

Moving Home:
Narrating Place, Home, and Rurality in Newfoundland and Labrador

by

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Abstract

This dissertation explores interconnected narratives of home, place, and rurality in Newfoundland and Labrador through three papers, each of which approaches the topic from a different angle. Through an examination of curators' stories of the design of two exhibits in a provincial museum, the first paper argues that notions of home have excluded Indigenous ways of living and suggests a decolonizing framework that focuses on the movements through which home is made. The second paper examines rural Newfoundland women's narratives of residential choice and, in focusing on their narrated experiences of movement, suggests that parenting is a life-stage during which place tensions are experienced, and that women are responding to rural change through the use of parenting strategies that include important narrative interventions. Closely connected to the idea of narrative interventions, the third paper explores some of the changing meanings of rural childhood that appear in women's narratives of home in rural Newfoundland and, in noting its important role in rural retention, suggests that despite an aging population the rural is a place narrated for the young. Focusing on movement, the papers together represent new approaches to examining connections between movement and the ways in which home, place, and the rural are lived and experienced in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Keywords: rural, home, narrative, decolonization, place, movement, women

Co-authorship Statement

Michelle Porter is the sole author of all papers presented here.

Statement of Ethics Approval

The research described in this dissertation has been reviewed and approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

I'm going to begin on Rennie's River. The river flows out of Long's Pond, runs through parts of the city of St. John's, Newfoundland, and empties through Quidi Vidi Lake into the ocean. Whenever I can, I walk along Rennie's River on my way to the university. This river is always on the move. It is always flowing, forming rapids and eddies, in some places gently crashing over rocks and in others welcoming swimmers of all ages. This river, like all rivers, is never the same from moment to moment. The waters I might wade into one afternoon have swept by in minutes or hours and have been replaced by new waters. And yet it is always the same river: Rennie's River. It is this sense of becoming through movement and change that I engage with through this narrative project, and will continue to engage with in my future research. The river: never the same river in any given moment and yet, to my experience of it, the same river. In drawing on aspects of the biophysical world, I explore these kinds of contradictions and tensions.

Notions of gathering and attention to meaning in movement are the results of research approaches that bring together the seemingly disparate literatures that engage with the complexities of place and mobilities. Flowing through all my research is the idea that, as mobilities scholars tell us, we are always on the move. Yet, this continual movement is deeply embedded in connections to place. At the end of this doctoral journey, I have come to see that the river is an important metaphor both for my research approach and for the

narratives through which the women who were part of my project describe their experiences of movement, mobility, and place.

Three ideas are the focus of this introduction. First, my research offers the notion of *gathering* as a way to invoke how home—the “processes of establishing connections with others and creating a sense of order and belonging, as part of rather than separate from, society” (Alison Blunt and Robin Dowling 2006, 14)—is made as much through movement as through staying in place, and importantly, through particular ways of relating to land and environment. Second, my work takes note of the narrative tensions and contradictions that appear in women’s stories of their rural lives and suggests that embodiment presents challenges to accessing the new global-local and connected mobile rurality. Further, the globally connected mobile rural is an ideal that mothering women in particular have trouble enacting in their daily rural lives. Third, I argue that ways in which people narrate movements into and out of rural places have the potential to lead a critical analysis of the particularities of rural change. This analysis suggests new ways of engaging with rural continuance through the meanings people attach to change and place.

This collection of papers stands at the intersection of the rural, home, place, and narrative studies. Within the discipline of geography women’s perspectives remain underrepresented (Pamela Moss and Karen Al Hindi 2008; Gillian Rose 1993). However, home, place, and narratives studies are garnering academic interest and are increasingly taken up in research using a stimulating myriad of methodological and analytical approaches (Arthur Frank 2012, Michael Woods 2009, Alison Blunt 2006). Clearly, it is crit-

ically important to better understand the ways in which home is made across the scales of the local the global, and emotional, material, and physical connections. Indeed, place and home are deeply implicated in the ways people make meaning out of their world and those meanings are storied in narrative layers. Despite a revitalization of rural studies (Paul Cloke 2006, Woods 2009), this area of academic inquiry continues to work in the shadows of other disciplines.

It is perhaps inevitable today, as global populations become increasingly urban, that rural studies would be dwarfed by its urban counterpart. However, it is this state of affairs—the increasing global dominance of urban thinking, living, and doing—that makes the case for the urgency of researching the rural. Tales as old and ubiquitous as *The Country Mouse and The City Mouse* make clear that the urban and the rural have always been understood as oppositional binaries. (The ways in which urban and the rural are defined and created through narratives and imaginaries are discussed in papers two and three.) It has been the trend, of course, to challenge binary categories—and rightly so. But dualities cannot be differently constructed without an understanding of both sides of the original binary. If the binary is taken apart by simply taking one up and ignoring the other, the binary remains intact and the un-paired subject cannot quite hold together. For this reason, among others, rural ways of living, working, thinking, and creating are important areas of academic inquiry in their own right. Urban studies is incomplete without consideration of its conceptual complement: the rural as it is understood and lived by rural people. Rural places have not only been important to the Canadian past, but rural

places (encompassing communities, regions, homes, and people) are poised to play a critical role in a future defined by economic, political, and environmental change.

1.2 'Growing' narrative methodologies

1.2.1 Approaching stories, the rural, and home

Very few narrative researchers today define "story" within rigid boundaries. James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium write "what a story is should remain fuzzy at the boundaries" (2012, 42). Increasingly, researchers are using much broader definitions that include almost any oral, written, or visual text as a narrative. I follow that approach. In this project rural and home each take shape through women's stories. My storied project approaches the categories of home and the rural in particular ways through this storied project. Early scholars approached home as people's affective and creative responses to place, usually directly involving a house. In critical geographies of home, the home is interpreted as a multi-faceted, imaginative, material, and connected geography shaping and shaped by relations of power. Home is a house, but is, like Doreen Massey's (1992) conception of place, extroverted and connected globally. For Gill Valentine (2001), Geraldine Pratt (2004), and other feminist geographers, home is the site of women's exploitation. For others, ownership of home (defined largely as house) is a human right (J. Douglas Porteous and Sandra Smith 2001). In these approaches, land is an almost invisible actor and movement is not directly addressed, but is effaced. In the conceptualization I bring forward, both land and movement become much more apparent. And the rural? Well, the rural is interesting.

Rural scholars note the different stories we tell about the rural. Woods (2010) describes the rural idyll, the rural backwater, and recreational rural, among a myriad of others. Keith Halfacree (2007) tells us about a variety of radical and alternative rural pasts, presents, and futures. John Parkins and Maureen Reed (2013) tell us stories about rural change and “the resource rural” in Canada. Melody Hessing and Rebecca Raglan (2005) examine the gendering of the “wilderness rural.” Johansen (2008) analyzes novels written in relationship with rural places and offers up the concept of a rural territorialized cosmopolitanism—a rural that is storied as connected to global urban and rural places, but that is embedded in responsibility to a particular place. Other scholars point to the ways that women’s experiences are too often effaced in rural development, due in part to their reproductive work (Lanyan Chen 2014). In my research rural women’s lives and their relationships to the land are more visible through an exploration of their narratives involving relational connections between people and geography. In this qualitative narrative project both home and the rural are approached as stories told about relationships between belonging and the land and sea we gather on, through, and alongside.

1.2.2 Methods, roots, and stories

The physical structure of this dissertation—three separate papers between an introduction and a conclusion—can be understood as three separate but connected plants that have grown from shared narrative methodological root and/or stem systems. This project’s questions, processes, and outcomes cannot be separated from its narrative methodology.

Moving Home engages with the following question: What do narratives about rurality, place, and home reveal about the enactment of home and rural ways of life in Newfoundland? The finer foci involved are: the storied connections between place connections and contemporary rural ways of life, the storied connections between place connections and home, and an analysis of the ways in which contemporary theories of rurality and home apply to narrated contexts in Newfoundland and Labrador¹.

Narrative methodologies fit the broad, complex, and storied scope of this project. Narrative approaches to rural tell us about the meanings of events and “provide recollection about self, about relationships with other and a place, insights rarely provided in such depth by other methods” (Mark Riley and David Harvey 2008). By focusing on narrative methodologies, I tease out the meanings through which the rural is lived, as storied in particular places and moments in time by the rural women I spoke to in rural Newfoundland. Importantly, narrative approaches speak to the ways in which personal lives respond to social change. This approach allows the research to be both very personal and subjective while also contributing to our understanding of broader concepts. Narrative research contributes to place-based knowledge in that women are relating particular lives and particular relationships to place, but contributes also to our knowledge about how place is made in a broader sense. Understanding how particular lives are lived in and through particular places can offers insight into the multiple roles of place in our storied lives.

¹ I refer to Newfoundland and Labrador when I refer to the area of research that involve all three papers, because the first involves Labrador geographies as well as island geographies. In general, when I am referring to the stories of women who were living on the island of Newfoundland, I write only Newfoundland. This was a decision made to avoid the implications that conclusions drawn from island experiences can represent Labrador experiences. Although aspects may overlap, Labrador histories and geographies are different from those on the island.

Moving Home brought together unique elements to form a “Stories First” approach. This approach recognizes that “[b]y looking at the subjects that people chose to dwell on in narrating their lives, we are in a position to see what matters most to them from their point of view” (Kirin Narayan and Kenneth George 2001, 513). Stories First emerges from an array of literatures, including: feminist systems theory (Anne Stephens 2009, 2011), vernacular and local knowledge (Pam Hall 2013, Dean Bavington 2010, Ivan Illich 1973), and narrative methods and methodologies (Molly Andrews, Corrine Squire and Maria Tamboukou 2008), and dialogical narrative analysis (Frank 2012). Like all narrative approaches, Stories First brings particular aspects of our storied lives into focus even while it allows other aspects to stay out of focus or out of the picture entirely. Unique to my approach is a commitment to a follow-the-story approach that may be described as academic journalism steeped in theoretical analysis that is responsive to the stories told during the research process. What matters most in my research process is also what matters most to the people I have talked to; as such those matters are foundational to my approach. The stories lead in Stories First. I ask, therefore, how do people narrate the subjects of their own lives?

Moving Home’s use of aspects of dialogical narrative analysis (Frank 2012) allowed for a variety of knowledge outcomes and ways of relating to bodies of knowledge. I have approached stories as relational entities whose meanings are made within dialogue. This non- hierarchical knowledge system is uniquely suited to the decolonizing approach and it allows for and prioritizes stories filled with contradiction, uncertainty, and change.

These are stories from which each person takes his/her own meanings, even while broader social meanings are created through them. Indeed, the decolonizing approach is one that looks to stories to better understand the aboriginal worldview and knowledges that have been subsumed by the colonial. Decolonization research takes into consideration “how settler perspectives and worldviews get to count as knowledge” (Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang 2012, 2). The concept of *gathering*, for example, emerged directly from this kind of storied engagement.

My project is also connected to the category of women. Feminist geographers, such as Rose, remind us that it is often women’s bodily experiences that remain muted in movement and place. Like Rose (herself referring to bell hooks’ work), I did not want “a margin defined only by its relation to its centre” (Rose 1993, 56). This narrative approach to women’s experiences allowed women to define the centres of their own lives, thus acknowledging the “unstable, shifting, uncertain and, above all, contested” grounds of academic knowledge (Rose 1993, 160). Further, the papers included in this dissertation describe women’s “paradoxical space” (Rose 1993). Engagement with the contradiction and paradoxes created through women’s experiences of and embodiment within space and place is Rose’s key suggestion toward unravelling the often unseen, embedded masculinism in geography’s basic concepts of place, space, and landscape.

It is worth pausing to observe more fully two examples of the ways research, which has engaged with women’s embodied experiences, has led to broadening conceptual understandings. Hessing and Raglan (2005) observe that women’s accounts of nature

they studied do not tell a story of conquest, adventure, and domination. Raglan's research showed that in conventional accounts of Canadian environment and wilderness, women's 'place' is the house but that women's accounts focused on making a home in and with that biophysical world (338). Wilderness as home challenges masculinist interpretations of wilderness as a pristine, empty space waiting to be explored; the idea of virginal wilderness that, when touched/marked by people, becomes less valuable. Roorda wrote that women's accounts of retreats from civilization narrated their experiences as tales of rugged interdependence in place, in contrast to the masculinized tales of rugged independence (35). These two examples show some of the ways that sex impacts the personal stories we tell and the ways we understand broader concepts, such as wilderness. Following these observations, the rest of this section will succinctly discuss some of the insights from each paper that were the result of engagement with the stories told by rural Newfoundland women about their rural homes.

In a time when newspaper headlines regularly predict "the end of rural" or "the decline of rural," much academic attention has turned to urban studies. This trend is the case in Newfoundland. Yet, as Woods observed, "[i]t is the complex and contested nature of the rural that has positioned rural space as central to many key issues facing contemporary society" (2010). Within this context, it is interesting to note that although rural places and rural landscapes are central to descriptions and narratives, the word rural does not appear in women's narratives—home is the preferred word and the one most often invoked. Anita Kora is Inuit and acted as a guest interpreter for the creation of one of the

two exhibits at The Rooms. The last sentence of a text she wrote for museum interpretive exhibit reads : “We gather, we hunt and we live on this vast and beautiful land.” During our interview she said:

I think people are getting caught up in the definition of what home is....I was talking to my mom about it. And I was like how am I supposed to encapsulate this? She said just think about what the land gives us and how we go. Because if we didn't harvest from the land, if we didn't move, we wouldn't live.

Her comments appear in the first paper “Gathering Home: Toward a Decolonizing Framework for the Study of Home.” When the two exhibits described in the paper opened, I knew I wanted to include an engagement with the official stories told through the provincial museum.

Within the exhibits, immediately interesting to me was the way in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stories were placed alongside each other, rather than tuck the Aboriginal section in its own silo, as often happens in such exhibits. During interviews with some of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who helped create the exhibits, I heard about the discussion and tension over the meanings and uses of the words “place” and “home.” It was this discussion about those concepts that most strongly informed my research and the insight provided by a woman who had grown up in newly recognized Nunatsiavut. I could have approached the museum through a number of other questions. But the focus on movement, land, and home throughout the exhibits and the design struck

me as significant and connected to aspects of home I had experienced in my life. My research process led to the word *gathering* as a focus and as a constructive approach to integrating the concepts involved.

Using *gathering* to think through the political and personal impacts of home's meanings led me to explore the colonial implications of home and the meaning of home in my own life and that of my Métis mother and other ancestors. Home as ways of gathering highlights not only the macro- and-micro movements over land in which we live, but it notes that notions and claims of belonging and place are, in fact, central to our movement. The *gathering* framework offers one small decolonial intervention in the study of home and challenges the growing hegemony of home as individualized economic spaces.

This following quotations are from a non-Aboriginal woman. She is in her mid-to-late forties and relocated to rural Newfoundland after the birth of her first child.

I know that people live like that every day, you know, they are just trying to get through until they figure out how to get back home.

But I think that in sending them off we've never made that opportunity for them to come back. Or explained to them or had those conversations about you know maybe your path will lead you back here.

These statements are part of the paper “‘We Would Never Have Encouraged Them to Stay’: Women, Place and Narrative Interventions in Rural Newfoundland.” Moving away from the decolonial engagement employed in the first paper, this paper shows a rural that is like Rose's concept of paradoxical space—in which contradicting ideas of the rural and

home are imagined, narrated, and lived out on the same geography. This article narrates some of the complex geographies of movement that make up the everyday lives of rural women on the island of Newfoundland today. In doing so, this paper engages with the importance of women's new circular narratives and the generational use of narrative interventions: interventions that have themselves undergone transformation and will likely continue to transform in response to changing conditions. Engagement with the idea of women's narrative interventions opens up not only the role of a narrated future in individual life choices, but also their roles in rural continuity overall.

The broader impact of the article is to question the role of place and embodiment in globalization and new mobilities theories. My research found that women's embodied role as mothers limits their access to the paired identity narratives of "globalized citizen" and "mobile citizen." These limitations have the impact of 'placing' them and their children on the periphery. These women's stories have tensions between the expectations of parenting through the maintenance of connections across larger geographies and the clear limitations on time and the physical needs of a child or children. These are narrated in their everyday rural lives.

The third quotation is from a grandmother who moved to rural Newfoundland when she married a fisher. She became a central organizer of fisheries operations where she lived. She describes her role and the role of her generation as keeping home alive and keeping a rural home open for continued access during the childhood of grandchildren growing up in urban areas.

My grandson came home last year.... he wanted to come in the winter. You can imagine all the snow. Jumping off all the rocks this time because it was all snowbanks. I mean obviously if one of the kids ever moved back we wouldn't leave but it'll be their summer home and we will no matter where we go we'll always come back here in the summer. If we don't end up going somewhere where the kids live.

This quotation appears in the third paper "For the Children: Notions of Childhood in Women's Narratives of Home in Rural Newfoundland," which engages with paradoxical narratives that recount and/or construct childhood in contemporary rural Newfoundland.

"For the Children" argues that changing notions of rural childhood have material impacts on rural lives and rural continuity. Raising children is identified as a core reason to live in rural areas among research participants because they wanted to offer their children a particular rural way of life, often a way of life they experienced. However, women talked about broad changes in everyday experiences of childhood through their observations of their own children's everyday lived childhoods and their own remembered childhoods. Women narrate a desire to live a particular way in rural places, but were hampered by additional pressures: what kind of childhood did they really want? How much rural were their children getting? Important here is not only that children are an important motivator in return to the rural in Newfoundland but that women narrate a willingness to leave rural areas if they cannot give their children the way of life, the rural childhood, they had moved to the rural to obtain. This tension calls for attention to the ways people

want to live in rural areas as much as to economic conditions as factors that impact rural continuity.

