honest summary of the emotionality of youth in care experience, and I use it here in place of a personal check-out on giving back. This piece serves as a great culmination of the research themes through communicating lived experience and the ongoing desire for hopeful futures, not just for oneself, but others in the fragmented community of current and former youth in care in Canada.*





To the boy who lived inside his head,

I don't know how to start this, it has been a long time, and I have shed many skins since I was a boy. Being 25 now, I am at the age my Mother was when her and her friends were raising me in my younger years. Those years where I was finding unheard of independence through circumstance and hardships. Those hardships, more times than not, went unnoticed to me and the abnormal became what normalcy was to me.

It is easy to feel so lost, alone, and uncared for. You try and fill the void with friendships, it works. Until all you can seem to do is compare what they have and how extraordinary it must be, to what you ultimately do not have nor ever really did. It is easy to think that just because they tore your family apart, that means you don't have one anymore. It is easy to forget yourself in that idea, and in the fact that you are forcibly subjected to live in someone else's home, under some else's rules and beliefs. You have to remember you. You are the key to everything you will need in your life. You will be your very best friend, and your own worst of enemies in the moments in your life that it will matter the most. You need to learn to recognize those moments when they come, and act accordingly to best serve yourself, at the very least.

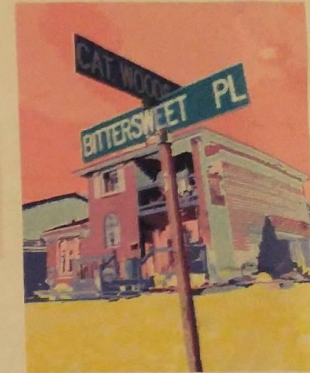
It is easy to believe everything they tell you, they will condition you to fail. You will hear things about the failure rates reiterated time and time again. Drilled into you head so much that it will almost feel like a prophecy and you are the chosen one. But it is not. Although you are the chosen one, chosen for a rough life, a hard life. The kind of life that will make you both strong and resilient. You are a force to be reckoned, and you are not alone!

I made it this far, you can too.

N.R.



Nicholas Ridiculous



Create! Don't let the constructs of society and authority deter you from being creative. Keep discovering who you are, don't let them stop your genius and uniqueness.



**CHAPTER SIX:**  
**CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

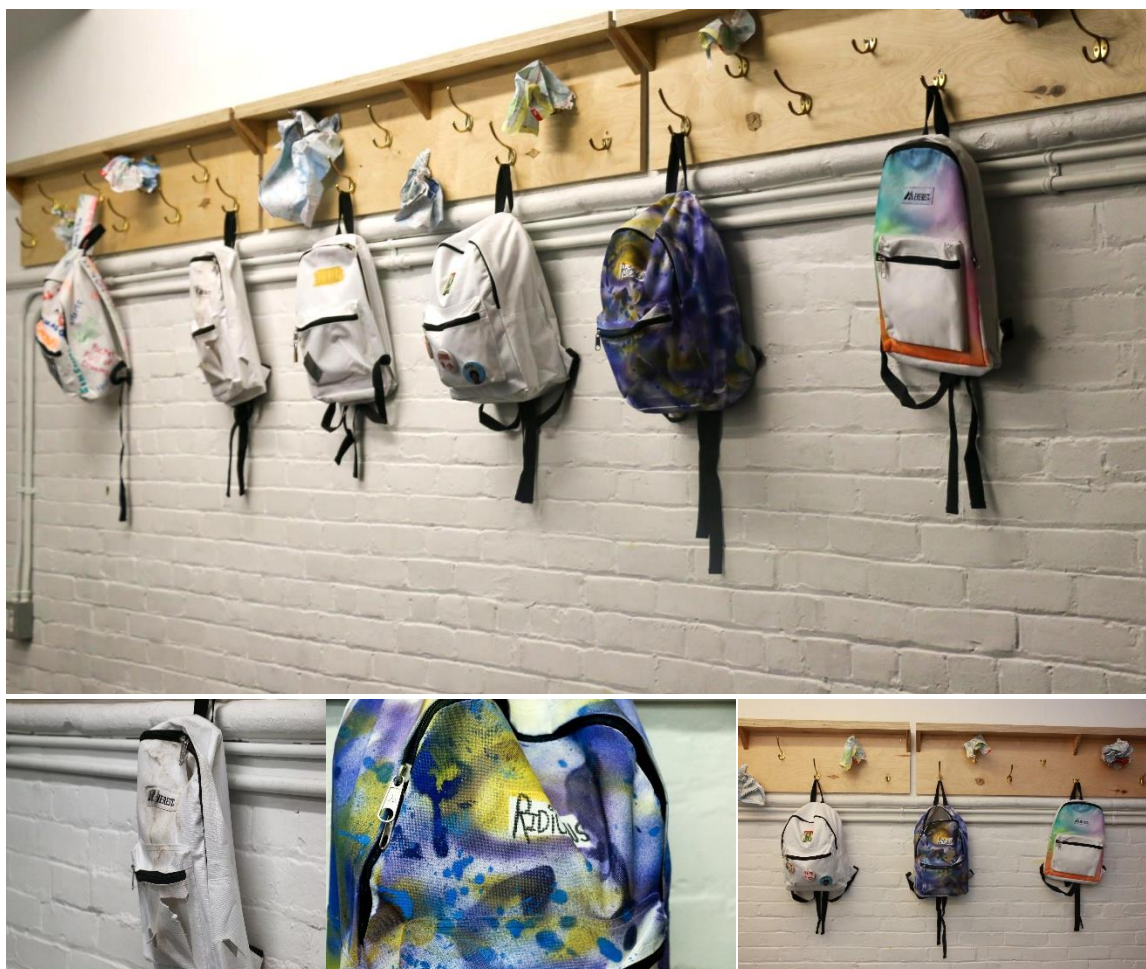


Image 6.0 *Backpack Installation*, Toronto co-researcher group, 2016

*6.1 Check-In: What's Your Backpack?*

*This installation idea came from the co-researchers in Toronto, in particular Jessie Stone. Thinking of what we carry with us, and trappings of youth, blank white backpacks as canvas make a useful object entryway to exploring the embodiment of transience. The backpack that is furthestmost left is decorated with song lyrics from favourite songs when in care, the next*

*torn up and empty representing how they feel the system affected them, the third from the left was left intact, merely the logo covered with gold paint, as more of an aspirational piece. The fourth backpack from the right decorated with buttons including one of Bob Marley and one that says “LIVING IN SIN”. The second-last backpack is fully painted in a graffiti style using spray paint. The last backpack, painted in rainbow-pastel tones, gives recognition to queer identity (and was created to be a gift following the project).*

*What are you carrying with you from your teenage years, and how would that look like on a blank backpack? Of all the statements to make, to display all day on your back, what is the one that stands out, and why? Is it reflective, aspirational, painfully honest, artistic, declarative, or giving, like any of the above? Is your backpack full, or empty, or somewhere in-between?*

## **6.2 Project Overview**

The *Moving Home* project involved 15 co-researchers in Toronto and Whitehorse in May-August 2016. Fieldwork was coordinated in two separate two-week sessions, five days a week, Monday to Friday for five hours a day. The morning sessions were group discussion and workshops exploring themes of such as movement, and skill-building sessions such as artist statement writing and art show planning. Following a break for lunch, every afternoon co-researchers worked on their art in the studios of partner youth arts organizations SKETCH Working Arts (Toronto) and Splintered Craft (Whitehorse). Co-researchers art supplies needs, bus tickets, food, and honorariums were provided by the Ontario Provincial Advocate for Youth and the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate. The honoraria rate was \$80 a day, for a total of \$800 for full project participation. Every day we did check-in and check-out activities, and these have been included in this thesis in an effort to communicate and live the research practice more fully. Following each fieldwork session, a public art show (at the respective youth art centre) was held to celebrate the work and engage in dialogue with the public. With the combined art shows,

attendance is estimated to be over five hundred people. There have been a total of seven news articles and radio interviews so far concerning the *Moving Home* project (full list and links in Appendix D). The research you see here has not only had an impact on the lives of co-researchers in the space created to consider the embodiment of transience, but has also raised awareness in the general public concerning the issues experienced by former youth in care. Additionally, with the creation and launch of the zine (August 2017), *TL;DR, a thesis in a zine*, these findings as well as art and self-care tips from former youth in care will be shared in plain language format. Below is a summary of the themes present from an analysis of the thirty-seven artworks and five zine submissions created as part of *Moving Home*.