All three of the papers presented in “Moving Home” story women caught between seemingly contradictory normative imaginaries of rural home. The papers demonstrate ways in which these contradictions are mobilized in and through social processes in rural Newfoundland. I’ll end this section by taking you back to Rennie’s River. I can’t tell you how many times I have walked along that river during this PhD journey. I have written portions of this introduction sitting on a bench beside that river. Many of the women I talked to during the course of this research told stories about home that were connected to the sight and sound of the ocean. For me it is the river.

Once, as a child, we lived in a small wooden cabin on the edge of a river. The sound of the river as it hurried ahead to empty into Cultus Lake, day and night, always there even as it always left me behind. I haven’t been to that river in more than two decades. But I carry the sound of it with me and, wherever I go, its spawning salmon and its curious dark depths go too. It is with me, and yet not with me at all: my rural home.

1.3 An introduction to the papers through the literature

Existing scholarship that explores the interplay between movement and being in place raises questions about the apparent immobility of place. At a time when there is increasing academic attention to mobilities (Monika Buscher, John Urry and Katian Witchger 2010, Tim Cresswell 2010), alongside increasing calls for place-based research (Bill Reimer and Sean Markey 2008, Arturo Escobar 2001, Maureen Reed et al. 2013) this re-

search takes a different tact. My concept of *gathering* through movement is positioned between mobility and place. This approach recognizes that mobility is inextricably linked to ways of making places and that mobility is in fact reliant on place. At the same time contemporary staying-in-place has become deeply implicated in leaving and is always connected to mobility and movement because people live through movement.

“Gathering Home” takes up an exploration of home’s theorizations, the paper first explores words and ideas commonly associated with home. The relationships observed between movement and home. Home has been and still is commonly associated with words such as intimacy (Gaston Bachelard 1958), centre (Edward Relph 1976), refuge (Carole Despres 1991), privacy and roots (Peter Somerville 1992), house, and being-in-the-world (Shelley Mallet 2004). Many of these associations, however, reflect particular life experiences: for the most part white, male, bourgeois property and land owners (Blunt 2006, Mona Domosh 1998). Feminists note the ways in which home could be for women a place of work, economic exploitation and violence (ibid), while black women and gay researchers note home’s ability to foster resistance and alternative senses of self (Andrew Gorman-Murray 2006, bell hooks 1991, Alice Walker 1983). Massey (1992, 1994, 2012) reframed place and home through connection, change and multiplicity. Blunt and Dowling introduced critical geographies of home, which highlight home’s political implications and shifting emotional geographies. Transnational home research brings attention to the ways in which multiple identities can co-exist through and at home and point to the ways in which mobility is intimately connected to home (Silvia Marcu 2014, Blunt 2007).

Studies of the home relationships of mobile people show us that rather than home being defined only through retreat and stasis, home for many people can also be 'rather a stop on a life route which promises constant change' (Jan Duyvendak 2011, 112-3).

“Gathering Home” also explores home’s cultural reach and impact, pointing to the ways that particular European narratives of home, such as private ownership of house and land and near-continual tenure, do not fit particular Aboriginal ways of living (Sarah de Leeuw 2013, Porteous and Smith 2001). This literature is key to this paper’s discussion regarding connections between Aboriginal ways of living and home. In its focus on movement, “Gathering Home” returns to Anne Buttimer’s (1980) concept of home as lived through tensions between staying in place and going away, extending those movements to the daily lived movements in and outside the home, but that are connected to home. Finally, this paper considers what home means to me personally, as a Métis woman disconnected from her people and her land and how Aboriginal considerations of home can be part of the broader project of decolonization.

“We Would Never Have Encouraged them to Stay” shifts focus from representations of home in an official museum setting to narratives that shape and reflect experiences of leaving and returning to rural Newfoundland. These stories, told by rural women, are closely related to notions of home and place. The literature reviewed in this paper draws on discussions of the critical importance of narratives of home in re-shaping how we study home and the stories we tell about home (Steff Jansen and Staffan Lofving 2009, hooks 2009, Pratt 2004, Marcu 2014, Blunt 2005), the importance of understanding

relationships between place, people and narratives about place (Reimer 2010), and the importance of dominant discourses in shaping the ways we narrate our lives (Taylor 2005). Important to this paper are the ideas of commonsense narratives and shared narrative resources. Shared narrative resources that have become normative and so common they appear as common sense (such as the idea that people have strong connections to places in which they were born or grew up) are called common sense narratives (Stephanie Taylor 2010). Studies that focus on how home is lived at micro and macro levels are critically important to the future of home and have the potential to re-shape how we study home and the commonsense stories we tell about home (Jansen and Lofving 2009, hooks 2009, Pratt 2004, Marcu 2014, Blunt 2006). Because home remains a key site “for the construction and reconstruction of one's self” (Iris Young 2005, 153) the study of home has “the potential to spark positive change in people’s home(less) lives” (Katherine Brickell 2012, 238). Home and the rural are both particular kinds of places made meaningful in particular ways and through particular narratives.

Narrative research on place-based identities sheds light on “new identities of place at the beginning of the twenty-first century” (Taylor 2010, 16). Increasingly, research supports the idea that a person’s sense of place varies over time (Emma Stewart et al. 1998), and is concerned with how place and self-identity are co-created (Reimer and Markey 2008). Reimer (2010) encourages rural researchers to “aggressively” interrogate place-based identity narratives in order to contribute to place-based policy, development programs and other forms of governance that respond to place and provide a catalyst for

the creation of new rural futures. Imagination remains core to these narratives because as people and groups re-build place-based identities, they do so through a re-imagining of themselves and their places in response to societal change and particular contexts and political interests (Hong Zhu et al. 2011). Close to my research, Taylor's study of women's residential identities uses narrative data to explore place tensions. She examined what women's life stories about places and houses they had moved to and from reveal about conflicts between narratives that shaped the ways we used to live and narratives that shape the way we want to live or do live in contemporary society. Contrasting what she calls commonsense born-and-bred narratives with newer place narratives that suggest belonging can be created through choice, Taylor observes tensions in achieving these new place identities in women's narratives. In analyzing the meaning of narrative contradictions, Taylor questions just how free women are to choose their place identities. Her research paves the way for this paper, which takes up her critical approach to new narratives of place in an exploration of the narratives of home and place among rural Newfoundland women. The notion of *gathering* introduced in the first article is undoubtedly part of the ideas that ground this paper as well as the paper focusing on childhood, but *gathering* is not explicitly brought forward. I am reluctant to use it as an analytical tool until I have had more time to work with it and to get feedback from other scholars whose work engages with decolonization (I am particularly interested in working with other Métis scholars to develop the conceptualization further).

Rural childhood is the focus of “For the Children.” The literature review in this paper turns its gaze toward storying the rural, rural women, and the nature of rural childhood. Rural researchers note that an understanding of rural childhood is important to the future of the rural in Canada and across the world (Chris Philo 1992, Valentine 1997, Hugh Matthews et al. 2000, Michael Leyshon 2008, Helene Cummins 2009). Yet, relatively few researchers explore aspects of rural childhood as a specialization or focus (Matthews et al. 2000). The notion of childhood is a key imaginative area through which the rural story is created (Mary Ann Powell, Nicola Taylor and Anne Smith 2008). The story of the rural as “constructed in the discourse of social science is a story of a continual struggle to define what is meant by the ‘rural’ and to establish the extent to which it is the same as, or distinctive from, the ‘urban’” (Valentine 2001, 249). The story of rural research focusing on rural childhood follows a similar pattern as it attempts to differentiate how rural childhoods differ from urban and whether rural childhoods are somehow better (Matthews et al. 2000, Owain Jones 1997, Jo Little and Patricia Austin 1996, Joan Abbot-Chapman et al. 2014, Katherine King and Andrew Church 2013).

“For the Children” discusses the importance of women’s perspectives to rural studies. Even while noting the lag in acceptance of feminist and women’s perspectives in rural studies (Little and Morris 2005), these perspectives have already broadened conceptual understandings in the study of the rural as they have begun to do in geography (Rose 1993). For example, one study found that women’s experiences of stress as a result of gendered experiences of farming can impact farm continuity (Linda Price and N. Evans

2005) and studies of women's experiences of the rural and rural wilderness are beginning to open up the taken for granted (masculinist) narratives that shape our dominant understanding of these categories (see Hessing, Raglon and Sandiland's *This Elusive Land*). The majority of research into rural childhood focuses on parent's views and shows that adults "both mobilize and contest notions of the rural idyll in describing their children's childhood" (Valentine 1997, 147). Idyllic or not, this third paper explores the power of the notion of childhood and its potential in sustaining the rural into the future.

Movement is the broad theme connecting all papers. Each considers movements in a different way as a thread linking gathering, home, place, and the rural. The findings relate to specific women in a particular place and in a particular point in time. However, as discussed in the conclusions, these results do align themselves with other empirical and qualitative narrative research in these areas. The richness of storied lives is such that the findings here make important observations about transformation in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and point toward the importance of rural imaginations in adapting to change.

1.4 Stories First: The value and limitations of this research project

In order to demonstrate the scope and value of this research project, it helps to understand its limitations and gaps. Of course, no doctoral research project can or should claim to be total and comprehensive. Each research project positions itself as part of a larger academic conversation and, ideally, more than one conversation.

The series of papers that make up this dissertation are part of different academic conversations. These articles have a place in the spectrum of narrative methods and analyses through its articulation of a Stories First narrative research approach. The term Stories First was first introduced in a presentation to rural geographers in Wales (Porter 2015). In this approach, stories lead the research and, rather than considered complementary or used to provide examples of phenomena demonstrated in numerical data, become central to the research. In “Moving Home” this method requires a focus on the collection of in-depth stories through informal conversations and, further, that the analysis be led by the stories rather than by previously held theoretical constructs. In this project, the Stories First approach allows the stories a platform to dominate the analytical conversation and to drive suggestions for future research. I follow Taylor’s 2010 narrative-discursive research and analytical methods, although her research process reflects a particular psychological and identity formation phenomenon, while my own research began with broader topics and allowed the final foci to emerge from the narratives themselves. This kind of a process can feel insecure to researchers accustomed to controlling many aspects of input and output; indeed, it requires the researcher to let go of control in many areas. The results, however, can be exhilarating and surprising. Without a doubt, my interpretations of the stories I collected are informed by my studies of feminist geographies, critical geographies of home, and rural geographies. However, I could not have predicted that the stories would lead to the kind of topics and complex findings at the heart of the three papers herein collected. It is also taken for granted that the fact that I collected stories about

how women came to live in their current home imposed necessary but broad and loosely-defined parameters to the stories—but I did not pre-determine the theories or topics that would be prioritized. I let the stories emerge from the conversations; that is the nature of the Stories First approach. Taylor’s research is embedded in social psychology while my own research is steeped in rural geographies (in which narrative analysis remains an uncommon approach) and critical geographies of home and place (which has a limited though larger tradition of in-depth interview and narrative-based research). However, the academic conversations with which I work, the insistence on letting the narratives drive the research process from beginning to end remains uncommon enough that it is necessary to outline this Stories First practice in this introductory chapter.

Yet, the idea of stories being important enough to lead is not new. I didn’t come up with it. I think the idea has been germinating ever since I first read Thomas King’s Massey lectures almost ten years ago. I often quote King’s one-liner: “The truth about stories is that’s all we are” (King 2003, 2). But King’s entire lecture series was made of stories that taught about stories and so many other things: King’s life, colonialism, christianity, Aboriginal creation myths, what it means to be of Greek and Cherokee descent, and racism. “So you have to be careful with the stories you tell,” he wrote, because “once told, [they are] loose in the world” (2003, 10). King’s favourite “commonsense” narratives involve the creation of the world because “contained within creation stories are relationships that help to define the nature of the universe and how cultures understand the world in which they exist” (2003, 10). King’s lectures showed me that the world in which

we live is made up of stories as much as it is made up of earth, rock, and water. And since that time I have never been able to see the world the way I saw it before. Stories First is a natural outgrowth of that: if King's lectures were roots, this research project is one of the plants that grows from that root.

“Moving Home” demonstrates the value of narrative research in rural geography and adds to a small but growing body of rural research that calls for an increase in the use of narrative, experiential research, including oral history research (Riley and Harvey 2007). This research thus adds to historical and contemporary bodies of narrative-based research about Newfoundland and Labrador (e.g. Linda Cullum 2003) and can be a starting point for future research. The papers to follow provide critical insight into areas not widely taken up in rural geography especially in Canadian contexts, which tend to focus on natural resources and rural economies (Michael Troughton 1995): rural childhood, parenting, and experiences of movement and home. Together, the papers herein recognize: the value of rural research that focuses on the complexities of people, and: that rural research can benefit from more narrative and people-focused research. One of the largest contributions to geographies of home is the identification of the need for a decolonizing framework for the study of home. However, the final two papers also contribute to the study of home with their insistence in taking up what happens in the home as an academic matter and in linking these home issues to broad topics such as rural geography, critical geography and theories of place and movement, urban and the rural.

This project took up a feminist methodology along with and before formulating what I call a Stories First approach. “Moving Home” responded to what the women involved in my research were talking about and, in doing so, indicated that these topics were important *because* women talked about them. In taking this methodological approach, this project adds to contemporary understandings of women’s lives in Newfoundland.

These contributions aside, the project has had clear limitations. Were I to have had unlimited resources and time, I would have interviewed more women in more communities (including in Labrador). However, the collection and analysis of more complex and different kinds of data were beyond the scope and budget of this project. Those narrative tools are perhaps possible for future research. Ideally, I would have liked to take a broader sample across geographies, experiences, and ages. However, the tradeoff would be, of course, that the stories collected would have been shorter and less in-depth and each individual’s voice would have become more muted as it takes its part in a larger set of stories. The small sample size allowed for a wonderful depth of discussion and analysis and, additionally, allowed me to be able to keep the stories in my conscious mind all together during analysis and write-up. The narrative focus inevitably missed a large amount of non-narrative data, but this focus allowed the stories to lead the research and provided a broad base of results with which to work in the future.

“Moving Home” provides a base of knowledge from which to potentially build many excellent research projects. A focus on women can bring ideas to the table that are

current, complex, and relevant. Important future areas of research that this project points to include, but are not limited to: the future of home in the face of change; exploring the new conceptualization of home as ways of gathering in partnership with decolonial Métis researchers; gender, movement and parenting from rural places; the new ‘global place’ and its tensions in women’s life histories; women’s changing connections to rural home; changing rural childhoods and new connections between urban and rural; and, phenomenological experiences of movement and stillness in contemporary rurality.

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2. Gathering Home: Toward a Decolonizing Framework for the Study of Home

2.1 Introduction

Since the arrival of settlers to North America, home has been the site of and tool of colonization. Contemporary critical studies of home have been able to describe the ways in which home and home studies has been implicated in the extension of the nation state (Blunt 2005, Blunt and Dowling 2006) and argue that normative theoretical and seemingly commonsense concepts of home and family have themselves been imposed for the purpose of enforcing assimilation (de Leeuw 2013). While these are necessary interventions, the study of home can also be part of the process of decolonization, re-imagining home without the fundamental historical biases related to Euro-centric settler-colonial ideas. Few scholars who take up the study of home have chosen to engage with decolonizing frameworks. This paper suggests that the process of reconceptualizing home is part of the decolonization process. This paper does not replace one set of prescriptive definitions of home with another, but chooses instead to place itself as a starting point for multiple possible decolonization processes that reconsider how claims to home are made. The ‘gathering framework’ described here calls for the recognition of diverse claims to home and home territories that are made through a variety of movements as resistance to the growing hegemony of home as economic and ecological spaces that are owned and therefore manageable.

As one tentative step toward such a research agenda, this paper suggests that home can be conceptualized through the notion of gathering. Home, this paper argues, is made

through the gathering of people over land and sea in and through on-going and varied movement. This paper recognizes that because “colonization has not just been about the land but also about ‘the exploitation and subjugation of knowledge, our minds, and our very beings’ (Geniusz 2009, 2)” (Adese 2014, 63), decolonial praxis often occurs slowly, one realization at a time. As such, the conceptualization described here is part of the journey toward decolonization and its aim is as much to reach out to others as they try to identify the decolonization processes that will support their families, communities and selves as it is to suggest the beginning of a personal and academic writing and research agenda. As will be demonstrated through engagement with the literature, gathering as conceptualized here reflects the recent studies of home that conceptualize home through ideas about movement, change and connection to the world. This conceptualization focuses on the ways movement creates meaning through gathering(s). The ideas presented here are not at all prescriptive but are intended, in the way of all stories, to be re-worked and re-created by any reader and listener who finds a seed in it that supports their own decolonization process.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first section describes a research project that led to this paper’s reconsideration of the meaning of home. The second section reflects on my own story of the study of home as a gesture of respect for the stories told to me during this research process. The third section engages with the words of an Inuit participant from Northern Labrador and introduces the emerging conceptualization that links home with the notion of gathering.

2.2 Part I: Home

2.2.1 The study of home

Early scholars established the study of home within Euro-centric, male, and upper-class notions of home (Valentine 2001, Blunt and Dowling 2006). Before and since Heidegger first asked what it is to dwell (1971), academics have been considering how to think about home by considering its various meanings. Though answers to the question ‘what is home?’ have varied, words and concepts commonly discussed in association with home have included: intimacy and creativity (Bachelard 1958); centre (Relph 1976); permanence, refuge, status, place to own (Depres 1991); shelter, hearth, paradise or haven, privacy and roots (Somerville 1992); house, ideal, symbol of self, (Mallett 2004). The majority of these terms reflect the experiences of a male head of an upper class household. It was these upper class men who did not take part in the work of making home on a daily basis; for these men home was a retreat from work and a shelter from public life. The lower-class, the servants and women (even upper-class women whose work included the management of the house for her husband) were not sheltered from the work at home and so home was a place of work (Valentine 2001). Though the details have shifted, George argued in *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity* that the set of ‘naturalized’ ideas that underpin home’s varying iterations remain almost unchanged from this time. She wrote that domesticity is “a set of ideas which have associated women with family, home, domestic values, hierarchical distribution of power favoring men, practices which have become globally hegemonic as a result of colonial and capitalist expansion

and modernization, albeit not without contestation” (George 1998, 3). Valentine noted that the idea and work of a mother/wife is necessary to the functioning idea of home and that changes in the built environment of home (suburban housing and neighbourhoods, for example) created more work for women in the home (2001). Blunt and Dowling argued that “household and domestic relations are critically gendered, whether through relations of caring and domestic labour, affective relations of belonging, or establishing connections between the individual, household and society” (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 15).

Criticism of the dominance of the white male ideal of home emerged from feminist scholars and black scholars. Feminist scholars pointed out that for women home can be a site of economic exploitation, a site of work, a place of violence, and experienced simultaneously public and private (Domosh 1998). Black feminists noted how home could also be a site of resistance to racism and that choosing to live home in the face of racism is itself a political act (hooks 1991, Walker 1983). The more recent emergence of gay-and-lesbian-focused criticism of home has suggested that home is a site that can foster and support alternative family structures (Gorman-Murray 2006). However, these challenges to the normative conceptualization of home offer variations to the ways home and house connect to the outside world and do not represent attempts at new or radical ways of conceptualizing home. For the most part, home remains as it was, in a private place or apartment, somewhat disconnected from the outside world.

Two interventions of the study of home and place have changed the way academics conceptualize and analyze these terms. Because home is a space made meaningful in

a particular way, theories of home are related to theories of place. Recent literature attempts to dispel the notion that being rooted requires being in place over time and critically reconsiders that assumption that rootedness is necessarily more desirable than a state of rootlessness. Massey called for the rejection of an inward-looking sense of place and instead conceptualized home as an extroverted and hybrid place, understood through an analysis of global connections made through flows of space and time (Massey 1994).

While some continue to argue for the importance of place as a concept that needs to be defended and preserved in the face of globalization (Harvey 2006, Escobar 2001), place and home as understood through global connections has paved the way for the study of transnational experiences of home. These studies have shown that senses of home can be defined by attachments to multiple identities and places and has demonstrated ways in which human mobility can be linked to a sense of home (Marcu 2014, Blunt 2007). Mobility can create a home that is 'rather a stop on a life route which promises constant change' (Duyvendak 2011, 112-3). Massey's place as applied to home is not a decolonizing framework; instead, when it is used without a decolonizing lens, this conceptualization can work to replicate and normalize detachments to land, place, relationships, and relatedness. However, other scholars and writers call for a fundamental reconsideration of our relationships to the land have been examined in other writing (hooks 2009, Barnhill 1999). *At Home on this Earth* (Barnhill 1999) is a collection of essays that argues for the creation of multiple, ethical relationships with the earth, represented through responsive place-relationships and home-relationships with the earth envisioned as a bioregion popu-

lated by interspecies communities. This paper follows his focus “on the possibilities of being at home on the earth: finding place, reinhabitation” (1999, xiii) and recognizing that our relationship to the earth is radical in the dominant context of globalization. Brachial asks how can people develop a sense of being in place as members of a bioregion and interspecies community and in answering his own question writes that one way is to “draw on experience of native cultures of America, but European Americans are caught in a paradox, needing to learn from them, but there are limits to learning and inauthentic imitation and cultural appropriation are all too common” (1999, 8). Barnhill quotes from Melissa Nelson’s essay *Becoming Métis* to stress that non-Aboriginal people do not need to imitate Aboriginal cultures but need to develop their own ethical relationship to place, defined by a “deeper knowledge of the self within a wider ecocultural context” (Nelson 1997, 63). Nelson’s exploration of her attempts to decolonize her mind and her relationship to place are echoed by the framework I am offering in this paper. In fact, it is my intention to further develop this framework in dialogue with other Métis writers and scholars and that is the reason home as ways of gathering remains open.

The introduction of the critical geographies of home has represented another shift in how home is studied (Blunt and Dowling 2006). In this critical framework home is not only a material space, but an imaginative and emotive place that is created through connections across multiple scales, including the local, the national, and transnational. Conceptualizations of movement are not a large part of critical geographies of home although Blunt and Dowling’s framework does centre connectedness and the plurality of home (in

that people can have emotional and imaginary connections to multiple home places). Using this critical analysis, Blunt and Dowling broadened the reach of home's geographies. However, home itself does not move very far away from its roots and this becomes apparent in its strong focus on the house and, in particular, the British home in various geographies and time periods (e.g. Blunt 2005). Home remains primarily attached to a sense of ownership influenced by market forces and individualism.

These recent home and place theorizations add complexity to their study areas but do not lead to a decolonization process. A small but growing number of academics are considering connections between home and decolonization. Although written about the Australian context, it is also true of Canada that '[s]ince colonisation the nation state has attempted through an array of social, legal, economic and cultural practices to break Indigenous people's ontological connections to land, and to cast them as homeless in the 'modern' world' (Slater 2007). Blunt's (2005) work into Anglo-Indian domesticities clearly demonstrates the role home and ideas of home played in the expansion of the British empire. De Leeuw (2013) observed in her examination of the impact of child welfare regulations, policies and practices on Indigenous families in British Columbia, Canada, seemingly commonsense ontologies of home can reify interests of power. For this reason home research has the potential to be a site of activism and social-justice intervention. Its power lies in the fact that "geopolitics is influenced by, and emerges from, the home" (Brickell 2012b, 585). Alaazi et al. note the relational turn in the study of home that

in particular cautions researchers and policymakers to avoid Eurocentric assumptions about home and to embrace multicultural perspectives and subjectivities in constructing relationships between housing and home (Habibis, 2011). Thus, 'sense of home' is conceptualized in this paper as a relational, social, and cultural construct that transcends the instrumental experience of being housed. (Alaazie et al. 2015, 31)

Their research into Indigenous experiences of homelessness and the housing first model makes clear that notions of home involve connection to land, community and family. Further, they argue that a sense of home and connection to (rural and/or Indigenous reserve communities) home remains strong even through movement, mobility, and experiences of urban homelessness. While Alaazi et al. argue for particular housing first models that recognize the particularity of Indigenous home connections, this paper begins the process of opening up the ways in which the word home is understood.

2.2.2 The project: an overview

This qualitative study was designed as an interview-based examination of narratives about contemporary home and rurality on the island portion of Newfoundland and Labrador. The portion of the project relating to this paper was concerned with representations and narratives of home and place as told through two new exhibits in the provincial museum. The intent was to explore how the narratives of home and place were constructed in this museum because of the collaborative nature of the design process that included consultations with the public, experts, and Indigenous guest curators. The objective was to analyze the ways in which contemporary theories about rurality and home apply to Newfoundland contexts, as reflected in the narrative discourses examined. I wanted to see how the theories of home lived up to everyday life, as narrated through the story of the

creation of museum exhibits. To do this, two key museum employees involved with the creation and design of the two new exhibits were interviewed. Also interviewed was one of the four Indigenous guest curators who worked on one of the two exhibits. My intention was to begin to understand how home and place had been represented through narratives that described the province's Indigenous people as well as the non-Indigenous

2.2.3 The Rooms as a site of research: 'What does HOME mean to you?'

In 2010, *The Rooms* (Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial gallery, museum and archives) asked for public input for the proposed design of two new exhibits. As planned, these exhibits were to interpret the province's 300-year history, starting around the 1700s. Once completed, these exhibits became *From this Place: Our Lives on Land and Sea* and *Here, We Made a Home*. The public input process that shaped which stories were told and how included a newspaper campaign and a temporary exhibition soliciting audience feedback and ideas in various ways. One feedback station asked: 'What does HOME mean to you?' One activity 'for wee ones' asked visitors to draw a picture of what home meant and suggested that he or she hang that picture in the 'art gallery'—strings stretched across a board, clothespins clutching bright crayon pictures of narrow houses in a row or square structures with chimneys, bright suns overhead, families drawn looking from windows or standing out front, the word love or happy or some place-name scrawled across the page. Not just children, but adults with and without children wanted to draw pictures of home and display them. This became important to exhibit designs, as one research participant described:

you got a lot of adults chiming in and drawing little pictures but with commentaries that definitely led us to believe that this is something that connects to people from here and people from away...this is a concept that people are comfortable with, connect to from inside and out and that it would be a good way to try to frame our exhibition.

These bright pencil and crayon drawings of settled houses hanging from strings are representations of one of the ways in which home is commonly imagined and, if and when possible, brought into being across multiple scales in North America and much of Europe. Scholars who take up the study of home work with and respond to these ways of thinking about home. However, these everyday ways of thinking about and representing home often do not explicitly grapple with the ways home is lived within and through everyday geographies. This paper introduces a movement-based conceptualization of home called 'Home(s) as ways of gathering' as an additional tool for use in understanding, mapping and analyzing home.

The Rooms remains an important though contested (Latta 2005, Devlin and Tye 2005) site of representation of provincial histories, personalities and, ultimately, stories of movement toward imagined future possibilities. Designed to invoke the vernacular architecture once common to every fishing village in the province, the museum was built to resemble the box-like structures used by fishing people to store their tools and gear that can still be seen standing along coves and harbours near the wharfs in every fishing village. This design deliberately refers to a way of life and occupational history in sharp decline and that, at the same time, attempts to invoke a new cultural vision for the province. The size and location of *The Rooms* makes an additional visual statement, denoting 'the

visual and cultural competition it would offer the Basilica' (Latta 2005, 29) in its home province. Built to a similar scale as the church near it, The Basilica Cathedral of St. John the Baptist (Catholic place of worship built in 1841), there were concerns 'that the new complex would dwarf the neighbouring Basilica which had previously dominated the skyline' (Latta 2005, 28). The majority of museum's operating budget is provided by the provincial government and it is governed by a board of directors, the majority of whom are appointed by the provincial government.

In 2013, The Rooms (the provincial gallery, museum and archives) officially opened the two new exhibits. The two exhibits were built into one room on two floors, a set of stairs leading up from one to another. As planned, these exhibits were to interpret the province's 300-year history, starting around the 1700s. The two exhibits were separately funded (one funded mainly by the provincial government, the other by a wealthy private donor). They are located in one room on two floors: on the bottom floor is *From this Place*, which tells the story of 300 years of history through the voices of the Innu, Inuit, Mi'kmaq and Southern Inuit peoples and the descendants of the European Settlers' from the late 1700s to present day. This exploration of a place created through the movements of five cultural groups is divided into zones: *mobility, production, contact, spirituality, place, identity*. On top floor is *Here, We Made A Home* which explores stories of non-aboriginal Newfoundland and Labrador (European origins) from the late 1800s to present day.

The bottom floor exhibit is called *From this Place: Our Lives on Land and Sea*. It tells the story of 300 years of history through the voices of the Innu, Inuit, Mi'kmaq and Southern Inuit peoples and non-Indigenous people termed *livyers*², descendants of European settlers. The exhibit involves the period between the 1700s and near present-day. The cultural stories are told alongside each other through themed zones: mobility, production, contact, spirituality, place, identity.

On the top floor is *Here, We Made A Home* which explores stories of non-Indigenous Newfoundlanders and Labradorians from the late 1800s to present day. The discontinuation of Indigenous narratives in this section is important in understanding how the word home was applied.

During the interviews with museum curators and Anita Kora, the Inuit guest curator, it became clear that the word home had been the source of debate and some disagreement between the exhibit designers and the Indigenous guest curators. I asked Anita's permission to use her name in order to fully credit the role her comments played in this step toward a decolonizing framework for the study of home. She agreed.

2.2.4 Who has home?

The word home was initially planned for the name of the bottom-floor exhibit, the one featuring four Indigenous groups and the non-Indigenous groups called *livyers*.

² The term *livyer* historically was applied to the fishermen from Europe who did not return home outside the fishing season, but lived here all year. For the museum exhibit, the term was used to denote any person or people who do not belong to one of the province's Indigenous groups.

However, questions arose about whether or not the term home applied to Indigenous ways of living. Interview participants explained that non-Indigenous and the majority of the Indigenous guest curators discussed the word home and ultimately agreed that home did not represent Indigenous relationships to land, shelter and movement. A museum curatorial employee said:

...when you talk to [Indigenous guest curator] you'll find that the idea of home is not what the European idea of home is. So we felt that the concept of home was more reflective of the European story.

Instead of *Here, We Made a Home*, which was then applied to the non-Indigenous exhibit on the top floor, the title became *From this Place: Our Lives Lived on Land and Sea*. Because this decision was made after discussions and represents a compromise, the intent of this paper is not to criticize this decision, but to raise questions about the way the word home is conceptualized and understood in both its academic and vernacular usages.

Increasingly scholars question the ontological nature of seemingly common-sense concepts, including the concept of home. Home is a word applied positively to some ways of living but not others (Slater 2007, de Leeuw 2013), with clear political and material consequences.

Anita's comments bring interesting critical context. Initially she said: "I remember the discussions we had. For the time period we were working with I don't want to use that as a crutch but yeah I guess home wasn't appropriate."

Anita felt uncomfortable discussing other people's opinions. She explained that in her culture people don't speak for others and they don't like to express open disagree-

ment. However, in speaking for herself, she went on to question what it meant to say that home did not apply to Indigenous peoples. She said:

People like holding onto that 1950s we want to be nomadic still phase and that's why home is such a different concept now. Because we're not nomadic as much anymore.... That's why these conversations about place and home were so interesting. Because for some reason because Aboriginal people usually moved around—not all of them, some of them were very sedentary—they didn't have homes.

Anita felt that if home was defined as a single house and a sedentary lifestyle—the European and/or North American idea of home—then it actually didn't fit many of the traditional Indigenous ways of living. However, she also seems to be saying that contemporary Indigenous lifestyles did often fit that more-sedentary definition of home.

Yet Anita felt that if the definition of home was different—if it was defined as more than staying in one house in one place—then home could be used to describe Indigenous peoples' relationships with the land. She said that in this view traditional nomadic Indigenous ways of living were ways of making home.

And I always come back to my brother, cause if you're traveling aren't you taking your home with you? So yeah, in that regard I think people are getting caught up in the definition of what home is. Is it a house? Is it a permanent structure? Is it a town? Or if you're like my brother and me is it your things or what you feel— is home a mobile concept?

Anita also reflected on the different meanings of the words place and home. Her comments point to the overlaps between the terms.

I like both home and place. I think it would have been okay if they said both were relevant....place was so broad to me, you don't get that nice feeling of home. To me it's like cold terms and warm terms. And place for me was a cool term and home was a warm term. So why take that concept away? Can

only livyers have that concept? But...[livyers] came from away.... And because place might mean home to some people.

Home was a place she had wanted to claim for herself and her people because of the power of its emotional connections. Yet she felt home was not at that time something she could claim for herself and her people in Northern Labrador, even as she was critical about the reasons why this was the case. She also felt that home, as it is commonly understood, did not actually describe her own contemporary Indigenous connections to home.

2.3 Part II: My own story of home

In this section I offer my own story relating to home and the personal importance of decolonizing home as a concept. I am writing about myself for several reasons. I do it out of respect for the stories offered to me during the course of this research project, particularly out of respect for Anita Kora's contribution whose comments and writing are at the centre of this paper and for the friendship that came about as a result of this project. I write about my own personal struggles with decolonizing home in order to ground this research, and its importance in personal relationships, in what Shawn Wilson (2008) describes as 'relational accountability' in his book about Indigenous research methods. In recounting his own exploration of the ways academic research and Indigenous research methods can work together he writes:

Indigenous people in Canada recognize that it is important for storytellers to impart their own life and experience into the telling. They also recognize that listeners will filter the story being told through their own experience and thus adapt the information to make it relevant and specific to their own life When

listeners know where the storyteller is coming from and how the story fits into the storyteller's life, it makes the absorption of knowledge that much easier" (Wilson 2008, 32).

The process is imperfect, in part because academic research and Indigenous knowledge take such fundamentally different approaches that what is considered right and proper in one genre is improper in the other.

I tell this relational research story here for other reasons too. Having grown up with a mother who told stories and as a voracious reader who then became a writer, I love stories and I absorb more through stories than through the presentation of un-storied academic material. I believe most people do. Yet more than that, I write my own personal story here in thanks to Jennifer Adese (2014), who wrote her own personal story in her paper titled Spirit gifting: Ecological knowing in Métis life narratives. I recognized myself and my mother in the personal and research stories she told in that paper. The personal stories she told gave me a jolt of joy in the recognition of myself and in the permission it gave me to tell my own story, to be able, at least to begin, to make sense of who I am and where I come from. She writes:

Born to a mother who was adopted into a Mennonite family and a father I know little about, for many years I identified as 'part-Cree' or 'Native' in keeping with fragments of information passed down by my mother, about my father's family, and based on my experiences with urban Indigenous community identification.... In the absence of a Métis community through which I could develop a sense of myself as Métis, I turned to the literature to makes sense of bits and pieces of story I was receiving. While I did not yet belong to a physical community of Métis, I immersed myself in a remembered and imagined community of Métis and Cree storytellers and historians, something that continues to today. (Adese 2014, 52)

The questions in her life story are similar to the ones that I have been living in my own life. How do the generation of Métis who grew up without community find that community again and how do they begin to give themselves permission to seek it out?