### **6.3 Summary of Findings: Emotions, Relations, Movement and Resilience as Resistance**

Feelings and bodies are depicted artistically in manners that align with the current data on youth in care. This includes negative emotions, and bodies most often presented as alone (in terms of other human forms). Among the total collective of co-researchers, female-identified artists were more likely to depict the body, and when they did so it was in complex, layered and multi-media ways. While negative emotions play a large role in many works, hope for the future, and the desire to find a place called home is also present. Place-making and home-making for former youth in care is thus an ongoing and embodied process for many.

While often bodies are alone in human form, they frequently are expressed together with representations of the natural world. The stars, the forest, mountains, flowers, and the galaxy all came up repeatedly among Indigenous and non-Indigenous co-researchers. These representations of nature were in a positive light for the most part (exceptions being rain and clouds connected to difficulties in life) drastically unlike almost all the artistic representations of houses and homes in the collective body of work. I am interested in further exploring the idea young hyper-mobile

people and their relationship to nature as positive. At first, all the stars, galaxies, and planet images confounded me as a researcher, and now I see it as living out an early goal of my research. One of the reasons I wanted to use the arts was to be open enough to see and hear a variety of stories resulting from experiencing numerous housing placements. Instead of merely pathologizing the embodiment of transience, what can we learn from those who experience it?

The embodiment of transience created by frequent and repeated foster and group home placements has resulted in a spectrum of movement and emotionality related to it. Movement is not neutral for former youth in care, whether they identify as travelers on one end, or detest moving and strive to stay in one place on the other. The majority of co-researchers identified frequent moves as an ongoing issue in their lives. Movement expressed in the art also had several sub-themes, the first being freedom-from, the practice of movement as freedom from the past and forgetting (including an avoidance of emotional intimacy inherently connected to stability). The second sub-theme of movement was freedom-to, freedom as seeking a home, a better future. This freedom-to is hopeful and fused with the representations of resilience in the data

Resilience comes through in the art as resistance, as an intentional act of surviving in spite of the child welfare system. Place turns out to be integral to the knowledge produced, as this theme comes across more strongly in Toronto art, where the alienation produced through displacement in foster and group homes is more significant than in Whitehorse, being a much smaller community. Thus, the north (or maybe smaller communities in general) might exist as a protective factor against the alienation that the child welfare system produces through placement bouncing, if youth get to remain close and connected to their cultural and spatial communities of childhood and adolescence.

Resilience as resistance is also seen through representations of Indigenous culture and ontologies from Indigenous co-researchers as an example of ongoing resistance against

colonialism. Place impacted this theme as well, as it emerges stronger in the North due to demographics, though present in both projects with Indigenous co-researchers. Lastly, resistance in the body, against a larger system in this case situated as resilience despite the difficulties in care, has elements of precarity and vulnerability in it as well. Instead of praising youth with difficult upbringings for being resilient, serious policy changes, several of which are underway, can shift the burden from being resilient as an individual to systems being responsive, inclusive and actually hearing the youth voice of those they are set out to care for.

### **6.3.1 Giving Back and Hopeful Futures**

On the one hand, hope might be keeping some of these young people alive. On the other hand, hope can also be caught up in an adventurous yet maladaptive embodied habit that protects young people while trapping them in the comfort of major upheaval and disruption. Throughout these varied relationships to hope and movement, co-researchers expressed a desire for a better life and a home in the future, not just for themselves but for youth in care overall. Giving back and community-building among former youth in care is present in the zine contributions noting self-care tips for current youth in care, and in artist statements and performances discussing the struggles and beauties of being late bloomers. Former youth in care are enacting an ethics of care, creating the communities they need out of the ones that are very displaced and fragmented. This thesis is a part of this desire to give back and build community among former youth in care, for current youth in care. Scholars interested in an ethics of care can learn how communities such as former youth in care are practicing this theory, which can develop practical understanding, skills and tools towards a grounded feminist ethics of care. Next, I discuss further contributions of knowledge from this thesis.

#### 6.4 Contributions to Geographical Knowledge

The findings of *Moving Home* are reaffirmation of the complex, layered and personal definition of home. In particular, this research develops a geographical approach to understanding young people in and from care in Canada, which has not until now been studied through a geographical lens. In the child welfare context, the notion of home involves multiple scales of workplace, institution, and home all at once (Dorrer, McIntosh, Punch & Emond, 2010). Young people in care are experiencing multiple transitions of home and school within the transition of youth to adult (Valentine, 2003). This research adds a temporal lens to the notion of home, and moving home, focusing on the embodied habits of transience learned through these multiple transitions. In terms of embodiment, *Moving Home* leads us to consider what else can we embody over time besides transience stemming from multiple moves as a young person? What other embodied habits might individuals have picked up that have yet to be researched and explored?

Concerning mobilities literature, this work builds on the politics of mobility (Cresswell, 2010) by exploring repeated systemic moves and their impact on individual lives. Repeated moves of home at the scale of the body deepen understanding of movement and mobilities. Young people who are experiencing multiple placements, then continuing to move when out of the system due in part to embodying transience as a habit ask mobilities research to consider the embodiment of movement and a longer relationship to temporality together. The co-researchers lived experience and art produced in *Moving Home* suggest that movement can be a habit, and eventually a maladaptive one at that.

## 6.5 Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations below are for Child Welfare organizations, programs and services, as well as those who work with and research with current and former youth in care. Because there is so much overlap between former youth in care and experiences of incarceration, street-involvement, poverty and homelessness, it is crucial that the implications of the embodiment of transience are understood, and further explored within these groups.

- Given that former youth in care are moving so much as a habit, supportive housing policies should be more flexible in terms of entry and re-entry into them.
- Former youth in care are more mobile across Canada. Letting youth access former youth in care services across the country, instead of solely in the region where they were in care can help support a healthier transition to independence.
- Given the embodied nature of this movement, promoting movement-based therapeutic activities for former and current youth in care can help connect them more deeply to their bodies and emotions.
- Child welfare service organizations should consider how they view bodies, and educate young people about bodies, and treat bodies overall. Additionally, these organizations should explore how they consider and manage bodies, compared to how young people do.
- There should be continued and expanded support for former youth in care to meet each other as a way to share skills, supports, and build relationships and community.
- Continue to fund arts-based research projects with this community, as a way to facilitate through difficult and emotional topics with the benefit of materiality, self-expression, and storytelling.