I always begin by saying that my mother is Métis. I always do this because although I have the legal status conferred by my mother, my red-haired freckled father was not Métis and, like my siblings, I turned out a good deal fairer than my mother. As a fair-skinned, light-haired person, I have long been cautious and uncertain about my connections to Indigenous identities. There is also the issue that Adese identified in her story: I grew up entirely without community. Or I thought I did.

My mother left my father when I was five and I rarely saw him after that. My mother raised the five of us alone. She raised us on little more than the always-exciting promise of a new start in a new place and the stories she wove for us about her life growing up, stories about her sisters and brothers growing up in the bush, about her mother and her mother's mother: all of them, in these stories, Métis or Cree, except for the story about the young woman from a wealthy Quebec family who ran away to marry a Métis man and was disowned by her entire family as a result. Because we moved around a lot—I went to fifteen different schools up to grade twelve and moved more often than that—my community consisted of my siblings and our mother's stories. Our mother didn't make friends and so we only ever visited my mother's sisters and our cousins when and if we lived close enough.

Once I blamed my mother for raising us to be different in ways I couldn't quite understand. Now that I have a name for how we were raised—Métis—I credit her with raising us differently, despite and because of all the obstacles she faced.

Adese notes that “Métis worldviews are resilient and many, though not all, managed to adapt themselves to and weave themselves with new modes of living” (2014, 59) and tells us that “Métis have had and continue to have, and struggle to hold on to, understandings and relationships to the water, land, air, sky, and animals. This is but one part of the legacy of colonization and settler encroachment for Métis, a legacy that is far too rarely acknowledged,” (2014, 63). In Adese's words I see my mother, struggling with a complicated legacy of community and personal loss, yet raising children who relate to the world, to the land, to their histories in a way I have only in the previous five years begun to realize is and was Métis. It was an unmarked Métis—my mother didn't say this or that is the Métis way—but it was nonetheless Métis in its approach. As children we believed ourselves unconnected to Métis community and culture except through history. We didn't know enough to mark our mother's difference as Métis, nor to see or value our own differences. This is one of the damages of the loss of culture—to be unable to see and name who you really are, to not have the cultural vocabulary.

We grew up in my mother's stories of living in the bush and in her painful separation from and longing to return to the land. These stories and the way in which she managed to pass on Métis worldviews came together to change the course of my research.

As I wrote above, I did not intend to conduct research involving Indigenous communities. There are several reasons why: the most important of these reasons being that the specific timing, funding, and supervisors available at the time I was in graduate school meant I could not get the kind of support I needed in order to conduct Indigenous research. Still I wanted to understand more about how home was formed—those of us who felt they didn't have a home are often curious about the 'homed'—and how people related to the land, the wild areas and the rural areas in which they lived, places many people consider home. It was by chance that I happened to be fascinated enough with the two new museum exhibits to want to explore how they came together to include that in my research project and came to interview guest curator Anita Kora.

As I wrote up the conceptualization offered here, I had to consider how to justify the relevance of this portion of my findings. It was through trying to make myself understood within the academy that I came to reflect deeply on the influence of the Inuit woman involved in my research, the ways I was linking new ways of thinking of home to Indigenous worldviews, and how these were connected to and reflected my own belief systems and my mother's stories. It was then I began to understand that I was offering up a decolonizing process for the conceptualization of home. It was through this research that I came to fully realize that the home or 'homes' my mother raised us in—the many apartments, townhouses, cities, and towns, the constant movement, as well as the imaginative home she offered in her stories and her ways of approaching the world that no other mothers we knew at that time had—was not an absence of home, but was a Métis home

forged in transformation, change, endurance, survival, in-betweenness, connection to land, and relationality. She did give her children a form of Métis community and it has taken me all my adult life so far to begin to see it. And it will be the work of the rest of my life to pull at the threads of her stories and to try to understand them through a different lens. This research project is not only part of an academic decolonization framework that seeks to destabilize theories and ideas of home that are embedded in values that exclude the Aboriginal and Métis other, but it also marks the beginning of a decolonization process that seeks to learn to reinterpret my own and my mother's life stories. Linda Tuhiwai Smith wrote that

Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things. (Smith 2010, 34)

The process of more fully understanding my mother's history and my own history is the first step toward understanding the concepts I am trying to elucidate in my research. This reflexivity will continue to frame how I think about home as an academic, about its current hegemonic ideology, its powerful alternative iterations, and its possibilities to renew Indigenous and non-Indigenous people's connections to the land and sea into an uncertain future.

2.4 Part III: Gathering

2.4.1 What is home?: In the words of an Inuit woman

That gathering is a productive notion through which home's micro and macro movements could be revealed and understood emerged gradually through critical analysis of the two exhibits and interviews. The word gathering had already been identified as a potential focal point in the early stages of this research project due to its broad movement-based evocation, but it was engagement with a particular text displayed in one exhibit that confirmed that the scope of the word had the potential to reach across cultural contexts. This short text will be included in this section in its entirety to serve as an anchor to the concept.

The bottom-floor exhibit, *From this Place: Our Lives on Land and Sea*, is divided into zones. From the entry, the exhibit leads a visitor in a circle and ends with the place zone, where the short text is located. The place zone is a small area and bordered by three walls covered in photographs. The photographs primarily show rural places and landscapes in the province. Most also include Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in these photos, people gathering to work on the land, by the ocean, on the edge of the sea and ice.

Scattered between the photographs here and there are short texts: previously published poems about the place and/or its people; excerpts from books about the place; quotes from people who have lived or continue to live in the province. The quote that is the focus here is attributed to Inuit resident Anita Fells (she has since changed her last name to Kora). Herself a guest curator, she was asked by museum curators to write a

short piece about her Inuit homeland for the Place section. When asked how she came to write the text as it appears, Kora replied:

I was talking to my mom about it. And I was like how am I supposed to encapsulate this? She said just think about what the land gives us and how we go. Because if we didn't harvest from the land, if we didn't move, we wouldn't live.

And there are two places, three places, there's the land, the sina [the edge of the sea ice] and the ocean. We're always on them. You can't go into the sky because you can't fly.

The text she wrote reads as follows:

Nunak (the land), imaluk (the ocean) and sina (the edge of the sea ice) are our homes, gathering places and regions of great significance.

On the land we live and come together; we hunt, and gather berries and other plants for subsistence and medicinal purposes. From the land we hunt the tutuk (caribou), ukalik (arctic hare), aKiggik (ptarmigan) and illaKutsik (porcupine).

The sea and sea ice are places of great importance to Nunatsivummiut (the people of Nunatsiavut). From the sea come various types of puijik (seal)—natsik (ring), Kaigulik (harp) and Utjik (bearded)—as well as iKaluk (char), uviluk (mussels), ammomajuk (clams), Kilalug (beluga), aivik (walrus) and porpoise.

We gather, we hunt and we live on this vast and beautiful land.

-Anita Fells (Inuit)

In the text, the word gather is used twice as a verb (gather berries; we gather) and once as part of a compound noun (gathering places). The text focuses on links made between home, place, movement and gathering. The text does not identify home in the singular, but identified homes in multiple places. All the activities through which home is claimed and that occur in each of the home places require movement or are movements. Further,

the conversation she describes with her mother focused on movement, using the phrase 'how we go' and stating that 'if we didn't move, we wouldn't live.' Gathering places are areas in which the people come together for a number of activities. Gathering is also a movement and a verb. Home is not a place of repose, but of movement on and through places on the land. In her final summary line, she focused on gathering (the ways people connect with each other), on hunting (how people survive on the land), living (everyday activities or the very act of survival) and identified the land as the place in which these gatherings and activities occur.

2.4.2 Lived home

The museum exhibits describe a way of life that does not fit the popular notion of long-term tenure in a single permanent house for either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. House-as-home remains a narrative against which people make sense of their own lived experiences of home but the narratives told through the exhibits demonstrate how historical homes in Newfoundland and Labrador, Indigenous and non-Indigenous were always lived through movement. This suggests that movement is a much-neglected but essential aspect of how home is made and is in this paper linked to the notion of gathering. The notion of house-as-home and home as lived in one place is so strong that people's movements are rendered invisible. If the idea of home as lived in one place does not fit the ways Indigenous people live or lived, neither does it fit the way non-Indigenous people lived then or live today.

The two exhibits make clear the ways in which non-Indigenous groups living in the province (in the museum designated by the term *livyers*) also did not gather, live or remain in one place or one house, did not make a home that can be made sense of only through the concept of stasis. What appears in the museum fits with newer ideas of place and home as made through connection and change. Both Indigenous and *livyer* groups historically laid claim to home in and through gathering through movement, often across vast stretches of land and bodies of water. Home and place in Newfoundland and Labrador have always been made in and through gathering, whether gathering of people, or resources, or both. Both the exhibits represent home in this way. Mobility was the name of one of the zones in the bottom-floor exhibit (*This Place*) and showed how different peoples solved the challenge of moving across space and place in different ways, including dog-team and sled, snowmobile, kayak, ship, on foot, etc. To observe that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people live in and through movement does not render their movements similar in intent, context, or outcome. Instead, noting that homes are inherently made through movement and gathering brings attention to the different relationships (with land, ocean community, relations of power, technology, weather, time, etc) in which home's movements took place.

2.4.3 Gathering, the word

The conceptual framework suggested here centres on the word gathering, a word used repeatedly by Anita herself. In this way, though an English word, the use of the word gather reflects a conceptualization already in use by this woman and the Inuit elders and

relatives she consulted in writing the text. The word gathering was used as a cultural connector and was used as an attempt to explain her understanding of her own culture's concept of home, relationships with the land, the ocean and movement.

A close consideration of the varied meanings of the word gathering uncovers the depth of the connection of the word to a number of categories. The word gather is a verb. It denotes a movement that can exist in multiple contexts (to gather something, to gather people together, to gather on or with the land or non-human things or aspects; to gather as in to surmise). It does not need to specify a beginning or an end because we can all be always gathering in multiple ways and yet specific gatherings do have specific endings.

The Oxford Dictionary of Current English defines the verb "gather" as 'bring or come together, assemble, accumulate; infer or deduce; summon up (energy etc.); pick or collect as harvest; increase (speed); draw together in folds or wrinkles; develop purulent swelling.' The New Oxford American dictionary defines the word 'gather' in a number of ways, including: to bring together and take in from scattered places or sources; to pick up from the ground or a surface; collect (grain or crops) as a harvest' (or plants, fruits etc for food); draw together or toward oneself, as in she gathered the child in her arms; draw and hold together (fabric or a part of a garment) by running thread through it; infer or understand; summon up a mental or physical attribute (such as one's thoughts or one's strength) for a purpose.

The concept of gathering emerged from this research as a vital, animated word, linked through movement to land, environment, survival and living. As interpreted in this

conceptualization, gatherings are always beginning and ending and reconstituting themselves in response to changes in time, people, material/physical surroundings, and imaginations. Interpreting home as ways of gathering is a way to understand how movements are motivated through the desire for: home, place, connection, survival, land, future, past, life.

2.5 Moving toward home as ways of gathering: a conclusion

Home as conceptualized by the concept ‘gathering’ is intended to denote an imaginative shift in the ways home is understood. Rather than act as a set of parameters, this conceptualization suggests areas of focus in fully understanding one’s own and Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of living home. It has political power in extending claims to home beyond ownership and into the ways in which people move. As King (2012) reminds us, home is not a neat easily-definable concept but is linked to subjective and changeable worldviews and experiences that are not necessarily broadly representative.

The conceptualization of home as ways of gathering can bring attention to the ways home is, and always was, made through movement across land and sea. The concept as a critical focal point is a response to the prevalence of culturally ethnocentric notions of home as house, permanence and security lived through staying-in-place through ownership and control. In the literature, even when movement is involved in defining home it is still focused on the concept of a dwelling from which we leave or return and the connections that occur as a result. In home as ways of gathering, the movements are actually central to making the home place. This could result in (legal and other) claims to home

encompassing the movement itself and over the land on which movement occurs. Understood this way, peoples rights to home are rights to access to and/or control over a much wider area than an apartment and balcony or house and yard. Rather than home being the place we live to get away from or to express individual identity or in which violence occurs or through which connections to the wider world are made, home is the territory on which a person must move in order to survive, to gather with others for all the reasons humans gather, and to make the world as it is.

Home will always be lived through tensions between staying in place and going away (Buttimer 1980). Geographic conceptualizations of home need to attempt to take home's (geographical and temporal) movements into account in order to critically analyze the daily reach of home's connections to the world. It is also important to understand the way in which particular homes or ways of gathering create particular worlds. The limited and static interpretation of home as permanent house has been used to deny claims to home, land and territory made by cultures whose movements are different and/or unrecognizable to those of in power (de Leeuw 2013, Porteous and Smith 2001). The idea of home as conceptualized through the notion of gathering, however, brings attention to the ways in which home has also always been created through travel and movement, how travel and movement are necessary to home, and points to how diverse are the movements that create home. This 'gathering framework' ultimately calls for the recognition of diverse claims to home and home territories that are made through a variety of move-

ments. This call can be part of the growing resistance to the hegemony of home as economic and ecological spaces that are owned and therefore manageable.

2.6 References

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3. “We Would Never Have Encouraged Them to Stay”: Women, Place, and Narrative Interventions in Rural Newfoundland

3.1 Introduction

This paper examines women’s narratives of home in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Their stories were told following three decades of rapid ecological, economic, social, and cultural changes in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Following an analysis of the tensions and contradictions that appear in their stories of their rural lives, this paper suggests that, for these women, embodiment has presented challenges for women trying to claim globally-connected, mobile, rural narratives for themselves— and that this is an ideal that mothering women in particular have trouble enacting in their daily rural lives. Indeed, this paper suggests that women in rural Newfoundland narrate their experiences in ways that parallel Rose’s (1993) concept of paradoxical space—in which contradicting ideas of the rural and home are imagined, narrated, and lived out on the same geography. This article narrates some of the complex geographies of movement which make up the everyday lives of rural women on the island of Newfoundland today. In doing so, this paper engages with and relates the importance of women’s new circular narratives and the generational use of narrative interventions, interventions that have themselves undergone transformation and will likely continue to transform in response to changing conditions. Engagement with the idea of women’s narrative interventions open up not only the role of a narrated future in individual life choices, but their roles in rural continuity overall.

The meanings of home, rurality, and place have experienced and will continue to experience narrative shifts. This paper explores how changes are storied among women in rural Newfoundland in order to better understand the myriad of ways rural people respond to ongoing rural transformation and the increasing experiences of “hybridities of identities and places” (Holloway and Kneale 2000, 83). This paper approaches these broad questions through a narrative analysis of personal life stories about residential choice and mobility told by (mostly middle-class) women living in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. This paper considers the ways in which normative place assumptions and new place identities (Taylor 2005) converge in women’s narratives to reveal contemporary place tensions and related strategic attempts to shape their futures and their children’s futures. Commonsense narratives are those narratives that are so normative that they need no justification, such as the born-and-bred narratives that assume that people who have lived in a place for their entire lives have a deep connection to that place (Taylor 2005). Newfoundland women’s narratives reflect responses to the hybridization of place identities in a globalising world that provides structural and narrative supports to individualist place and home performances.

Like rural areas in the rest of Canada, rural areas in Newfoundland have been experiencing a decline. However, this decline is more recent than in other areas of Canada and in fact the urban population surpassed the rural population in Newfoundland in 1961, 40 years later than Canada as a whole (Bollman and Clemenson 2008). Although Newfoundland’s rural population has seen a sharp decline since 1991 (from 264,043 in 1991 to

213,370 in 2006), the province still has one of the highest proportions of rural residents in Canada. Yet as young people leave for opportunities in urban areas of the province and elsewhere, the aging of the rural population continues to be of concern (Vodden, Gibson and Porter 2014). Because rural Newfoundland had been based on fishing economies, the moratorium on the cod fishery in the 1990s transformed rural areas overnight. The moratorium forced many fishers to leave rural communities for work (sometimes with their families and sometimes leaving families behind) and/or to consider new futures for themselves and their children. Economies in some rural areas began to recover with the introduction of increased industrial activity in the early 2000s, with a focus on mining and oil-related activities (Vodden, Gibson and Porter 2014). These experiences and concerns are reflected in the narratives analysed in this paper.

Previous narrative research into women's residential identities observed that women's personal narratives negotiated two oppositional societal narratives: first, that a connection exists between a place the people who inhabit it and this connection is greater with increased time-in-place (the commonsense born-and-bred narrative) and, second, a newer place identity in which people today are seen to be freed from ties to place and can create place identities as a choosing individual (Taylor 2005). This research paper explores the importance of changing place-based narratives among women who have chosen to return to and raise children in rural areas that have experienced recent change. Previous research with rural parents has found that a strong sense of belonging to place was linked to an increased willingness among parents to encourage their children to move

away for education (Abbot-Chapman et al. 2014) and research with rural youth suggest that an increased sense of place and belonging impacts youths' experiences of moving away and of returning (Stewart and Abbot-Chapman 2011). The narratives explored in this research support and add to this research by exploring home narratives in the context of rural decline and demonstrating how parents convey or narrate rural experiences of going away, returning, and stretching place. This paper suggests that women experience anxiety produced by the challenges of parenting across a stretching sense of place (Seamon and Sowers 2008) and documents the changing narrative interventions women describe as responses to changing rural realities. In women's narratives of home, parenting becomes a fulcrum on which contemporary place anxieties converge. Rural women's narratives of home, and in particular their narrative interventions, are playing an important role in shaping the future of the rural by providing support for the return to rural for the next generation of Newfoundlanders.