## 6.6 Check-out: Mapping Similarities

*Art shows in Toronto and Whitehorse included an interactive activity involving mapping. In Toronto, the project was put together by the group, and in Whitehorse a very similar process occurred with co-researcher Anonymous's contribution, with their addition of mini-installation elements. As I did not share the artwork of co-researcher groups with each other until the end of the fieldwork, the fact that such similar and interactive public projects emerged was interesting. In Toronto, as we were mapping out where we had been, the aesthetic seemed like a crime film scene. The only thing connecting the dots was one person, each with their own colour of thumbtack and embroidery thread.*

*In Whitehorse, the map Anonymous used was of the world as opposed to the region (there was already a Yukon map being used for the artwork Emotional Geographies of the Yukon) and this allowed for an interesting, yet ultimately more physically tenuous interactive mapping project. Below are photos of both interactive mapping activities/installations (Toronto on the left, Whitehorse on the right).*



Image 6.1: Interactive Mapping Projects, Toronto co-researchers and Anonymous, Whitehorse, 2016



*For this final check-out, map your similarities with this research, using this guide from co-researcher Anonymous on their above interactive project. “This interactive installation reminds us of how vast and beautiful the world is. Where we have been and our experiences there affect us greatly. Please take the time to show us where you have been!” (2016). Where does this activity lead you next?*

*For myself, the end of this writing has led to a thesis art show at Critical Distance Centre for Curators in Toronto (August 2017), and a zine version of my thesis launched called TL;DR., (Internet-speak for too long; didn't read). I will now begin to write my first journal articles based on findings from this research, and am interested in continuing to explore embodiment of transience, expanding the scope to work with other highly-mobile populations, and what can be learned from them.*

## REFERENCES

- Abbott-Chapman, J., & Robertson, M. (2001). Youth, leisure and home: Space, place and identity. *Loisir et société/Society and Leisure*, 24(2), 485-506.
- Adey, P. (2009). *Mobility*. London: Routledge.
- Alexander, B. (2010). *The globalization of addiction: A study in poverty of the spirit*. Oxford University Press.
- Ahmed, S. (2013). *The cultural politics of emotion*. London: Routledge.
- Kermoal, N., & Altamirano-Jiménez, I. (Eds.). (2016). *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understanding of Place*. Athabasca University Press.
- Anderson, K., & Smith, S. J. (2001). Editorial: emotional geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British geographers*, 26 (1), 710.
- Askins, K., & Pain, R. (2011). Contact zones: participation, materiality, and the messiness of interaction. *Environment and planning D: society and space*, 29(5), 803-821.
- Atkinson, S. (2013). Beyond components of wellbeing: The effects of relational and situated assemblage. *Topoi*, 32(2), 137-144.
- Atkinson, S., Lawson, V., & Wiles, J. (2011). Care of the body: spaces of practice. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(6), 563-572.
- Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2011). *Arts based research*. Sage.
- Bailey, S. (2004). Woman/body/landscape: Imaginary geographies in the writing of Karen Connelly. *Canadian literature*, (181), 62-76.
- Bain, A., Payne, W., & Isen, J. (2015). Rendering a neighbourhood queer. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 16(4), 424-443.
- Bauman, Z. (2013). *Liquid modernity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity (Vol. 17)*. London: Sage.
- Bennett, J. (2005). *Empathic vision: Affect, trauma, and contemporary art*. Stanford University Press.
- Berlant, L. G. (2011). *Cruel optimism*. Duke University Press.
- Biddle, J. (2003). Country, skin, canvas: the intercorporeal art of Kathleen Petyarre. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, 4(1), 61-76.
- Bigelsen, J., Lehrfeld, J. M., Jopp, D. S., & Somer, E. (2016). Maladaptive daydreaming: Evidence for an under-researched mental health disorder. *Consciousness and cognition*, 42, 254-266.
- Blunt, A., & Varley, A. (2004). Geographies of home. *Cultural Geographies*, 11(1), 36.
- Bogues, A. (2012). And What About the Human?: Freedom, Human Emancipation, and the Radical Imagination. *boundary 2*, 39(3), 29-46.
- Bordo, S. (1993). Feminism, Foucault and the politics of the body. *Up against Foucault: Explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism*, 179.
- Boudreau, J. A., Keil, R., & Young, D. (2009). Changing Toronto: governing urban neoliberalism.
- Braidotti, R. (1994). *Nomadic subjects: Embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*. Columbia University Press.
- Braidotti, R. (2011). *Nomadic theory: the portable Rosi Braidotti*. Columbia University Press.
- Brown, L., & Strega, S. (Eds.). (2015). *Research as Resistance, 2e: Revisiting Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*. Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Buliung, R., Sultana, S., & Faulkner, G. (2012). Guest editorial: special section on child and youth mobility—current research and nascent themes. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 20(1), 31-33.

- Büscher, M., & Urry, J. (2009). Mobile methods and the empirical. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 12(1), 99-116.
- Butcher, S., & Wilton, R. (2008). Stuck in transition? Exploring the space of employment training for youth with intellectual disability. *Geoforum* 39(2), 1079-1092.
- Butler, J. (1990). Gender trouble, feminist theory, and psychoanalytic discourse. *Feminism/postmodernism*, 327.
- Butler, J. (2006). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.
- Butler, J. (2011). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. Taylor & Francis.
- Butler, J. (2014). Rethinking vulnerability and resistance. Madrid, June 2014
- Butz, D., & Besio, K. (2004). The value of autoethnography for field research in transcultural settings. *The Professional Geographer*, 56(3), 350-360.
- Cahill, C. (2007). Including excluded perspectives in participatory action research. *Design Studies*, 28 (3), 325-340.
- Cahill, C., Torre, M., (2007). Beyond the Journal Article: Representations, Audience, and the Presentation of Participatory Action Research. In *Connecting People, Participation and Place: Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods*, edited by Sara Kindon, Rachel Pain, and Mike Kesby, 196–206. London: Routledge.
- Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. (2016). First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada et al. v. Attorney General of Canada (for the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada). File numbers T1340/7008. Ottawa, ON.
- Canadian Polar Commission. (2014). The State of Northern Knowledge in Canada. Accessed via [http://www.polarcom.gc.ca/sites/default/files/snk\\_report\\_english.pdf](http://www.polarcom.gc.ca/sites/default/files/snk_report_english.pdf)
- Castleden, H., Garvin, T., & Haa First Nation (2008). Modifying Photovoice for community--based participatory Indigenous research. *Social Science & Medicine*, 66(6), 1393-1405.
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Children's Aid Society of Toronto: (2014, July). Hidden in our midst: Homeless newcomer youth in Toronto uncovering the supports to prevent and reduce homelessness. Retrieved from [http://www.childwelfareinstitute.torontocas.ca/app/Uploads/Resources/22\\_file.pdf](http://www.childwelfareinstitute.torontocas.ca/app/Uploads/Resources/22_file.pdf)
- de Certeau M. (1984). The practice of everyday life. University of California Press, Berkeley
- Christensen, J. (2013). 'Our home, our way of life': spiritual homelessness and the sociocultural dimensions of Indigenous homelessness in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14(7), 804-828.
- Clark, D. (2003). The death and life of punk, the last subculture. *The post-subcultures reader*, 223-36.
- Clifford-Napoleone, A. R. (2015). Living in the margins: Metal's self-in-reflection. *Metal Music Studies*, 1(3), 379-385.
- Colls, R. (2012). Feminism, bodily difference and non-representational geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(3), 430-445.
- Colls, R., & Evans, B. (2014). Making space for fat bodies? A critical account of 'the obesogenic environment'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(6), 733-753.
- Conrad, D. (2010). In search of the radical in performance: Theatre of the Oppressed with Incarcerated youth. In P. Duffy & E. Vettrano (Eds.) *Youth and Theatre of the Oppressed* (pp. 125-141). New York: Palgrave
- Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. *Communications monographs*, 58(2), 179-194.
- Cook, R., Fleischman, G., & Grimes, V. (1991). A national evaluation of Title IV foster care independent living programs for youth in foster care: Phase 2. Final Report Volume 1 .

- Corcoran, R. H. (2012). Rethinking “Foster Child” and the Culture of Care: A Rhizomatic Inquiry into the Multiple Becomings of Foster Care Alumni (Doctoral dissertation, University of Victoria).
- Basar, S., Coupland, D., & Obrist, H. U. (2015). *The Age of Earthquakes: A Guide to the Extreme Present*. Penguin UK.
- Coulter, R., & Van Ham, M. (2013). Following people through time: An analysis of individual residential mobility biographies. *Housing Studies*, 28(7), 1037-1055.
- Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*.
- Covell, K. The Rights of the Child Part Four: Child protection and youth on the street. *AboutKidsHealth*. Accessed via <http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/en/news/series/rightsofchildren/pages/therightsofchildren-partfourchildprotectionandyouthonthestreet.aspx>
- Coy, M. (2009). This body which is not mine: The notion of the habit body, prostitution and (dis) embodiment. *Feminist Theory*, 10(1), 61-75.
- Cresswell, T. (2010). Towards a politics of mobility. *Environment and planning D: society and space*, 28(1), 17-31.
- Cresswell, T. (2006). *On the move: mobility in the modern western world*. Taylor & Francis.
- Davidson, J., & Milligan, C. (2004). Embodying emotion sensing space: introducing emotional geographies. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(4), 523-532.
- De Leeuw, S. (2009). ‘If anything is to be done with the Indian, we must catch him very young’: colonial constructions of Aboriginal children and the geographies of Indian residential schooling in British Columbia, Canada. *Children's Geographies*, 7(2), 123-140.
- Diamond, J. M. (1998). *Guns, germs and steel: a short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years*. Random House.
- Dorrer, N., McIntosh, I., Punch, S., & Emond, R. (2010). Children and food practices in residential care: Ambivalence in the ‘institutional’ home. *Children's Geographies*, 8(3), 247-259.
- Dregan, A., & Gulliford, M. (2012). Foster care, residential care and public care placement patterns are associated with adult life trajectories: population-based cohort study. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 47 (9), 1517-1526.
- Duncan, J., & Gregory, D. (Eds.). (2002). *Writes of passage: reading travel writing*.
- Edensor, T. (2007). Mundane mobilities, performances and spaces of tourism. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 8(2), 199-215.
- Evans, J., & Boswell, D. (Eds.). (1999). *Representing the nation: a reader: histories, heritage and museums*. Psychology Press.
- Evans, J., & Jones, P. (2011). The walking interview: Methodology, mobility and place. *Applied Geography*, 31(2), 849-858.
- Evans, B., & Reid, J. (2014). *Resilient life: the art of living dangerously*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Fallis, J. (2012). Literature Review: The needs of youth transitioning from protective care, and best practice approaches to improve outcomes Accessed via General Child and Family Services Authority website, <http://www.generalauthority.ca/docs/Literature%20Review%20The%20Needs%20of%20Youth%20Transitioning%20from%20Care%20Final%20July%202012.pdf>
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skin, white masks* [1952]. New York.
- Festinger, L. (1962). *A theory of cognitive dissonance* (Vol. 2). Stanford university press.
- Finley, S. (2008). Arts-based research. In G.J. Knowles, A.L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples and issues* (pp.71-82). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

- Fischer, C. S. (1973). On urban alienations and anomie: powerlessness and social isolation. *American Sociological Review*, 311-326.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Pantheon.
- Friere, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.
- Gesler, W. M. (1992). Therapeutic landscapes: medical issues in light of the new cultural geography. *Social science & medicine*, 34(7), 735-746.
- Gonzalez-Arnal, S., Jagger, G., & Lennon, K. (Eds.). (2012). *Embodied selves*. Springer.
- Gorman-Murray, A. (2009). Intimate mobilities: Emotional embodiment and queer migration. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 10(4), 441-460.
- Guyette, S. (1996). *Planning for balanced development: a guide for native American and rural communities*. Clear Light Publishers.
- Harvey, D. (1990). Between space and time: reflections on the geographical imagination 1. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 80(3), 418-434.
- Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of hope* (Vol. 7). Univ of California Press.
- Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2010). Switch: How to change when change is hard. *New York, NY*.
- Hemming, P. J. (2007). Renegotiating the primary school: children's emotional geographies of sport, exercise and active play. *Children's Geographies*, 5(4), 353-371.
- Hesford, W. S. (1999). *Framing identities: Autobiography and the politics of pedagogy*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Holm, B. (1965). Northwest Coast Indian art: an analysis of form. Vancouver: JJ Douglas Ltd., 1978. Reprint, same title.
- Hollnagel, E., Woods, D., & Leveson, N. (2008). Resilience engineering in a nutshell. *Resilience engineering perspectives*, 1.
- Holling, C. S. (1973). Resilience and stability of ecological systems. *Annual review of ecology and systematics*, 4(1), 1-23.
- Holloway, S. (2014). Changing children's geographies. *Children's Geographies*, 12(4), 377-392.
- Hooks, B. (1992). Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics.
- Hooks, B. (2000). *Where we stand: Class matters*. Psychology Press.
- Hopkins, P.E. (2006). Youth transitions and going to university: The perceptions of students attending at geography summer school access programme. *Area* 38(3), 240-247
- Hunter, D., Bailey, A., & Taylor, B. (1994). The art of facilitation.
- James, A. (1986). Learning to belong: the boundaries of adolescence, in: Cohen, A.P., (ed.) *Symbolising Boundaries: Identities and Difference in British Cultures*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Jayne, M., Valentine, G., & Holloway, S. L. (2010). Emotional, embodied and affective geographies of alcohol, drinking and drunkenness. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35(4), 540-554.
- Jelleyman, T., & Spencer, N. (2008). Residential mobility in childhood and health outcomes: a systematic review. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 62(7), 584-592.
- Johnson, J. T., & Murton, B. (2007). Re/placing native science: Indigenous voices in contemporary constructions of nature. *Geographical Research*, 45(2), 121-129.
- Kaiser, S. (1997). The social psychology of clothing: symbolic appearances in context, Fairchild. *New York*.
- Kaplan, C. (1996). *Questions of Travel: Postmodern discourses of displacement*, Duke University Press.