3.2 New narratives of home

Home is an increasingly important site for narrative research seeking to understand local, global and transnational change through analysis of personal life stories in part because of home's central role in identity formation (Wise 2000). The strong tradition of feminist analysis in home studies "recognizes the fluidity of home as a concept, metaphor and lived experience" (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 21). Home remains a key site through which the category of woman is constituted and represented and home continues to be a key site of women's oppression and resistance. Indeed, home is a key site through which society is

constituted; how home is organized and lived determines and is determined by how the world outside the house or dwelling is organized and lived. The newest home studies challenge the boundaries within which conceptualizations of home (and its reach) have been confined (Porter 2015a, submitted; Blunt and Dowling 2006; Porteous and Smith 2001). Once defined almost entirely through terms of retreat, comfort, safety and privacy (Seamon 1979, Bachelard 1958, Buttimer and Seamon 1980, Despres 1991), home is now more frequently analysed through its shifting imaginary connective geographies (Massey 1992, 1994, Manzo 2003, Blunt and Dowling 2006). These approaches interpret the physical boundaries of home as permeable and unstable (Massey 1992). As the terms that define the study of home have broadened—to include outward-looking connections and relations of power—so too the geographies within which home is studied have broadened, extending further across maps beyond the set boundaries of what have been called Eurocentric ideas of home (George 1998). Examples of this include the study of home as ways of gathering (Porter 2015a, submitted) or the study of home through the transnational experiences of migrants, refugees and mobile workers (Jansen and Lofving 2009, Pratt 2004, Marcu 2014, Blunt 2005). Social and personal narratives of home must negotiate these new globalised formations to create both inward-and-outward-looking home in their search for identities. Indeed, for this reason “research on place-related identities in contemporary western societies confronts contradictory commonsense assumptions” (Taylor 2005, 249).

Women's narratives about home have been able to tell stories about home that would not have been heard otherwise. bell hooks' narratives, for example, tell stories of home as a site of resistance to both racial and gender oppressions and that the act of homemaking does not have to be (only or at all) oppressive, noting that "[h]istorically, black women have resisted white supremacist domination by working to establish home-place" (2008, 385). In fact, hooks makes clear that homemaking is a personal and national political act which can make claims to belonging, using her own and other black people's decision to make home in still-racist areas of southern United States as examples. Pratt's (2004) work with Filipina domestic workers demonstrates the ways in which home remains a contradictory and troubled site for women across the world. Pratt's work uncovers one of the ways in which the act of parenting ceases to be individual or private but becomes instead political and transnational, making visible the blurred boundaries not only between work and home but between liberation and oppression. Academic analyses of home can do more than broaden the narratives through which home is understood, sustained and created. In one paper Brickell highlights the potential for the study of home to effect change in the way home is made:

Our responsibilities as critical geographers of home then...are through innovative and collaborative research methods, to support, report and even become participants in spatial acts of resistance that have the potential to spark positive change in people's home(less) lives. (Brickell 2012, 238)

3.3 Narrating place-based identities

Places, like homes, are increasingly interpreted as global-and-local concepts. Yet the parameters of place and its definition remain elusive (Convery, Corsane and Davis 2012)

although Cresswell wrote simply that “the most straightforward and common definition of place—a meaningful location” (2004, 7). Home and the rural are both categories of places made meaningful in particular ways and through particular narratives. The narrative meanings of place, home, and the rural often overlap: all three tending to imply experience-over-time, a sense of belonging, identity, security, and rootedness, among arrays of other meanings. As Bijker observes, in deciding to move to rural places people are deciding to live on a particular property and/or in a particular home (2015). Further, “[a]gainst this background of the importance of in-migration for rural areas, it is remarkable to notice how little attention is given to the decision-making processes of rural in-migrants” (Bijker 2015, 78).

Narrative research on place-based identities interrogates “new identities of place at the beginning of the twenty-first century” (Taylor 2010, 16). Contemporary researchers imagine ‘place’ as multiple topographies over which different interpretations of place are mapped (Piselli 2007, Knopp 2004, Massey 2004). Home is a place that remains a key site “for the construction and reconstruction of one's self” (Young 2005, 153). In contemporary rural studies, place-based identity refers to the contribution of place attributes to one’s self-identity (Reimer and Markey 2008, Stokowski 2002). Easthope (2004) makes a case for the importance of understanding identity through place and vice versa, writing that “the relationship that people have with their physical environment and the ways in which they understand that relationship through different conceptualizations of place are important aspects of identity construction” (Easthope 2004, 74-75). Noting that empirical

measurements of place identity are problematic because conceptual and affective overlaps are not easy to disentangle and that many methods, such as questionnaires, are not effective at drawing out or understanding implied, tacit, or unconscious place-attachment and meaning, researchers are increasingly using narrative and interview methods that allow people to define places themselves (Convery, Corsane and Davis 2012). The politics of place are under constant negotiation, and identity is a key site of contestation (Masuda and Garvin 2008). Reimer (2010) therefore asks researchers to “aggressively” interrogate place-based identity narratives in order to contribute to forms of governance that respond to place and provide a catalyst for the imagination and narration of new rural futures.

Academics increasingly take the view that “by its very nature then the identity of a place is ‘provisional’ or in flux” (Massey 1992, 70), arguing against interpretations of places as bounded, retreat, safety, native. And yet people continue to narrate their experiential definitions of place, home and the rural in these terms (Taylor 2005) and, despite Massey’s framing, researchers continue to observe the ways in which place continues to be threatened and how “rapid social change and globalization tear space from place by attenuating relationships and reducing face-to-face interaction in ways that ‘disembed’ individuals from traditional institutions and communities and also threatens local cultural identity” (Abbott-Chapman 2014, 298). This is not to say that they do not experience place as provisional or in flux but people do not always experience this flux as positive and people continue to narrate their experiences with place through contradictions in which both experiences of place (as ‘native’ and ‘local’ or ‘extroverted’ and ‘global’) are

negotiated. Indeed, “discursive work to construct and take up ‘new’ identities does not erase old meanings but must, inevitably, contend with them, particularly in the ways that speakers are positioned by others” (Taylor 2005, 263). Taylor’s research into women’s residential identities noted the difficulty women experienced in negotiating contradictory place identities, the born-and-bred narrative and the choosing self narrative. Both these narratives were actively shaping the residential mobilities of the middle-class women interviewed by Taylor, though undoubtedly the opportunities for choice and choosing were certainly more prevalent due to the class status of the women and interviews that focused on women from a different class would undoubtedly reveal different sorts of relationships between the two competing and/or complementary narratives. In the choosing self narrative the idea pervades that “places have not fixed or essential past. The identity and meaning of a place must be constructed and negotiated” (Massey 1992, 70). But the born-and-bred narrative continues to be strongly weighted in people’s narrated relationships to place, even though in contemporary, individualistic western society “identities given or conferred by larger social structures have generally become less important than more individualized identities which people construct and claim for themselves” (Taylor 2005, 251). It is true that in narrating their life stories speakers “construct coherence, however temporarily, out of multiplicity and fluidity” (Taylor 2005, 254). In doing so, speakers reach for and negotiate with seemingly commonsense social narratives—and researchers look to the contradictions and narrative trouble that appear in these negotiations for information about the limits to our understandings of place.

3.4 Project Overview

With the intention of exploring the relationships between narratives of rurality and home and rural ways of life in Newfoundland, women from three rural contexts were interviewed: rural adjacent to urban, rural non-adjacent (beyond daily commuting distance), and rural remote. Interview data was collected between 2013 and 2014 during trips of varying length to the three areas. In order to protect anonymity of the interview participants, the names of the particular study areas will not be provided in this paper. Participants were recruited through the snowball method. Most interviews were conducted with one participant but in three cases, participants were interviewed in groups of two or three in order to elicit group storytelling dynamics.

In total nineteen women were recruited for one interview each. Interviews began by asking participants to describe how they came to live where they live. Interviews were informal and largely unstructured. The interviews were participant-led so that the themes and stories that came up during interviews originated as much as possible from the participants themselves. The wording of questions did not define place, home, or the rural so that participants could interpret these terms as they wanted. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Life circumstances among the women varied. It was the intent of this project to interview women from a broad range of ages and experiences to capture a broad range of narrative experiences. Some of the women were born in Newfoundland and have always lived there. A few of the women were born elsewhere but moved to Newfoundland as

young adults. Others were born in Newfoundland but moved away and came back: this paper focuses its analysis on two women who fit this category, while bringing insight from the other narrative experiences. For the most part, women did not overtly disclose their financial or class status. It was not the intention of this project to conduct a class analysis or to overtly ask questions of a more personal nature: for the purposes of this project, I was more interested in the terms and narratives through which women decided to frame their life and home stories without coaching. Class status in contemporary Newfoundland can be complicated in that a large majority of adults were officially 'poor' and lower class when they were children. The rapid changes in economic structure and the demise of the fishery as a way of life meant people became more and more tied to wage work (including the higher wage work associated with resource extraction in and outside of the province). As a result, overall standards of living have improved, though inequalities have risen sharply. Many adults in Newfoundland who were 'poor' did not experience many of the associated social exclusions because a relative poverty was the shared state of most people living in the small fishing towns and villages in rural Newfoundland. However, the majority of the women interviewed described life experiences associated with middle class that today are the result of clear socio-economic divisions, such as travel across Newfoundland, Canada and the world, extensive house renovation, and ownership of second homes and/or cabins. Although some of the women described childhoods during which the family struggled economically, the women interviewed also described themselves as having more than many other families they knew at the time. Additionally,

the majority of the women described life experiences that tend to indicate a middle-class experience (eg. repeated international travel for entertainment). The majority of the women interviewed fit this description. It is important to realize that these stories do represent largely white, middle-class experiences and so their experiences can not be broadly generalized. It is important to note as well that these stories do not narrate a simple static middle-class experience, but the experiences of a rise into a new middle class in the province. It would be interesting in a subsequent research project to purposefully explore the impacts of class status on the types of narrative interventions demonstrated and described in this paper. It is probable that the commonsense narratives would shift in focus and that any narrative interventions would story different life futures for themselves and their children and that parenting itself would be narrated in different terms in response to different narrative opportunities and expectations.

In this paper, women's stories were considered through dialogical narrative analysis (Frank 2012). Following Taylor, the analysis focused first on "patterns across interviews as indicative of a shared discursive resource" (Taylor 2005, 255). The analysis also considered where there weren't shared resources. In examining the implications of shared and non-shared resources, the analysis focused on areas of narrative contradictions, tension or 'trouble', recognizing that "[l]imits or constraints appear to the analyst as 'trouble' (Taylor 2005, 254). The term trouble refers to times when the speaker must defend or justify in anticipation of claims that are potentially challengeable due to inconsistency with earlier claimed identities or, as is the focus in this paper, that go against perceived com-

nonsense societal narratives. Terms used to express variations of this trouble in this paper include ambivalence, contradiction, dissonance, and tension. This is in line with a narrative analysis through which researchers focus on “relationships not only between respondents and texts, but also between text and social reality (Franzosi 1998, 521). However the analysis focused on the main thematic focus of home as ways of gathering through movement (Porter 2015a, submitted), that directs attention to movement. In this analysis attention is therefore focused on the narrated daily movements of the rural women.

The methodological framework applies the pluralist approach outlined in the Feminist Systems Theory (FST) (Stephens 2012). This approach encourages responsiveness to changing contexts, challenges and ideas that emerge during the research process. It is also multi-disciplinary, encouraging “practitioners to draw on pluralist methodologies and theories, and to embrace interdisciplinary approaches to theory and research” (Stephens 2012, 5). Within the FST methodology, women’s perspectives and gendered complexities are fore-fronted in data collection and/or analysis. Subjects are treated as elements of relations and the narratives collected here are interpreted as deeply embedded in broader community and societal narratives. This methodological approach merges aspects of critical systems thinking with cultural ecofeminism and recognizes that “[t]heoretical pluralism’s value lies in enabling a variety of purposes and values simultaneously to explain phenomena in context, therefore pluralism offers greater insights than working from one position alone. It follows then that interpretation of a single phenomenon results in multiple potential understandings” (Stephens 2012, 5). This methodology requires responsive-

ness on the ground, rather than acting from a rigid and pre-planned set of methods and interpretive frameworks. Using repeated boundary analyses (assessing the project and data to reinterpret, if needed, what is and is not part of the research framework), FST allows different research paradigms, ontologies and epistemologies to co-exist.

3.5 Returning, gathering, stretching

The extracts that are analysed in this section were excerpted from interviews with two participants who were residents in different areas of rural Newfoundland. Both women have lived away and decided to return. Both are in a long-term heterosexual relationships, work full-time, and are raising young children. Similar themes appear in these specific narratives as those told in the other interviews with rural Newfoundland women of similar ages, socio-economic status and life experience and so these narratives are representative. These two women's narratives were selected for several reasons: analyzing fewer narratives amplifies the depth in which each narrative that can be explored; because they moved away and chose to return; and because these two narratives were complete in the way each woman reflected on previous generations, their own generation, and their children's generation. Much like the women in Taylor's study, the speakers adopt a 'choosing' identity. However, Taylor concludes that for the women she interviewed the decision to take "a new identity as someone who chooses and controls her life circumstances and the trajectory of her life narrative does not in itself necessarily create control or confer agency" (Taylor 2005, 263).

Based on narratives with women living in urban London or South England, choice and opportunity are key to women's decisions to take up new place based identities, showing "a connection between place and identity that can be claimed even on the basis of a relatively short period of residence" (Taylor 2005, 262). Taylor observes that these women's "positionings around place correspond to the kind of individualized new identities that theorists have suggested are a feature of contemporary societies" (2005, 263). However, though an analysis of narrative identity troubles, Taylor further concludes that these identities are not so easily taken up or sustained by women.

In rural Newfoundland, women who have decided to move back to the places in which they grew up, in which they are now raising their own families, attempt to claim and to enact multiple place identities for themselves and for their children. The first place identity is related to the commonsense assumption that a connection exists between a place and the people who inhabit it, what has been called the born-and-bred narrative (Taylor 2005). Using this narrative as an explanatory tool, the women defend their decisions to move back home and 'place' their children in their rural Newfoundland home as they were as children. The second narrative is related to the new place-based identity understood through the new commonsense assumption that people are free from ties to traditional place and should move for jobs and opportunity and/or live where they choose. In this narrative women describe their attempts to 'place' their children in the world through access to skills, experiences, and travel. This reflects research that observes that parents attempt to "expand their children's opportunities and experiences in new places, enabling

them to live in and to benefit from ‘the best of both worlds’”(Abbot-Chapman et al. 2014, 304). In these narratives women use new place identities as explanatory narrative tools to make sense of their place tensions and their concerns for their children’s future place in the wider world and in the local community. The daily acts of parenting become performances of narrative tension and moments during which important place negotiations are made visible.

In the first set of extracts, each woman describes how she came to live in her current home. Both women describe narrative moments involved with choosing to return home before they reach further back in time to reflect on the decision to leave home when they were young.

Extract 1

1. P1: So it wasn’t a big leap at the time. I was uh laid off...
2. I was off on maternity leave with my first child and we got severance
3. they got shut down so all of us were let go.
4. So then I found out I was pregnant with my second child
5. so we thought well we got nothing to lose
6. here if we stay here we’re only going to accumulate bills so....
7. And I think it’s your comfort zone in that
8. I guess when you are in...some of these other places you don’t have the history
9. or the knowledge of the land and the road networks and the traveling.
10. Whereas here its so vast I mean you can go for hours and hours and everybody kind of
11. knows that you grew up knowing that here.

12. Newfoundland is home. You know in that respect so for me it's that peace.

Extract 2

P2: When I left I didn't think I'd ever be back. I'd never forget home. I always was strongly rooted to home. I just didn't figure out how I would ever get back here.

INT: was it that you didn't want to live there or didn't think you could?

P2: I just didn't think that I could. What would I do here?

And then it was do I even want to? Because I was experiencing the world.

You're doing fun things you're golfing

and going to the mountains and experiencing life.

I can remember I phoned my mom one evening.

I said to her, I said mom what's it like at home?

So I had been 3 years in Alberta, back and forth quite often. Maybe a couple of times a year.

And she said [name] I'm sitting on the front step now and there's not a ripple on the water. It's absolutely beautiful here.

And I thought what are you doing to me? You have you no idea what that statement is doing to me.

So I would say within two weeks I applied to school on the west coast. I got in.

[rural Newfoundland place name]

So it sort of like full circle. A couple of times I was drawn away but I was fortunate enough to come back and I do feel fortunate.

In these life story excerpts choice and opportunity become important themes. In the first excerpt lines one through six describe the particular factors that led one woman

to make the choice to move home: the loss of the jobs that formed her connections (and her husband's connections) to places away from Newfoundland. Lines seven through twelve narrate an extended justification for choosing to return home. The necessity for a justification for returning home suggests that these women are narrating their life stories against other seemingly common-sense narratives in which moving away and or staying away from home is normalized, while staying or returning home is problematized. Invoking an enduring connection to place is a key strategy in these stories: connections to the landscape and people known during childhood, particularly family, are invoked to defend a decision to turn away from urban opportunities, choices and lifestyles and anticipate particular forms of scrutiny of their life narratives and choices (self-scrutiny or scrutiny of others).