- Kendrick, A. (2003). Caribou co-management in northern Canada: fostering multiple ways of knowing. *Navigating social-ecological systems. Building resilience for complexity and change*, 241-267.
- Keys Young (Firm), Australia. Dept. of Health, Aged Care, Australia. Dept. of Family, & Community Services. (1998). Homelessness in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context and its possible implications for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). Commonwealth Dept. of Health & Aged Care.
- Korsmo, F. & Graham, A. (2002). Research in the North American North: action and reaction. *Arctic*, 319-328.
- Kovach, M. E. (2009). Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts . University of Toronto Press.
- Kovach, M. (2010). Conversation method in Indigenous research. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 5 (1), 4048.
- Kufeldt, K. (2003). Graduates of guardianship care: Outcomes in early adulthood. *Child welfare: Connecting research, policy and practice*, 203-216.
- Lankenau, S. E., Sanders, B., Bloom, J. J., Hathazi, D., Alarcon, E., Tortu, S., & Clatts, M. C. (2008). Migration patterns and substance use among young homeless travelers. *Geography and drug addiction*, 65-83.
- Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *The sociological quarterly*, 34(4), 673-693.
- Lawson, V. (2007). Geographies of care and responsibility. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97(1), 1-11.
- Lawson, V. (2009). Instead of radical geography, how about caring geography?. *Antipode*, 41(1), 210-213.
- Leavy, P. (2008) Method meets art: Art-based research practice. New York: The Guilford Press
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *Critique of everyday life* (Vol. 2). Verso.
- Lefebvre, H. (2004). *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. London: Continuum.
- Leslie, B., & Hare, F. (2003). At care's end: Child welfare grads and street youth services. *Child welfare: Connecting research, policy and practice*, 239-247.
- Liang, B., Boileau, K., Vachon, W., & Wilton, F. Acting in Support of Youth Voice: Theatre as Equitable Education. *Writing with Mark: A cross-border conversation about Mark Krueger and his*, 67.
- Lokensgard, K. H. (2007). Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality. *The American Indian Quarterly*, 31(1), 198-205.
- Lorde, A. (1988). *A burst of light: Essays*. Firebrand Books.
- Longhurst, R. (1995). Viewpoint: The body and geography. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 2(1), 97-106.
- Louis, R. P. (2007). Can you hear us now? Voices from the margin: Using indigenous methodologies in geographic research. *Geographical research*, 45(2), 130-139.
- MannFeder, V., & White, T. (2003). Facilitating the transition from placement to independent living: Reflections from a program of research. *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare*, 6(4), 198-204.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Place, Space and Gender*. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- Massey, D.B (2005). *For Space*, London: Sage
- McDowell, L., (2002). Transitions to work: Masculine identities, youth inequality, and the labour market. *Gender, Place and Culture* 9, 39-59
- McGregor, D. (2004). Coming full circle: Indigenous knowledge, environment, and our future. *The American Indian Quarterly*, 28(3), 385-410.

- McLuhan, M., & Fiore, Q. (1967). *The Medium is the Message*. New York, 126-128.
- Milligan, C. (2005). From home to 'home': situating emotions within the caregiving experience. *Environment and Planning A*, 37(12), 2105-2120.
- Million, D. (2013). *Therapeutic nations: Healing in an age of indigenous human rights*. University of Arizona Press.
- Mol, A. (2002). *The body multiple: Ontology in medical practice*. Duke University Press.
- Moss, P. (1999). Autobiographical notes on chronic illness. *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability*. London: Routledge, 155-165.
- Mulcahy, M. & Trocmé, N. (2010). CECW information sheet #78. Children and youth in out of home care in Canada. Montreal, QC, Canada: Centre for Research on Children and Families, McGill University
- Napoleon, H. (1991). *Yuuyaraq: The way of the human being: With commentary*. University of Alaska, Fairbanks, College of Rural Alaska, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies.
- Nash, C. J., & Gorman-Murray, A. (2014). LGBT neighbourhoods and 'new mobilities': Towards understanding transformations in sexual and gendered urban landscapes. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(3), 756-772.
- Nash, C. (2000). Performativity in practice: some recent work in cultural geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24(4), 653-664.
- Nayak, A. (2010). Race, affect, and emotion: young people, racism, and graffiti in the postcolonial English suburbs. *Environment and Planning A*, 42(10), 2370-2392.
- National Youth in Care Network, (2003). Primer fact sheets. Retrieved from <http://youthincare.ca/systemcapacitycont>
- Nayak, A. (2010). Race, affect, and emotion: young people, racism, and graffiti in the postcolonial English suburbs. *Environment and Planning A*, 42(10), 2370-2392.
- Nayak, A. (2011). Geography, race and emotions: Social and cultural intersections. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(6), 548-562.
- Nichols, N. (2013). Nobody "Signs Out of Care." Exploring the Institutional Links Between Child Protection Services & Homelessness. *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice*, 75-93.
- Nissen, M. (2013). Beyond innocence and cynicism: Concrete utopia in social work with drug users. *Outlines. Critical Practice Studies*, 14(2), 54-78.
- Oishi, S., Kesebir, S., Miao, F. F., Talhelm, T., Endo, Y., Uchida, Y., ... & Norasakkunkit, V. (2013). Residential mobility increases motivation to expand social network: But why?. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49(2), 217-223.
- Office of The Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth. (2012) 25 Is The New 21: The Costs and Benefits of Providing Extended Care & Maintenance to Ontario Youth in Care Until Age 25. Toronto, ON
- Olson, E., & Sayer, A. (2009). Radical geography and its critical standpoints: Embracing the normative. *Antipode*, 41(1), 180-198.
- Pasupathi, M. (2001). The social construction of the personal past and its implications for adult development. *Psychological bulletin*, 127(5), 651.
- Peck, J. (2001). Neoliberalizing states: thin policies/hard outcomes. *Progress in human geography*, 25(3), 445-455.
- Philo, C. & Parr, H. (2000). Institutional geographies: introductory remarks. *Geoforum*, 31(4), 513-521.
- Raising The Roof Foundation. (2009). Youth homelessness in Canada: The road to solutions. In Homefree Nonprofit Foundation, *Helping Youth Leave Child Welfare Care Succeed: Housing needs and solutions*. Toronto ON: Homefree Nonprofit Foundation



- Raphael, D. (2009). Social determinants of health: Canadian perspectives.
- Richardson, C., & Wade, A. (2008). Taking resistance seriously: A response-based approach to social work in cases of violence against Indigenous women. *Walking this path together: Anti-racist and anti-oppressive child welfare practice*, 204-220.
- Robinson, C. (2005). Grieving home. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 6(1), 47-60.
- Roby, D. (2013). Crust Punk: Apocalyptic Rhetoric and Dystopian Performatives.
- Rose, G. (1990). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. London: Sage
- Roy, A. L., McCoy, D. C., & Raver, C. C. (2014). Instability versus quality: Residential mobility, neighborhood poverty, and children's self-regulation. *Developmental psychology*, 50(7), 1891.
- Said, E. W. (2000). Invention, memory, and place. *Critical inquiry*, 26(2), 175-192.
- Samuels, G., & Pryce, J. (2008). "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger": Survivalist self-reliance as resilience and risk among young adults aging out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30 (10), 1198-1210.
- Seligman, M. E. (2012). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Simon and Schuster.
- Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Positive psychology: An introduction. In *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 279-298). Springer Netherlands.
- Serge, L., Eberle, M., Goldberg, M., Sullivan, S., & Dudding, P. (2002). Pilot study: The child welfare system and homelessness among Canadian youth. Ottawa, ON: The Child Welfare League of Canada.
- Sharma, S. (2014). *In the meantime: Temporality and cultural politics*. Duke University Press.
- Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and planning A*, 38 (2), 207-226.
- Sibley, D. (1995). Families and domestic routines: Constructing the boundaries of childhood, in: Pile, S. and Thrift, N. (eds) *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformations*, London: Routledge, 343-360
- Simmel, G. (1997). *Simmel on culture: Selected writings* (Vol. 903). Sage.
- Sirilli, E. (1999). *Ripples from the Zambezi: Passion, entrepreneurship, and the rebirth of local economies*. New Society Publishers.
- Smith, M., Davidson, J., Cameron, L., & Bondi, L. (2009). Geography and emotion: Emerging constellations. *Emotion, place and culture*, 1-18.
- Snow, K. (2008). Disposable lives. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30 (11), 1289-1298.
- Snow, K. (2009a). Vulnerable citizens: The oppression of children in care. *NETWORK (CYC-Net)*, (130).
- Snow, K. (2009b). The case for enhanced educational supports for children in public care: An integrative literature review of the educational pathway of children in care. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies: An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care*, 4(4), 300-311
- Snow, K. (2013). Aspirations and Belonging: Touchstones for the journey. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 4(3), 381-390.
- Snow, K., & Mann-Feder, V. (2013). Peer-Centered Practice: A Theoretical framework for intervention with young people in and from care. *Child Welfare*, 92(4), 75
- Snyder, M., & Wilson, K. (2015). "Too much moving... there's always a reason": Understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' experiences of mobility and its impact on holistic health. *Health & place*, 34, 181-189.
- Solnit, R., (2010). *Infinite City: a San Francisco atlas*. Oakland: University of California Press



- Sontag, S. (1973). America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly. *On Photography*, 27-48.
- Statistics Canada, (May 8 2013) 2011 National Household Survey: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit, accessed via <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130508/dq130508aeng.htm>
- Statistics Canada, (2011). 2011 National household survey: Age groups and sex of foster children, for both sexes, for Canada, provinces and territories. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/censusrecensement/2011/dppd/hltfst/fam/Pages/highlight.cfm?TabID=1&Lang=E&Asc=1&PRCode=01&OrderBy=999&Sex=1&tableID=304>
- Statistics Canada, (December 22 2015). Census in Brief Series: Living Arrangements of Young Adults Aged 20 to 29. (Catalogue no. 98312X2011003), accessed via [http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/censusrecensement/2011/assa/98312x/98312x2011003\\_3eng.pdf](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/censusrecensement/2011/assa/98312x/98312x2011003_3eng.pdf)
- Sevenhuijsen, S. (1998). *Citizenship and the ethics of care: Feminist considerations on justice, morality, and politics*. Psychology Press.
- Swyngedouw, E. (1996). The city as a hybrid: on nature, society and cyborg urbanization. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 7(2), 65-80.
- Taylor, D. (2003). *The archive and the repertoire: Performing cultural memory in the Americas*. Duke University Press.
- Thompson, A. H., Newman, S. C., (1995). Mortality in a child welfare population — implications for policy. *Child Welfare*, 74, 843-857
- Thorburn, J. (2007). Globalisation and child welfare: Some lessons from a cross-national study of children in out-of-home care. *Social Work Monographs*. Norwich, UK: UEA
- Tronto, J. C. (1993). Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care.
- Tronto, J. C. (2013). Caring democracy: Markets, equality, and justice.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Winnipeg, MB
- Turpel-Lafond, M. & Kendall, P. (2007). Joint Special Report: Health and wellbeing of children in care in British Columbia (Report 2 on the Educational Experiences and Outcomes). Victoria, BC: BC Representative for Children and Youth.
- Valentine, G. (2003). Boundary crossings: transitions from childhood to adulthood. *Children's Geographies*, 1(1), 37-52.
- Valentine, G., & Skelton, T. (2007). Re-defining 'norms': D/deaf young people's transitions to independence. *The Sociological Review*, 55(1), 104-123.
- Veninga, C. (2009). Fitting in: the embodied politics of race in Seattle's desegregated schools. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 10(2), 107-129.
- W., Bill. (1946). *Alcoholics Anonymous: The story of how many thousands of men and women have recovered from alcoholism*. Alcoholics Anonymous World Services.
- Wadsworth, Y. (2006). The mirror, the magnifying glass, the compass and the map: Facilitating participatory action research. *Handbook of action research: The concise paperback edition*, 322-342.
- Williams, R. (1977). Structures of feeling. *Marxism and literature*, 1, 128-35.
- Wilson, S. (2008). Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods. Fernwood: Winnipeg
- Wilson, S., Houmøller, K., & Bernays, S. (2012). 'Home, and not some house': young people's sensory construction of family relationships in domestic spaces. *Children's Geographies*, 10(1), 95-107.
- Wilton, R., DeVerteuil, G., & Evans, J. (2014). 'No more of this macho bullshit': drug treatment, place and the reworking of masculinity. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 39(2), 291-303.

- Wolfe, N. (1990). *The beauty myth*. Vintage Books.
- Worth, N. (2009). Understanding youth transition as 'becoming': identity, time and futurity. *Geoforum*, 40(6), 1050-1060.
- Worth, N. (2014). Youth, Relationality, and Space: Conceptual Resources for Youth Studies from Critical Human Geography. In *Handbook of Children and Youth Studies* (pp. 110). Springer Singapore.
- Wright, S. (2012). Emotional geographies of development. *Third World Quarterly*, 33(6), 1113-1127.
- Youtube, (2017) To this day Project - Shane Koyzcan. Media. Accessed via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltun92DfnPY>

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: RECRUITMENT POSTERS



Were you in foster care or group homes?  
Are you 18-25 years old?

Are you interested in making art and exhibiting it? Learning about research? Beefing up the ol' resume?

Often youth in care experience a lot of placements. Moving Home is an arts-based research project where you will be a co-researcher, exploring the effects of multiple placements through painting, drawing, collage, silkscreening, story, photography, installation... really it's up to you.

**Art supplies, food, bus tickets** and **honoraria** provided! Finish with an arts exhibition! We especially invite applications from Black, First Nations, Inuit and Metis youth.

This project is coordinated by a former youth in care as part of a Master's degree at York University. It is funded by The Ontario Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. Office of Research Ethics certificate #: STU 2016-054

**PROJECT RUNS**

Monday-Thursday

10AM-4PM

May 30-June 10, 2016

**APPLY BY MAY 19!**

To apply, email Amelia Merhar at [redacted] stating the arts medium you would like to work in, why you want to be involved, and how many placements you have experienced.

Limited spots available!

Provincial Advocate  
for Children & Youth

L'Intervenant provincial  
en faveur des enfants & des jeunes

**sketch**



**Were you in foster care or group homes?  
Are you 18-25 years old?**

Are you interested in making art and exhibiting it?  
Learning about research? Beefing up the 'ol resume?

Often youth in care experience a lot of placements. Moving Home is an arts-based research project where you will be a co-researcher, exploring the effects of multiple placements through painting, drawing, collage, silkscreening, story, photography, installation... really it is up to you.

**Art supplies, bus tickets, food and honoraria** provided! Finish with an arts exhibition! We especially invite applications from First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth.

This project is coordinated by a former youth in care as part of a Master's degree at York University. It is funded by the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office. Office of Research Ethics Certificate STU 054-2016.

**DEADLINE TO APPLY IS JULY 20TH AT 5 PM!**

Project Runs  
Monday-Friday  
July 25-August 5th 2016  
10 AM to 3:30 PM

To apply email [redacted] with:

1. Arts medium you work in
2. How many placements you have experienced
3. Why you want to be involved

Limited spots available!





## Appendix B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (YUKON VERSION)



### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Study name:** Moving Home: The Art and Embodiment of Transience in Canada's Child Welfare System

**Researchers:** Amelia Merhar under the supervision of Dr. Alison Bain

**Researcher name:** Amelia Merhar **Candidate:** MA **Graduate Program in:** Human Geography

**Email address:**

**Purpose of the research:** This purpose of this research is to better understand how experiencing multiple foster and group home placements (or homelessness and repeated moves) has affected youth. Using arts mediums including (but not limited to) painting, drawing, collage, music, traditional crafts and photography, participants will explore conceptions of home(s), belonging, and self-care as they relate to experiences of repeated moves within the child welfare system.