The choice to return home was, however, preceded by the choice to leave home. In extract two (in lines one through six) it is clear the woman interviewed left home not expecting to return, or even to want to return. In addition, both women tell stories of lack of connection to the places they were living before they decided to return. The following excerpt offers this in more detail:

Extract 3

P2: I mean I said in the meeting the other day I've lived in a couple of different places and it's not that I didn't care I don't think that's fair to say but I didn't feel like needed to join a committee or group because I didn't feel like it was my place or that I had a vested interest because this is a stopover.

I knew this wasn't going to be long term for me deep down inside and so I didn't care

that the soccer association was there I didn't care that a community event was sort of happening.

I was just sort of punching time until I could figure out how to get back home and I know that people live like that every day you know they are just trying to get through until they can figure out how to get back home.

But again when I look back on that it was a great time in my life.

I got to do things and I got to meet people and have an experience that I wouldn't have had I not been there. So I'm grateful for it and it helped me. It helped me realize that this is where I needed to be and I don't know that I would have necessarily I don't know that I would have realized that so much had I stayed in St. John's.

Because St. John's was always somewhat comfortable to me, familiar and you know the ocean is there.

Common to these first three excerpts is the seemingly contradictory idea that going away allowed these women to return home (as defined by their place of origin). They left in order to have access to an increased number and quality of choices and opportunities. Going away facilitated returning home through the realization that despite creating some new friend, work, family and/or place connections during their time away from home, these connections remained shallower than the connections to home. Going away, for these women, also facilitated skills training, education and work experience that allowed them access to work at home. In this way these Newfoundland women construct circular narratives of home-choices. In the general course of this circular narrative young people embark on a journey away from home before being ready to return. The actual

routes women narrate are complex and lived across multiple geographies. It can take multiple moves from one place to another (ie/for jobs, travel, marriage) before an opportunity is found to return to Newfoundland.

In extract 3 it is clear that for the woman speaking choice and opportunity do not on their own result in a sense of home. What does result in a sense of home is choice and opportunity combined with connections to place, both lived experiential connections and the familial/community connections to place.

Though not directly asked to do so, these two women reflected on their decisions to leave the province when they were young. In extract 2 lines one through five introduce the sense that leaving the place in which they grew up was inevitable. The following excerpts more fully narrate the pressures of her particular generation:

Extract 4

P1: I guess at that time it always seemed more glamorous away.

I don't know if everybody feels like that.

But I guess after you know you go out and stuff.

I think some of the challenge was we were raised here with the mindset of get your education and go have a better life. Only to realize that you fed us to the wolves the better life was here. That's my final say.

I remember saying to my Uncle one time what was so wrong with here.

Right. So I don't know why their mindset was that way.....

But I think they also grew up with the boomer situation and unemployment was high and economic opportunities here on the Island here and that kind of stuff.

I don't think my children will grow up with any kind of a mindset of... you got to go away.

And even when I lived away on the island I always craved to be back.

Extract 5

P1: I think their fight was they seen NL poor fishery-dependent at the time but I mean every where else it seemed like there was opportunity. And they were backwards,

where I don't think my kids are going to grow up seeing any difference between here although this is a small community.

You know when we grew up here, you went to

Gander once a year maybe, right, you're lucky your parents took you in.

It is important to contextualize the narrative offered in extract 4 lines four through six and extract 5 lines two through three. This woman is describing the prevalence of a narrative of place new to her generation and new to the place in which she grew up. The narrative is in this paper termed a 'success-away-from-home' narrative. For these two women, the 'born-and-bred' narrative—the idea that a person should make a living in the place where they belong, the place they grew up—was less influential than or replaced by a narrative that insisted that the good, successful life was to be had away from home and that if they left home they would find the good life that had eluded their parents. The interviews shows that this was a new narrative for the generation to which these women belong as compared to the previous generation of women in Newfoundland.

As becomes clear in considering the interview transcripts, women's narratives differed across age groups and in the way women reflected on their parents' lives. In the narratives of the oldest generation of women from Newfoundland (women with grandchildren and great—grandchildren) there appeared no negotiation with pressures to leave the province (or the country, before it became a province). In these narratives if and when women moved from one rural community to another it was first to be married and then with a family unit and for the purposes of maximizing the family unit's access to a road and so to services and employment—maximizing choices and opportunities without leaving the province, and in most cases staying within the region. For the purposes of this paper, this generation will be identified as generation A. The narratives collected for this project tell how the children of these women, generation B, grew up imagining their future lives (work and family) occurring within Newfoundland. It was during generation B's span as parents that the cod fishery collapsed and took with it a good portion of the provincial economy. Many individuals and families moved away for work elsewhere and most with children took them along. As becomes explicit in extract 4, lines four through five, those in generation B who chose to stay introduced a new normative place-based narrative to their children: the default life narrative became 'success-away-from-home'. As the women interviewed described, for this generation of born and bred Newfoundlanders, making home in the province needed to be rationalized or defended narratively. Home—rural Newfoundland—was narratively cast in women's stories (by their older relatives, broader social networks) in as negative (unglamorous, no jobs etc.) and staying in

the province was a sign of lack of success and a projected future of (particularly financial) difficulties.

The two women whose extracts are the focus of this paper belong to what is termed here generation C: they are the children who absorbed the success-away-from-home narrative and lived their lives in response to that narrative. (Generation C also includes the children of those among generation B who left. Born away from their parent's home, some retained strong connections to Newfoundland and continued to identify as home a place they never knew growing up, or knew as a vacation place. Their stories appear in the women's narratives as side notes and are not the focus here.) The life stories of generation C share above narrate negotiations between the born-and-bred narrative and the contemporary success-away-from-home narrative. This contemporary narrative creates, sustains and normalizes the experiences of people who must leave a home place for education, for jobs, and/or to better themselves in general.

These two women, however, want to offer a different narrative to their children. This becomes clear in extract four, line eleven and extract five lines four through five. During the act of parenting, these women, a part of generation C with young children, are attempting to create new narratives of place for their children in rural Newfoundland. These new narratives combine choice and opportunity with local people and place connection: they are narrating a reach for a balance between accessing choice and opportunity elsewhere with sustaining and creating (for their children) roots at home. This is particularly relevant with regards to parenting.

The following extracts look ahead to generation D, the young children of generation C, the women who returned to raise their children in the place in which they grew up. It is in narrating Generation C's emerging consciousness as parents, their projections for their children's future life stories and their daily lives in providing a good life for their children that tensions between place as an embodied, limited reality and place as an imagined ideal are heightened.

Extract 6

P2: but the products that Fogo Island has put out there in relation to the people that are well educated and making a difference on this planet, not just in this province or in this country.

I just love to be able for somebody to be able to sit down and say this is what we produced. This is what we've collectively as an island this is our contribution.

Overwhelming.

But I think that in sending them off we've never ever made that opportunity for them to come back. Or explained to them or had those conversations about you know maybe your path will lead you back here but that takes some planning.

Because I do have those conversations with [name of child]. [My child] says to me he says mommy I have to go away to go to school and at eight that's a concern for him because he has to leave. It's not like we live in St. John's and you can do four years of university and still live at home with mom and dad. He has to go at 17, a boy.

Not gonna be able to do that you know.

And I do say to him well baby who knows what it'll be like then. I mean you know

you can do courses on line now. Again I want him to have that exposure and that experience because it's so much fun and so important in building you as a person. But you know I say to him you have to look at what it is that you want to do and see if that can get you back here if this is where you want to be. You know this is an option. I'm not forcing this on him, it's his path, his life his choice. But at the same time I want him to know this is an option. I hope home is an option for him.

Extract 7

P1: And even to kids today it's a different world....

They're more modernized around some of that stuff.

I mean I grew up in the morning I'd go out and I'd fish and I'd explore and you know we lived outside playing outside all the time.

But today's kids don't. And that's not only here that's everywhere. It's a different connected society around that some of that stuff. I wonder how kids are going to grow up in their household in terms of connected and all that. I mean at one time the kids at least would be sitting on the couch and if the crew were around the table around some of that stuff. Now they're in the basement on the computer or in the you know like there's like no we got to share the same space but everybody's got too much space now.

So that was a big difference because houses then in rural NL. I mean you had your grandparents, you had your parents and you had your siblings and it wasn't just another sibling and in some cases they had two sets of grandparents in the houses and stuff so quite often you were under a roof of I'd say majority of the houses around

here 30 years ago had

at least six people in them. Now they're probably got two....

Today it's a different world. My kids will never know. I wonder will my children grow up with the same connectivity as I did.

Extract 8

P1: It's the norm around, well that's what we find with the cabin when we go away and we spend more time there with family time.

I mean where every week we're in the car taking our kids to some kind of organized event.

That's the same thing I said to my husband the other night in the car it's like all we do is we're a taxi and we're not even spending any kind of quality time with them to some extent right?

Extract 9

P2—Now we want to get Disney out of the way so we're hoping to do that in October just to get it not to get it out of the way because I'm a kid at heart and can't wait to go there. But you know [my child] is one of those kids that he says mom I want to go see the Leaning Tower of Pisa. I said wow you're going to be a handful.

Does he want Disney more than anything? I think he wants to but to see other places as well. Not going to say we are going to be world traveler no.

It's going to take some saving and planning.

[My partner] travelled to Europe before so when [my child] sees something on TV and [my partner] says well I've been there, that sort of sparks his interest, you know.

It's just because he's heard us having conversations about we've been to the Eiffel

Tower and we've been to Notre Dame.

In extract 6 lines five through seven and sixteen through twenty offer a (potentially limited or contingent) completion of the circular narrative observed above: they are talking to their children about the possibilities of returning home after experiencing life away. This generation of women are consciously narrating futures for their children that embrace a return to home, and even encourages planning toward this goal. This narrative shift should not be underestimated. These women are engaging in narrative intervention, offering potential futures to their children different than the ones available to them as children, and different than the ones that had been available to their parents. The continuation of this kind of narrative planning is vital to the rural communities of Newfoundland not only so that the communities experience an increase in population following the loss of young people who have left for jobs and education but so that these returnees bring back the skills, experiences and ideas they encountered through venturing away from home—making home a place with a broader diversity of ideas and a deeper capacity. This circular life narrative is part of the creation and continuation of new identities of place being constructed in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Paired with these new identities of place, however, are narrative contradictions. These appear as place-related parenting anxieties. In extract seven, the woman considers how differently her children are connected to place than she was, even though they are growing up in the same place. Generational divides are certainly normal, but the particular anxieties on which each generation's divide is created are reflective of particular cul-

tural and place-based anxieties. The narrative tensions which focus on place in these extracts speak to particular place demands being made of the women from generation C, who currently have young children, and these demands appear different than what had previously been experienced.

All the narrative extracts that appear in this paper clearly show that women value deep rural, home connections and want to ensure similar connections to place are formed by their children. At the same time, these same women value their connections to and experiences with the urban and the world outside of their small rural communities. This tension has previously been easily resolved: earlier in their lives the women of generation C were able (and encouraged) to move for work, travel and recreation all the while keeping connections to home strong and once they moved back to their small rural communities, they could continue to travel frequently and maintain strong connections outside home. As independent adults with only their own connections to create and maintain—including an array of home connections rooted in place largely due to the choices made by their own parents and extended family—these women were able to navigate between multiple senses of place—inward looking place as rootedness and deep family connections and place as outward-looking place, made through connection outside of the home community—to a certain level of satisfaction, if not necessarily always with a sense of equilibrium or balance.

Yet the daily acts of parenting change this individual place balancing act. With the onset of parenting, mothers and fathers cease to be only independent actors who maxi-

mize choices to their own benefit but become linked not only physically to a dependent human but imaginatively to a desired future for that dependent human. During the act of parenting human limitations are felt keenly. Not only does access to global connections become more limited on a financial level (parents must pay for travel and participation in any activities etc.) but parents become much more limited physically in their reach across space to access once-easier-to-access places away from home. Parenting involves a daily physical and imaginative geography that makes apparent the place tensions in contemporary life. Place contradictions that were more easily smoothed over as an independent non-parent are much less easily resolved during parenting.

Research demonstrates that women shoulder the majority of parenting burdens, even when both parents are working full-time (Baruch et al. 1987, Hochsild 2012, Vaananen et al. 2004). These burdens include caring work, stress, missing work and wages for sick children, organizational duties, shopping work, emotional work, getting the child from one place to another. Statistics show this is the case in Canada (Conway 2003). Many of the anxieties narrated by the women in Newfoundland focus on concerns over place identities and competing ways of belonging in place. Their stories indicate that the burdens of parenting-in-place and the burden of parenting-over-global-and-local places fall disproportionately on women. New narratives of place create additional expectations for good parenting that requires that women attempt to stretch across multiple, sometimes contradictory, narratives of place in order to ‘place’ their child successfully. Their daily parenting movements are acts of stretching across space: driving longer and further to

take children to activities; working in order to afford the traveling and activities that will place their children in the world; choosing work that is close to children in order to facilitate traveling to work, to childcare, to school and to activities; giving up their 'place' through giving up the time spent maintaining connections to local and global (rural and home) places in order to facilitate children's multiple and time-consuming connections; prioritizing their children's future place-based identities over present day place-based connections to family and land(scape).

These women who have chosen to return to rural Newfoundland to raise their children are faced with questions/dilemmas: how can they connect their children to global place and local place at the same time?; how can they both prepare their children to leave and to stay?; are the very different place connections formed by their children deep enough, enduring enough?; have they done enough to ensure their children will want to return, given the opportunity?

These women do not want to live the way their parents did. In the lives they live in returning home, they seek to bring together the aspects of the past, with the aspects of the present and the aspects of imagined potential for the future. They don't continue to live the known and comfortable rural home; they attempt to stretch between home and away, known and unknown, the urban and the rural, global and local. This stretch becomes most apparent in their narratives of parenting and introduces tension within particular life narratives.

A key narrative tension in these women's stories is the differences between how they grew up and how they are raising their children. This can be seen in extract 8 lines five through seventeen. In that extract it is clear that the women speaking recognizes that her strong home connections are the result of a being raised in a particular way that emphasized home, the rural, local connections, that resulted in a de-emphasis of outside connections (recognizing the limits of being physical beings in that we can not manage an unlimited number of connections and can only manage well a limited number). Yet, in order to raise children who will be successful in the world—who will live in the world as much as in any one place—these women must raise children with strong experiential and imaginative connections to the outside world. In doing this, they express concern about the other side of increasing global connections--the loss of and/or weakening of the kind of local home and place connections they were given while growing up. The notion that local connections are weakened at the expense of global appears frequently in several narratives and is a key theme appearing in extract 9 lines one through six. In this extract the woman speaking narrates what would be a familiar scenario to contemporary parents: the experience of having children involved in so many activities that they spend a lot of time driving to activities in a car. These activities are part of giving the child skills and experiences needed in the outside world. In this narrative arc, rural home is less a place of connection, but a base from which parents drive their children to activities meant to train them for the urban world in which they will live. The second 'home'—the cabin—is the place to spend time with family, the time away from children's activities. The woman

speaking in this extract complains that she feels she and her partner are reduced to the role of taxi drivers. This suggests that although she has chosen to raise her children in this way and thinks it is the best for the long-term, she knows that time spent in the car is less time with grandparents, aunts and uncles and less time learning about the land around them. Notice that in this narration, the choice of parenting in this manner means that time spent creating activity-based connections limits time spent creating family-and-land-based-connections not only for the child involved in the activity, but for the parent(s) doing the driving. These children's activities suck up the time, energy and place-connections of multiple people—as currently organized. There is a recognition that place-based identities and connections are changing as they struggle to balance the need and desire for both local and global connections.

The world is not as connected as new place identities might indicate and researchers have observed that global place is much more accessible to certain individuals than others: people and families with more money have more dramatically more mobility while those without financial resources have much less, and when they do have it, a much more limited and coercive mobility (de Blij 2010). In fact, the vast majority of the world's population will never leave the general area in which they were born (ibid). In rural Newfoundland it is for the most part the financially privileged who have access to global places and people and families without the benefit of disposable income create place connections that are much more limited geographically by comparison. None of those interviewed would be considered wealthy, but, income aside, it is clear that place becomes ac-

cessible differently to people at different points of their lives. Parenting is a key moment in time and place during which are made clear the limitations of contemporary narratives which tell stories of untroubled individualized access to global place(s).

The dilemma that is narrated through these place tensions is this: given a family's inherent physical and temporal limitations how can local and global place connections of sufficient depth and quality be supported while maximizing choice and opportunity and what is the appropriate balance of these to build a promising future for their children?

3.6 Conclusion

This broader impact of this research leads to questions about the role of place and embodiment in globalizations and new mobilities theories (Cresswell 2012). This research found that women's embodied role as mothers limited their access to the paired contemporary societal identity narratives of the globalized citizen and the mobile citizen. These limitations have the impact of 'placing' them and their children on the edges of these ideas. In these women's stories there were contradictions between the expectations of parenting through the maintenance of connections across larger geographies and the clear limitations on time and the physical needs of a child or children. These were narrated as tensions in their everyday rural lives.