**What you will be asked to do in the research:** You will be asked to participate in this study as a co-researcher, committed to exploring the effects of multiple placements through facilitated

discussions, arts workshops and activities, as well as working independently on your art. The research project will be for 5 hours a day (+ lunch break), 5 days a week, for 2 weeks, culminating in a public art show. As a co-researcher, you will receive \$80\* a day for your work (totalling \$800 for full participation), which will be paid weekly via cash on Fridays. (\*Unless otherwise noted)

**Risks and discomforts:** A potential risk of participation is emotional distress related to memories of placements through the course of the study. Amelia and Gen, the facilitators, are experienced at listening and holding space for young people, and will always be on site and available. Additionally, Many Rivers (phone 667-4970, located at 4071 4th Ave) offers free youth counselling services, and Wednesdays 10-4 they have drop-in counselling. The counselling is completely confidential and separate from the research project. The Yukon Distress & Support Line can be reached at 1-844-533-3030 7 pm to Midnight every day.

**Benefits of the research and benefits to you:** You get to contribute to research on multiple placements that concern youth in care. You get the opportunity to explore the arts in mediums of your choosing. You get to learn more about research and explore your own research questions through art-making. Additionally, you can be a part of two public art shows at the end of the project if you wish.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff or the nature of your relationship with York University, Splintered Craft, or the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate either now, or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the study:** You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. If you choose to withdraw from the study early, you will receive honoraria equivalent to the days of your participation.

**Confidentiality:** In this research, the art and your artist statement is the data I will be collecting. Anonymity will be the default for crediting artwork. If you would like to use your name, initials

or an artist name in credit of your work, you are free to do so by consenting on the next page of this form. Personal contact info will be stored in a password protected and encrypted folder on a password protected computer as well as a password protected backup hard drive. Your contact info will be stored long enough to share the results of my data analysis, which is estimated to be completed August 2017, and then destroyed. You have the option to consent to the creation of a visual and/or audio/digital copy of my artwork being made and used in reports and scholarly publications, maintained in a secure password protected folder, to be used by the lead researcher until deceased. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

**Questions about the research?** Questions about project details can be directed to Amelia Merhar, the researcher, in person or via email. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca. This study's certificate number is STU-2016-054. This study's Yukon Research License number is 16-61-S&E

**Legal rights and signatures:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in MOVING HOME conducted by \_\_\_\_\_. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ would like to be credited as  
\_\_\_\_\_ when my art and/or  
reproductions/photos/descriptions of my artwork is presented, used in research analysis and  
publication.

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to the creation of a visual and/or  
audio/digital copy of my artwork being made and used in reports and scholarly publications,  
maintained in a secure password protected folder, to be used by the lead researcher until  
deceased.

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C: ARTIST STATEMENT WORKSHEET



### Artist Statements Made Easy!!!

Assembled by Naty Tremblay with Luv

#### So... What's the purpose of an Artist Statement?

An artist statement can be about a single work of art, a body of work, or about you as an artist and why or how you make your artistic decisions. An artist statement of high quality will introduce the viewer – in as few words as possible – to the thought processes, themes or cultural context the work was created in. An artist statement can be used in outreach, promotional material, on your website, in event programs and in gallery panels to describe the art you've made in a fabulous way!

For example:

- If the artist statement describes a basket you have woven, you may want to discuss the method you chose, the patterns or style of weaving, material used and why these elements are important to the finished work.
- If your piece tells a story, or if there is a story behind the creation of your piece, you can tell it in a concise way in your artist statement.
- If the work involved research, you can talk about your methods and your findings.
- If your biographical information is meaningful to the work, include it.
- An artist statement gives you the opportunity to clarify artistic choices, such as colors, shapes, textures, methods you have used, themes, politics etc., and discuss why they are important.

#### An Artist Statement is a form of Creative Writing!!!

1. Think about why you do what you do. How did you get into this work? How do you feel when work is going well? What are your favorite things about your work? Jot down short phrases that capture your thoughts. Don't worry about making sense or connections.

2. Make a list of words and phrases that communicate your feelings about your work and your values. Include words you like, words that make you feel good, words that communicate your values or fascinations. Be loose. Be happy. Be real.

2.b) Once you have a nice list of words assembled you may also pull out you 2-5 favorites then look them up in the dictionary, and/or thesaurus to see if you find some new & related words that can also be added to your list!

3. Answer these questions as simply as you can.

- a. What is your favorite tool? Why?
- b. What is your favorite material? Why?
- c. What do you like best about what you do?

- d. What do you mean when you say that a piece has turned out really well?
- e. What patterns emerge in your work? Is there a pattern in the way you select materials?
- f. What do you do differently from the way you were taught? Why?
- g. What is your favorite color? List three qualities of the color. Consider that these qualities apply to your work.

4. Write five sentences that tell the truth about your connection to your work. If you are stuck, start by filling in the blanks below.

When I work with \_\_\_\_\_ I am reminded that \_\_\_\_\_

I begin a piece by \_\_\_\_\_

I know a piece is done when \_\_\_\_\_

When my work is going well, I am filled with a sense of \_\_\_\_\_

When people see my work, I'd like them to \_\_\_\_\_

### **Now Start Sculpting your Statement!**

Write a three-paragraph artist's statement. Keep your sentences authentic and direct. Use the present tense ("I am," not "I was," "I do," not "I did.") Be brave: say nice things about yourself. As a rule, your artist's statement should be written in the first person. Refer to yourself with the pronouns "I, me, my." If this blocks you, write in the third person, then go back and change the pronouns as needed when you get to Step Four. Use the suggestions below to structure your statement. Write three to five sentences per paragraph.

#### **Here's a suggested format:**

First paragraph. Begin with a simple statement of why you do the work you do. Support that statement, telling the reader more about your goals and aspirations.

Second paragraph. Tell the reader how you make decisions in the course of your work. How and why do you select materials, techniques, themes?

Third paragraph. Tell the reader a little more about your current work. How it grew out of prior work or life experiences. What are you exploring, attempting, challenging by doing this work.

#### **Some Useful Writing Resources:**

**Arty Bollocks: Hilarious Statement Generator!**

<http://www.artbollocks.com/>

**Writing Resources:**

<http://artiststatement.com/artist-statements-dos-and-donts>

<http://theabundantartist.com/how-to-write-an-artists-statement-that-doesnt-suck/>

**Artist Statement Samples:**

<http://www.artbusinessinfo.com/examples-of-artists-statements.html>

<http://artiststatement.com/artist-statement-samples>

The Art Gallery of Ontario

<http://www.ago.net/singing-softly>

<http://www.ago.net/basquiat>

<http://www.ago.net/frida-diego-passion-politics-painting>

Whipper Snapper Gallery:

<http://www.whippersnapper.ca/exhibitions/butterfly-voices/>

<http://www.whippersnapper.ca/exhibitions/chips-in-the-night/>

XPace Gallery:

<http://www.xpace.info/exhibition-event/blindspots/>

<http://www.xpace.info/exhibition-event/doorcuts/>

Dance:

<http://www.armitagegonedance.org/karole-armitage/artists-statement>

Music:

<http://www.thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents/Programs/Live/Jacob-Wren--Every-Song-I-ve-Ever-Written.aspx>

**Appendix D: MEDIA LINKS**

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/youth-in-care-art-1.3639421>

About the Toronto project, interviews three youth\*

<http://whatsupyukon.com/family-learning/how-foster-care-shapes-lives/>

Whitehorse show and the project in general

<https://soundcloud.com/cbcyukon/moving-home-art-based-research-project>

The interview promoting the project, doing initial call out and youth outreach with Sandi Coleman CBC Radio One

<http://sketch.ca/youth-moving-forward-moving-home-project/>

An article about the project, focusing on Toronto and my relationship with Sketch

Additional interviews, (no links)

\*Interview with co-researchers on Metro Morning, CBC Radio One Toronto, June 16, 2016