This paper considered the ways in which place narratives have responded to changes in rural ways of life and to women's changing place anxieties. Raising children appears to be a time during women's lives when place-based tensions are strongly felt. Recent research has shown that parents with strong place-based identities and senses of

belonging appear to be the most willing to send their children away, with the hopes that they will return and focusing on return rather than retention (Abbot-Chapman et al. 2014, Stewart and Abbot-Chapman 2011). In doing so, parents are recognizing “the ‘portability’ of bonds, relationships and identities, the permeability of rural and urban places and the extensibility or stretchiness of place” (Abbot-Chapman et al. 2014, 305). This research project expands on the experience of the stretchiness of place and the daily (physical and imagined) acts of stretching between rural and urban senses of place. The narrative anxieties documented in this research suggests that this stretching does come at a cost, particularly for women during the time they are parenting from rural places. These narratives are not without constraints for the women taking them up and attempting to enact them as part of their children’s present and future. Taylor wrote that “[f]or women in particular, the new residential identities I have described may be difficult to sustain” (2005, 263) because women are “constrained by more conventional positionings of women in relations to place,” (2005, 263). For the two rural women whose narratives are the focus of this paper, parenting not only positions women more conventionally in relation to place (a parent whose movements are much more limited through the limits of physical caretaking responsibilities) but requires women to stretch across space and place in order to parent for a child’s future success in the world. This observation points toward important areas for future research that considers women’s contemporary experiences of the rural and the kinds of rural infrastructures, policies, and programs that could provide support during this period in which the sense of being stretched is most acute and suggests that this type

of focus would support rural sustainability. If parenting from rural areas is experienced as too stressful, fewer parents will decide to remain in rural areas during this key time of developing place attachments to the rural for both parents and children.

The second observation that women's strategies of rural continuance and renewal have included narrative interventions suggests that new narratives of place are quite malleable. This builds on previous research which observed that rural parents are open to children moving away for education and/or opportunity—by suggesting how this openness is transferred to the next generation. This research also suggests areas for future research to identify other emerging narratives of rural continuance and renewal and ways in which rural policy and development initiatives can work with existing narratives toward new ones. These narratives show how four generations of women experienced shifting narratives of rural possibilities and how their own life narrative was shaped in response to these. Importantly, the generation of women currently raising their children are consciously shaping narratives that leave open the commonsense possibility of return to rural Newfoundland, narrating future circular life narratives for their children. The women narrate this as a clear shift from the rural narratives offered to them and to their own parents. These women have responded to the decline of rural Newfoundland by creating an imagined future rural that offers to their children opportunity and possibility when their children are ready to return from (a probably urban) 'away' to raise their children.

Home is a complex site profoundly impacted by rapid social change, globalization, and the stretching of place. Indeed, in considering how rural women have narrated

their responses to rural change in Newfoundland, this research suggests that it is time for rural researchers to take on an ambitious research agenda that explores how rural homes can be created, lived, narrated, experienced, sustained and supported differently than they are today. This will ensure that rural areas can absorb the impact of future political, environmental, and cultural change.

3.7 References

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4. For the Children: Notions of Childhood in Women's Narratives of Home in Rural Newfoundland

4.1 Introduction

When rural women in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, were asked ‘how did you come to live where you live?’ many shared narratives that engaged with notions of childhood and notions changing rural childhoods. In taking up these women’s narratives of residential mobility and home, this article considers place-based implications for rural Newfoundland and the implications of these contemporary rural narratives to rural and urban geographies more broadly. This qualitative research suggests that notions of childhood are an increasingly important category through which rural geographies in Newfoundland and Labrador are created and sustained. The ambivalence storied within women’s notions of childhood reflect four main ideas that are discussed in this article. 1. There is a growing gap between the traditional idealized rural childhood relationships to land and work that Newfoundland women say they would like to make possible for their children and what I have called in this paper the ‘idealized contemporary rural childhoods’ that are being enacted on a daily basis (involving multiple and numerous connection to urban geographies and activities). This is important because these women’s narratives show that if they cannot provide access to at least some aspects of the rural childhood experiences they value for their children, they are more likely to move away from rural areas. 2. Notions of ideal rural childhoods have not kept up with changes in experienced rural childhoods. Given this, notions about contemporary rural childhoods remain ‘in-between’—caught between ideas about Newfoundland’s traditional rural past and the spread of urban geographies

and ideas. This is reflected in women's narrated ambivalence between what they see as traditional rural values and the increasing demands of urban-rural connections: in offering their children a 'rural' childhood, women are uncertain what they are offering and how to enact positive contemporary rural childhoods. This presents an opportunity for academics and those concerned with rural continuance to engage with and contribute to the new positive definitions of what it means to live rural in Newfoundland today. Rural Newfoundland needs to be 're-storied' (in the way that urban has been re-storied in recent decades to present positive possibilities for ways of living there) so that parents can more easily access new positive narratives to guide and support the value of childhood in rural places and work together to create new opportunities for positive childhoods in rural areas.

3. Women's narrated ambivalence involving a desire for teaching children value for place-based relationships with the land *and* ensuring connections to urban-based activities and values suggests that the categories of the rural and the urban are spilling over their binary-based categories more than ever in today's rural Newfoundland. The question for those concerned with rural continuance is how to understand and grapple with this excess. This paper argues for urban and rural studies to pay attention to this 'spilling-over' and begin to work toward new ways of conceptualizing rural-urban connections.

4. In this project, women's narratives centred reproductive concerns. Rural studies often relegate reproductive, family, and home concerns to the periphery of the discipline. Following these women's stories, I suggest that reproductive work and related theoretical implications be made more visible in rural studies. For example, in Halfacree's three-fold no-

tion of rural space (2007), rather than subsume social reproduction concerns within the lived experiences category (which allows for reproductive concerns to remain almost completely invisible), I suggest that the conceptualization add another leg, becoming a four-fold notion of rural space, and thus including: rural locality; formal representations of rural; everyday lives of the rural; social reproduction of the rural.

This paper opens new directions for academics, policy makers, and those concerned with rural continuance and residential mobility decisions and the impacts of changing rural-urban connections on the way people live and the way they would like to live. The paper begins by briefly visiting the local and global contexts of rural childhood and considering the blurry definition of child and childhood in women's stories. Following an overview of the literature on rurality and rural childhood, the paper outlines the research project and presents the interview excerpts that relate to this paper's argument. The paper points to the tensions in women's narratives between the idealized rural childhood and the rural childhood contemporary children (their children or grandchildren) are living. This paper suggests that women's (and people's) changing notions of childhood are an important but overlooked aspect of rural continuation.

4.2 Contexts of rural childhood

Rural children are the "potential inhabitants and users of the rural environments of the future" (Valentine 1997, 147) and thus an understanding of rural childhood is important to the future of the rural in Canada and across the world (Philo 1992, Valentine 1997, Leyshon 2008, Cummins 2009, Matthews et al. 2000). Childhood socialization is key to

raising children who value the rural as adults—in whatever form, be it fishing, farming, nature, trees, animals or landscape (Valentine 1997, Cummins 2009). Porter noted that parenting can act as a draw to live in rural areas, writing that “[p]eople return to and wish to stay in rural places in order to parent” (Porter 2015b, submitted).

In this paper the notion of childhood implicates emotional and lived geographies across time and through multiple generations. Childhood is taken up as memory, is applied to the contemporary lives of children, and is a notion through which the future is imagined. The stories presented in this paper were told through the experiences of parents and so the words child, childhood (and to a much lesser extent, youth) apply to an unfixed age range and tended to be used as relational categories with emotional significance.

Commonly, the word child or childhood referred to the time period after birth and before adulthood. However, age ranges were not storied definitively and remained blurry in part due to the relational aspects of the words. For example, several women reflected on home by recalling their own childhoods and then recalling how they left home (their rural communities). Although they were legally adults when they left they referred to themselves as children leaving home. Their legal status did not invalidate the relational nature of the word child: they were their parents’ children. It wasn’t until they had children that these relational categories shifted in these stories and they referred to themselves not as their parents’ children but as their children’s parents (their own parents having shifted to grandparents). But even in talking about their own children and grandchildren, there was no shared terminology that separated one age category from another: the words child,

kids, youth, and childhood were variously applied to young children, to grandchildren of all ages, and to adult children. This vernacular use of these words may be a reflection on the fact that the age categories imposed by quantitative research, while important for its own research outcomes, do not resonate with people's lived experiences. This itself—that people don't use statistical categories for childhood in their daily lives and stories—is an argument for the necessity and value of narrative research on this topic. In using the words youth, childhood and child in this manner I am following the lead of other established academics who use the terms in this manner (Philo 1992, Valentine 1997, Leyshon 2008, Cummins 2009, Matthews et al. 2000). This paper reflects people's common usage and, in exploring the ways in which people story changing notions of childhood, seeks not to investigate the use of these words, but to explore the changing meanings through which rural people are relating to and creating rural childhoods.

Notions of childhood are taken up within the broad context of rural depopulation and the 'greying' of rural areas (Vodden, Gibson and Porter 2014) on the island of Newfoundland. The importance of child socialization in the rural noted above is all the more important to ensure that a significant number of adults these children become want to live in rural areas and/or want to return to rural areas after leaving for education or early work experiences. There is some indication this connection to the rural has been created during childhood in rural Newfoundland and that young people (including children and young adults) either want to leave or plan to return. For example, even while statistics and demographics show that the majority of young people are leaving rural areas, some studies

suggest that at least a portion are doing so reluctantly. A study of ten Newfoundland communities showed that most youth (high-school students and above aged between 15 and 24) did not want to leave (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997). Indeed, for these Newfoundland youth “home in these rural settings was a beloved place and one that they planned to stay in and use as a future base for entrepreneurship” (Cummins 2009, 67). These plans to use the rural as a future base for activities that are not traditionally rural (not farming but non-farming entrepreneurship) suggests that childhood experiences and influences can create relationships to the rural that remain strong even in the face of change. Research with farming children in Ontario shows that this is happening outside of rural Newfoundland as well (Cummins 2009). The study found that although many of the children (aged 7-12) of farmers did not plan to farm, the majority wanted to live in rural communities and/or the countryside (Cummins 2009). Some of the women interviewed for this paper are part of this cohort of one-time rural children who return to live in beloved rural areas but do not continue the traditional rural activities that sustained their parents’ rural lives. Drawing from select narrative excerpts, this paper explores the meanings of the storied rural childhood across these changes. The paper focuses on the narratives told by Newfoundland women who are currently parenting, and suggests that the changes described are related in the long term to rural continuation.

4.3 Storying the rural

Halfacree’s threefold model of rural space suggests that the much fuller stories of the rural can be told through considerations of rural localities, formal representations of the rural

and the lives of the rural people (2007). In this paper, the focus is not weighted evenly between the three, but falls most strongly on lives lived as narrated in women's stories of home and the rural. The other two aspects are not ignored, however. The stories told are deeply connected to the broader contexts of rural localities in Newfoundland that grappled with the province-wide impact of the cod moratorium and the shift to industrial and oil-based economies (Vodden, Gibson and Porter 2014). The stories are connected to a government that lacks commitment to rural areas in the province and a lack of comprehensive rural policy (Furst 2014). Formal representations of the rural are read in the women's descriptions of the common sense admonition to young people to leave the province if they wanted a chance at success and in the commonly shared fears for the future of rural communities. These fears and hopes are felt in response to a formal story of rural that has been one of failure. These stories are also connected to the global rural contexts in which "rural change, although something that has of course always been with us, has intensified in terms of both pace and persistence, and that this change is also seen as being increasingly total and interconnected (Woods, 2005)" (Halfacree 2007). Further, this paper suggests that reproductive work, concerns and organization be taken up as an explicit conceptual category for understanding how rural geographies are brought into being and practiced. The three aspects of Halfacree's model take into account rural localities (understood as the spatial practices of production and consumption, but without mention of reproduction), formal representations of the rural (described as the ways rural is framed within capitalist processes), and the everyday lives of the rural (described as in-

corporating both individual and social elements, but again without explicit mention of social reproduction).

This paper is led by the idea that rurality is a story told about and by rural people and the land they inhabit physically and imaginatively. To believe that the rural is a story requires attention to the ways in which our (often unexamined) beliefs about the meaning of rurality actually shape what the rural becomes. This paper shows the ways in which rural women's changing notions in relation to rural childhood are already changing rural Newfoundland in particular ways. The paper then suggests that beliefs about rural childhood are key areas that can lead future rural change and support rural continuance or, at worst, lead to increasing rural depopulation and the devaluation of rural areas.

To ensure a positive future for rural areas, research about rural change and the emerging nature of contemporary ruralities must engage in some way with three questions: what has the rural been, what is the rural today and what can the rural potentially become? Rural narratives—the stories told about the rural, the people who live there, and their daily lives—offer particular insight into those questions. Rural fiction, for example, offers complex considerations of rural past, present and possible futures (see Johansen 2008 for an analysis of the cosmopolitan meanings of the rural as analysed through two novels about different rural places).

The rural is associated with a number of terms—including agriculture, fishing communities, resource extraction, remote, urban adjacent, resource communities, recreation, wilderness, protected areas, aboriginal reserve land, gardens, parks, and full-and-

part-time farm operations within urban city limits. Indeed, the story of how ‘the rural’ has been constructed in the discourse of social science is a story of a continual struggle to define what is meant by the ‘rural’ and to establish the extent to which it is the same as, or distinctive from, the ‘urban’. The very process of attempting to distinguish between these two opposites has given meaning to them both (Valentine 2001, 249). While the focus on similarities or differences between the rural and urban remains core to their overlapping meanings, researchers are increasingly being called on to resist defining rural through urban, but rather to consider the rural on its own terms (Halfacree 2007) and through its own narratives. This means, in part, asking rural people to tell the stories through which they live their lives, identifying if and how the rural acts as a significant category within these lives. This is because “the fact remains that notions of the rural remain salient among those who inhabit these spaces...it appears that the distinction of rural spaces remains significant within the situated knowledge [of the rural population studied]” (Wagner 2014).

New materialist approaches to rural studies have not reiterated previous focus areas (ie/mapping and/or describing rural areas and/or the production and movement of material goods) but have instead shifted the focus to explorations of meaning or experiential expressions of human and non-human, living and non-living things in rural spaces. This includes theorizations of the embodiment of rural subjects (with a focus that is not necessarily on people). In the study of rural change in particular there is more attention paid to

various ways senses of belonging are created and sustained through networks and dwelling and/or embodiment. Rural studies is experiencing:

a turning away from ideas of culture, society, economy, politics and nature as analytical tools [which] will increasingly produce other forms of rural study, opening up new perspectives on processes of rural change, experiences of rurality, and embodied and subjective forms of being in 'rural' space" (Holloway and Kneafsey 2004, 4).

The emphasis on a social representation approach resulted in a rural that has become at times largely a matter of definitions imposed by particular groups, in that "[w]hat makes rural are the meanings imposed on it by residents and visitors. In this way, the rural is a 'state of mind' and thus socially constructed" (Parkins and Reed 2013, 13). Understanding the rural as a social construction allowed researchers to differentiate between the multiple ways different populations acted on and interacted with rural areas and provided important insight into conflicts arising between different rurals, including rural areas such as the tourist rural, the resource rural, the wilderness rural, rural work, the coastal rural, the bedroom community rural, the newcomer's rural. In fact, it is true that "the quest for any single, all-embracing definition of the rural is neither desirable nor feasible" (Halfacree 1993, 34) because the rural is "material, imaginative and practiced" (Halfacree 2007, 127) as much as it is relational, heterogeneous, dynamic and contested. This research has shown us that "the rural, like gender, is messy, fluid and complicated" (Pini 2014, 456).

The study of women's particular relationships with rurality have broadened conceptual understandings and continue to investigate the ways in which geographical cate-

gories, including the rural, have often defined in and through masculine terms (Rose 1993). Examples of the ways women's life narratives have informed academic rural narratives include: a study which links women's gendered experiences of farming and stress to family farm continuity (Price and Evans 2005) and; research that, through its focus on women, has opened up the taken-for-granted (masculinist) narratives which shape our dominant understanding of rural wilderness (see Hensing, Raglon and Sandilands 2005 for consideration of women's impact on the meanings of Canadian rural). Women's experiences opened up the possibilities of the rural wilderness retreat narrative in the mid-twentieth century:

The most urgent question is no longer what is an individual position vis-a-vis the universe at large, as it was for Emerson, Thoreau, Muir and many other wilderness writers up to the present day, but rather what is *our* relationship to the beings who constitute what we know as our home. (Roorda 2004, 11)

While simply including women as study subjects has critical analytical potential, it is important to note that women are not a homogenous group and “it is unhelpful to think of a uniform group of rural women and a uniform group of urban women (Shortall, forthcoming)” or a uniform group of urban or rural men. Indeed, Harrison and Watson (2012) note that “[c]ritical feminist insight has shown that this relationship [between women and men and the environment] is neither innate nor given; it is the product of social relations of gender in particular contexts, including in settings of rural and semi-rural natural resources management” (2012, 933).” Reed observed that neither sex nor gender pre-determine women's interactions with the environment or with rural places, but instead

suggest that “women’s identities can be seen to arise from multiple positions and different understandings of their situations” (Reed 2003, 156).