Leonard Linklater on Midday Café, CBC Radio One Whitehorse, August 6, 2016

Indie 88, Sketch's 20th Anniversary, Dec 1st, 2016

## Appendix E: FULL LYRICS/TEXT TO WORKS PRODUCED

### Cosmic Diaspora by Elijah M

my mother was a good catholic  
 she attended church weekly  
 observing every holiday, with precision and severity  
 she confessed her sins  
 of which she believed absolved her of their earthly consequences  
 or perhaps she walked into that confessional feeling completely blameless  
 she believed in angels and divine fate  
 that god had a plan for a plan for us all  
 so long as you lived by the staunch rules  
 and behaved in a way that didn't stand out from the norm  
 she was the pope of her own crusade  
 she told me that I wasn't born of her  
 that I fell from a moonbeam into her garden  
 the potato specifically,  
 for the irish blood that I had and she did not share  
 I grew up feeling alien,  
 in my own kin and my own body  
 chasing that celestial inspiration that put me here  
 staring up at the stars tracing their invisible lines  
 connecting them to each other, the planets and me  
 lucifer fell to hell on a shooting star  
 that is the fate of anyone who questions authority  
 but my veins mimic the earth  
 I carry flame and force and will  
 stars go dim, planets erode, galaxies disintegrate  
 one day I will shed these earthbound bones  
 and return to a home cast in starlight  
 but for now  
 I will devote myself to proving my mother right  
 by channelling the awe and the might of the stars.

### Streams by Zula

Scrubbing my black skin  
 'til I feel human  
 (see-shaping) til I hit the concrete and have nothing to face  
 but my cold stone nightmares  
 eyes rolling back  
 line after line  
 black out

artist turning addict turning darkness into patterns time lapses keep my node bleedin madness  
turning into magic stargazing til I'm numb from the waist down

the memories of the dead trying to drown me in tradition  
oh yah, the ways of the wind ain't freeing me  
my momma gripped the bottle and daddy tried to kill me who to trust when the wise ones become  
the children when you're hungry,  
abandoned in the wild

it's a strange world  
and it's a battle  
I see you  
I wish you seen yourself

you say things you don't mean just to walk  
over bodies

to smile is to show weakness  
to conquer is to feel at home  
war is all you know power is what you crave  
you say nobody cares but nobody even knows you

but I see you

momma had you young she didn't know no better  
momma cries at night momma feels guilty  
and these 4 walls 10 girls and 7 social workers make you feel like you will never be *loved*  
but  
I *see* you  
I wish you seen yourself  
I know your fantasy is what keeps you alive but there's more living to do  
(ground) the things that you daydream about fearlessly  
you are safe in your body

### **Moving on Home by Oddane + Nicholas Ridiculous**

(*yeah thank you...* )

moving on home moving on home  
waited my whole life just to be free  
moving on home moving on home  
to find the person I was meant to be

I've been moving my whole life no stability  
you know what I'm moving on home to a place where I'm free

my thought's first class I can take this anywhere

they don't know what it's like just to be a kid in care  
 coming from a broken home tlc ain't found there  
 moving every month stress  
 new foster parent but to them I'm just a cheque  
 my past fucked up damn near left me traumatized  
 living under pressure contemplating suicide  
 amount of time I did that I can't count it on my fingers  
 only counting blessings, rapping is my therapy  
 this is my expression, mine is a weapon  
 sharpen every blade and loaded every clip  
 knowing its my time I ain't owning everything  
 look in the mirror tell myself I'm the shit  
 the only way I lose is the moment that I quit  
 but I will never lose cause I will never quit  
 hit the joint table, alternate the plan  
 wouldn't change the place cuz it made me who I am

if life is what you make it then I eally got a chance  
 that's my motivation if they tell me that I can't  
 so tell me that I can't man, tell me that I can't  
 they told me what I can't and look what it made me  
 chase the dreams I'm living and they told me I was crazy  
 now they ate their feelings cuz my dreams came true  
 moving on home to a penthouse view

moving on home moving on home  
 waited my whole life just to be free  
 moving on home moving on home  
 to find the person I was meant to be

moving on home just to be free  
 nobody told me it be easy  
 I would be damned if I don't try I would damned if I give up I would be damned if it breaks me  
 if it doesn't break it will make me had to make some choices I am grown now fam turned their  
 back I'm on my own now

CAS think they had me blessed, naw, rewind clocks never set, pause  
 fast forward just to forget loss  
 play it cool living off of bet, sauced  
 foster parents never caring, another cheque cashed  
 but sinners just staring just to watch us crash  
 don't know where we're going but we're going so fast  
 on the road to forget this broken down past  
 moving on home but we ain't made it yet we ain't made it yet  
 we ain't never been some rich kids  
 just a statistic conditioned to fail  
 but I'd risk it for a biscuit, yeah  
 cuz I'm hungry in the jungle, fuck the silver platter

did you hear my tummy grumble  
man it doesn't even matter  
so we moving on home but lets not pretend  
the only home I have is inside my head  
the only time I chill is after I'm dead  
but my heart still beat  
just stand down don't understand me  
stand so tall on my own two feet  
looking back at it like how could it be  
how could it be  
never thought I'd make it there without you  
looking at me know and I'm feeling so cool  
don't talk if your tongue ain't know truth, shit

moving on home moving on home  
waited my whole life just to be free  
moving on home moving on home  
to find the person I was meant to be

moving on home just to be free  
nobody told me it be easy  
I would be damned if I don't try I would damned if I give up I would be damned if it breaks me  
if it doesn't break it will make me had to make some choices I am grown now fam turned their  
back I'm on my own now



**APPENDIX F: ART SPREADSHEET**

Spreadsheet Moving Home ☆ ■ ameliamerhar@gmail.c

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help All changes saved in Drive

Comments Share

fx

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Medium	dance	music	spoken word	group art projects	silkscreened t-shirts	photography
2							
3	Artwork Name	dance piece BRRTME	Moving on Home RRTDH	Cosmic Diaspora GMD	Backpacks (10) EDM	Fuck your feelings RRT	Recognition PBE
4	Yukon Art		beats in space GME	Streams BDHE	Knowledge Production (7) GNIDE	Trust issues RRT	Start, Go, Search, Fall, Land NP
5	N= Nature					From a different point of view RRT	Welcome Series NMH
6	G=Galaxy/Space					Not just another number RRT	Positive/Negative GPB
7	P=Portrait						
8	R=Resilience						
9	RT=Resistance						
10	D=Daydreaming						
11	B=Body						
12	M=Movement						
13	H=Home						
14	I=Indigenous Culture						
15	E=ethics of care/giving						
16							
17							

Spreadsheet Moving Home ☆

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help All changes saved in Drive

fx

	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	painting	mixed media/collage	installation	textiles	traditional crafts	text	drawing	art show activities
2								
3	Cosmic Diaspora GM	Late bloomers BN (2)	Jaded RRTB	patched clothes M (2)	<a href="#">dreamcatcher IE</a>	zine 1ERRT	<a href="#">Inner Workings INGD</a>	Mapping activity E
4	Silver Lining DN	Lou in the city BNM	Statistics RRTB	patched skirt M	<a href="#">dreamcatcher IE (2)</a>	zine 2ERRT	<a href="#">Thoughts INB</a>	Home installation EH
5		Opal BN				zine 3E		<a href="#">Emotional geographies ENB</a>
6	<a href="#">#Mood BMP (3)</a>	Filled with life BHP				zine 4E HM		<a href="#">Mapping activity by artist E</a>
7	<a href="#">Wolf INBP</a>	<a href="#">Dream Catcher Painting IN</a>				zine 5E HM		
8	<a href="#">Beet in Space GN</a>							
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								

Total art with statements to analyze (a series counts as 1) 37

Plus 5 zine contributions

Total 42