Although childhood is a key idea through which the rural comes together imaginatively and materially, there has been only a small amount of research on this topic (Matthews et al. 2000). However, the research that has been done shows that adults “both mobilize and contest notions of the rural idyll in describing their children’s childhood” (Valentine 1997, 147). The majority continue to depict rural childhood as “a glorious place where children can grow up safely” (Matthews et al. 2000). Jones (1997) suggests that rural childhood is a complex experience which can involve a sense of ‘otherness’ (though whether this is the nature of rural childhood or childhood itself is not clear). Little and Austin (1996) found that parents recognized that there were dangers for children in rural areas (ie/traffic and stranger danger) but maintained rural was still safer than urban and that, moreover, there was a stronger sense of community in rural areas (Little and Austin 1996). Davis and Ridge’s research notes that rural childhood experiences are differentiated through a number of factors, not the least of which is socio-economic status (1997). Couchman (1994) also confronts the idyllisation of the countryside as place for children in her work which explore rural childhood as a geography of, at various times, socio-spatial marginalisation and exclusion. What children actually do in natural or rural areas impacts how they come to regard these areas, as King (2013, 74) reminds us when he wrote that “young people’s attitudes to nature are also inherently linked to practice”. Leyshon’s (2008) research with rural youth demonstrates the ‘betweenness’ of

the rural that youth experience today in that they identify with urban lifestyles and entertainments and the wider global cultures as well as the rural life that is outside their door. And yet, this betweenness marks the ways in which rural children can feel they are never able to completely inhabit or belong to any one category and feel excluded from all of them. Rural youth “uneasily situate their identities between being included and excluded from their home place and beyond” (2008, 22).

The rural is imagined into being and practiced through relationships to notions of childhood to which parents, grandparents, and wider members of the community aspire. Through the reach toward ideals of rural childhood the lived rural childhood occurs. This paper demonstrates the importance of understanding the role of childhood and its potential, as a notion currently undergoing rapid change in rural Newfoundland, to be redefined and re-storied so that it can be support rural continuance.

4.4 Interviewing women

I believe that it is no accident that notions of childhood became a narrative focus during a research project involving women. It would be interesting to investigate whether an open-ended project such as this one (that asked for stories of home) if focused on male participants would have collected similar narratives about parenting and childhood. Men’s narratives of home would equally mark an interesting departure as well and would likely touch on different issues than these ones told by women, but I chose to focus on women’s. I do not wish to make essentialist generalizations about rural women, however. These narratives were told by these women at this time in response to an interview with me: change

any aspect of that and different stories would likely have been told. In this paper attention is paid to the place and role of childhood in women's narratives of their rural lives. Like all life narratives these are contingent, changing and told through shared and personal narrative resources. Shared narrative resources which have become normative and so common they appear as commonsense, such as the idea that people have strong connections to places in which they were born or grew up, are called commonsense narratives (Taylor 2010).

Had I interviewed women with different shared life experiences, their stories of rural childhood may have together taken a different path than these. Children and childhood appeared in the stories of home told by all rural participants except one (for that woman her focus was her art in relation to home and the rural, the topic of a future paper). Stories told to me were quite different, but where stories overlapped with childhood they echoed the idea of change: childhoods were described as changed or different than before. Although narrative research that engages with memory suggests that memory itself is not necessarily reliable (Kramp 2004, Gubrium and Holstein 2001), this paper argues that these women's stories about rural childhoods nevertheless reflect changed material, imaginative and lived contexts in rural Newfoundland. Taking on a Stories First (Porter 2015) approach that pays attention to the local knowledge embedded in women's stories, this paper lets the stories lead the topics discussed and asks: why are women concerned with changing rural childhoods and what does their concern mean for rural Newfoundland?

Like all life narratives these are contingent and engage with both shared and personal narrative resources. Shared narrative resources are one analytical focus in dialogical approaches (Frank 2012). Those narrative resources that have become normative and so common they appear as commonsense, such as the idea that people have strong connections to places in which they were born or grew up, are called commonsense narratives (Taylor 2010). Analysed here are experiential stories collected as part of a project which explored narratives of home and rurality in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. To protect anonymity, the communities are not named. Dairy farming and agriculture dominated the area in which one of the three areas was located; the remaining communities had once been primarily fishing communities and, while fishing was still important, both these communities were attempting to diversify their economic base in the face of fisheries decline. Except in one case in which an elderly woman asked that her husband be present and relied on him to answer questions put to her while she preferred to add personal stories and correct details she saw necessary, all interview participants were women. Most of the interviews took place one-one-one, although there were three interviews with more than one woman present. The majority of the interviews lasted approximately one and a half hours. The length of the interviews and the participant-led interview style allowed a wide range of topics to be covered, allowed the conversation to return to earlier subject areas which needed greater explanation, and allowed interview participants time to think over the topics in general. A total of nineteen women were interviewed about their histories with home and the rural. The majority of the interviews began by asking each woman

how they came to live where they currently live. Question order and topics varied based on responses to that opening question. Interviews were recorded and once transcribed were subject to narrative analyses which looked for key topics, themes, tensions and narrative contradictions. While a previous paper related to this research took up themes of place and parenting (Porter 2015b, submitted), this paper discusses notions of rural childhood and changing rural childhoods.

4.5 Changing rural childhoods

This section considers the roles childhood plays in women's stories of home. This section shares excerpts from women's stories and discusses them in the context of the entire interview and broader story and stories told during the interview. Overall, these women's stories of changing in rural childhoods in Newfoundland uncover a contemporary rural-urban ambivalence and suggest that competing narratives of traditional rural childhoods and contemporary urban childhoods are contributing to this ambivalence.

4.5.1 Narrating change: Recalling their own childhoods

Many of the women interviewed emphasized change by recalling their own childhoods as comparisons to the kinds of childhoods contemporary rural children are experiencing in Newfoundland. The narrative focus rested on daily activities for children in the rural. In the interview excerpts here women tell stories of changing daily activities of many of the rural children in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the following three excerpts older women talk about their childhoods and their now-adult children's childhoods.

Excerpt 1

P8: I sat down and watched Little House on the Prairie. That was me.

And the older I get the more I realize how closely we were like that.

Imagine: there was only seven families.

Nothing but trees.

We had a lot of work to do because we had to build the community.

Rocks for a concrete basement - dad would come home from work and [he'd say] okay I'm going to have something to eat now I want all the youngsters in the truck. And he'd take us all aboard and we'd go over to the gravel pit.

Okay, he'd say, load up the truck.

P9: Two or three of the boys would go up to the site with him and the rest of us had to pick up rocks when he was gone.

Interviewer: You said the community built the school?.

P8: Oh yes. There was two carpenters but they were community every man woman and

child were pouring cement.

Excerpt 2

P10: You know it was not the same.... You either bring water in winter time you had to shovel snow up to the well, get your water, get your wood and that but no... But when we was on the Island half of your day was gone getting wood and water and that.

Excerpt 3

P11: I think it's the culture and the way of life and the way they make a living and that it's always you grow up with a blend of work and play.

You know what I mean you're playing with things that are work. You're imitating your father. If your father's out working with the hammer well the first thing they'll go out they'll pass you along small hammer piece of board let you hammer away if you're a small child.

You know it's sad that's the way not all kids grew up that way but our kids did because [their dad] and them always.

That's the way to entertain them. They were out where they were to and if they were out mending a net well they'd give them the little fisherman's needle and let them fill it up for them, let them try to do it too.

That doesn't happen for most kids anymore.

In these narratives rural work is the centre of daily life. Work was a part of rural childhood. It may even be said that childhood itself, though important, is effaced and not a primary category through which daily life is created. Daily life for children is instead created through daily rhythms of work and non-work. Children had the freedom to play outdoors either once the work was completed or while the older children and adults completed the hardest of the work. Children were not the centre of the daily work rhythms but as time goes on became embedded as a part of the rural work which sustained their families and communities. As excerpt 3 highlights, play in this kind of rural childhood could often imitate the kinds of rural work children observed their parents doing.

The reference in excerpt 1 to *Little House on the Prairie* connects the resettlement experiences of a community from a small island to an unsettled area on the island of Newfoundland to a popular television show about settling the western North America that

was watched by millions. The show presents a rural settler experience through the experiences of children based on the autobiographical books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. For the purposes of this paper, important are the speaker's identified connections between elements in the show and her own childhood experiences: the dominance of a non-peopled landscape, the trees (excerpt 1, line four); the settling of a small group of connected families (excerpt 1, line three); the work involved in building a community (excerpt 1, line five) where none had existed before; the rural work involved the entire family, including children.

The point of these narratives was to illustrate how things have changed (explicitly stated in excerpt 2, line one and excerpt 3, line twelve). Changes in children's daily activities in rural places in Newfoundland are linked to changes in expectations and meanings of rural childhoods. The following excerpt further details how childhood was arranged around rural work. The woman's husband was present for the interview, at her request. As noted above, she often looked to him to answer questions for her, interjecting when she had something additional to say or to correct his error. In this excerpt, the woman agrees with her husband's proud description of her daily work life when their children were young.

Excerpt 4

P12: She did her share. She made hay when I'd bring it home green and she'd shake it out in the daytime.

She'd have the baby out there in the carriage. She did all the gardens stuff like that.

And we had cows and she used to do the cream from them.

She had hens. Three hundred hens. She was busy enough. She did more than her share. She liked to be at it anyway. It was no chore. She liked to be farming anyway.

P13: Yeah. I liked it.

Interviewer: What did you like about it?

P13: I like to be out in the fresh air. It's a wonderful feeling when you get a garden and you got it all you know watch it grow.

P12: [She] was just always working the farm around kids.

When the kids were smaller we often grew five hundred sacks of potatoes. Not big for PEI but big for around here. And probably grow five hundred or six hundred sacks sometimes.

This excerpt narrates the way in which this woman's farming work was completed 'around' the work of caring for young children. In this narrative, the work defined the childhood and the childhood did not get in the way of the rural work more than necessary. In line three, the reference to the baby in the carriage at the edge of the very large food garden sketches a picture of how this juggling may have looked for this particular woman. The children were raised where the parent (mother in this case or the father in other contexts, as in excerpt 6) worked. Children were expected to contribute in age-appropriate ways (keeping in mind that what was considered age-appropriate in previous generations would not necessarily be considered age-appropriate today).

Missing from these excerpts are descriptions of time spent transporting children to activities. Excerpt 4 makes no mention of getting children from one place to another and

no complaints about rural living limiting her time to work or children's access to activities or even if the children were enrolled in any activities. It is important to note that transportation to school was not an issue: later in the interview the woman speaking in excerpt 4 (P13) describes how a school bus would pick her children up for school at the end of the lane each morning, drop them back home for the lunch hour, return them to school after lunch, then bring them home again after school.

4.5.2 Narrating change: Contemporary children's childhoods

When describing the lives of contemporary children the rural narrative begins to shift. Rural work remains a part of many rural childhoods, however, women's narratives indicate a shift in the role of rural work. Fewer of the activities described children as being a part of and/or necessary to the daily work of rural living, such as fishing activities, gardening, daily care of animals, upkeep of the house, buildings and grounds. Instead, the work that children do is experienced as one of many activities.

The fuller life narrative of speaker P13 above introduces the context of changes in rural childhood. One of the older generation of women interviewed for this project she lives on the small farm she and her husband worked on together since marriage. One son and his children continue to help on the farm one evening and one day each week. In her 80's and suffering some health problems, this woman can no longer do any of the farm work though she combined farm work and childcare full-time in her younger years. Her husband had worked a job part-time and worked on the farm part-time until his retirement, at which point the farm became his full-time concern as well. They believe their

grandchildren will keep the operation going in the long term if their current interest continues unabated. The following one-line excerpt brings attention to their hopes.

Excerpt 5

P13: Oh they are really interested in it, the kids. They are out there.

For these grandchildren rural work remains an important part of their lives, though it is lived differently. Rural work is scheduled (once or twice a week, and not for all but for those who take an interest) to fit in with a number of other activities. These children are not experiencing the full-time rural-work-immersed childhood their parents had described, who lived on the farm day-in and day-out for whom play was a release from their contributions to the work. It isn't that traditional rural work isn't important in the narratives which involved present-day young children, but that rural work for these families and their children is a smaller and necessarily less significant part of a wider network of factors and activities shaping childhood.

The shift of the role of rural work in childhood to a part-time scheduled activity in rural Newfoundland appears as a key theme in different ways in different women's narratives. Play in rural childhood today is not something that occurs around rural work. In these narratives contemporary play is often an scheduled organized activity that itself becomes work for parents to organize and transport children to. In one narrative, the speaker describes the many activities her daughters are part of, including participation in work on the farm operated by her husband's family.

Excerpt 6

P14: My 14-year old works on the farm now. She's been over there since last year. She gets up every Sunday morning for a day of work. She gets up at six and she goes on over and she milks the cows and do whatever.

She comes home maybe for an hour or two then she goes back over.

Comes home maybe around 6—it ends early on Sundays.

Interviewer: She's the one that wants to be a dairy farmer right?

Yeah. They both the younger ones are in 4H group as well.

And we go over on Monday there's a group as well and they train cattle to participate in the farm field day.

So twice a week now since kids have gone to school, we've done all the walking the cattle, brushing them, getting them used to people. The girls really enjoy it.

Interviewer: You volunteer?

I'm the leader of the 4H group, I coach my ten-year-old's basketball team. I coach the community basketball team. I'm a member of at the church I'm the vestry. I'm a member of the [community name] executive committee.

It's just really, you're not any less busy for not working on the farm.

There is obvious pride and pleasure that one of her children are connected to the farm. Even while rejecting the day-to-day work of the rural for themselves and their children, the speaker expresses pride in her daughter's ability to put in a day's work on the farm. Both daughters are involved in numerous activities as well and after describing her own connections she later describes her oldest daughter as being busier than she is. Not

only is connection with farm work satisfying, but connection to multiple activities is narrated as positive and something to be proud of. This number of activities could not be supported were she and her husband involved in dairy farming full-time. This childhood is different than the rural childhood her husband experienced on the same family farm his daughter works on once a week.

Excerpt 7

P14: He actually worked there from the time he was 8.

He would get up in the morning and before he would go to school he'd get up and help his dad with whatever he had to do. And then go off and get a shower and breakfast and go on to school and then come home from school and go back to the barn until supper was ready.

And he stayed there and didn't go to university or anything

She discusses her and husband's decision not to work on this same family farm. After they married, the speaker worked on the farm for a short time and enjoyed it, but decided to stop working on the farm when she had kids.

Excerpt 8

P14: When I had [name of child] there was no way I could do that with a baby.

I stayed home with her and then I went back to school.

The speaker went back to school and took a job in town while her husband (who had worked on the family farm since he was eight-years-old) bought a home-based business and left farming. They did not move away from the rural area, but continue to live in

a house alongside the family farm. Excerpts 8 and 9 demonstrate a shift in rural parenting. In these excerpts, for this woman and her husband, parenting and aspects of traditional rural work are mutually exclusive. This clash between parenting and rural work becomes more apparent when the speaker tells how her husband left farming.

Excerpt 9

P14: And being a farmer he worked a lot of hours. He used to work from 6 in the morning until six or seven in the evening. Come home see the girls for an hour and then fall asleep.

He used to get two days off a month.

And in the summertime he'd go to work six in the morning, he wouldn't come home most times at all. I'd be bringing his supper to him. Then he'd come home twelve or one in the morning and then go to work 6 the next morning. So he didn't spend any time with the girls because he was always working. It was a family farm so a lot of the work fell on his shoulders and his father passed so most of the work fell on his shoulders.

We saw that as a way out to spend more time with the kids have more of a life. So he ummm he bought the company and he he eased his way out of the farm over a year or two.

It was a little difficult with the adjustment and his two brothers are still over there. He helps out when he needs to but for the most part that's the main occupation for him.

Interviewer: And how did you like the transition?

I really liked it actually. It was really difficult at first.

It was a strain on the family because they had felt uncomfortable and they didn't really want him to leave so it was a big strain on his family that way.

A lot of pressure on him not to leave.

But for us it worked out really well.

The girls spend so much time with him. I go to work here, I leave here at ten to eight to go to work and he's still here. He sees them on the bus and he packs their lunch. He gets to go see and he gets to go watch their games and he didn't get to see any of that before.

So he's really enjoying that.

And he misses the farm. He really enjoyed it.

But he'd much rather spend the time with the girls.

The ability to offer a particular kind of childhood, one in which parents are highly-involved, is a key motivator for leaving farming in this story. However, the rural childhood (albeit a changed or changing rural childhood) remains the ideal childhood to offer their children: they remained living alongside the family farm, are proud of their children's connections to rural work and rural lifestyles, and the woman narrates her connection to the rural landscape where she lives and her intention never to leave; she hopes her children or one of her children will build a house on the same land.

The speaker is happy with her and her husband's ability to offer a childhood in which time is spent 'with the girls' (excerpt 9, line twenty-six) engaging in activities that centre on the children's enjoyment. This is different than the childhood created through

the narratives involving previous generations, in which time is spent doing work and the children have to contribute to work or play away from the adults.

In the following two excerpts another speaker describes the value in living in her rural home so that her sons and their children can come visit from various parts of urban Newfoundland and Canada.

Excerpt 10

P15: My grandson came home last year and well he's seven now so he had made a few trips home and in the summertime we'd go up behind the hall there up behind [name] hill we call it. Partridgeberry picking and there's a pond up there. So he loved that when he was a little boy so last year when he come he wanted to go in the winter. Of course he wanted to go to [name] hill. You can imagine all the snow and that kind of thing. We went up what a time he had. Jumping off all the rocks this time because it was all snowbanks. So he'd get up on top of the hill and jump off on the snowbanks and he'd walk up the road and he'd walk up the top of the snowbanks all the way up the road. Oh what a time he had just doing that kind of stuff, you know? It was just so different to him.

Excerpt 11

P15: But we moved in we finished it as we went and we always knew when we came here that we'd never sell our house. It was never the intention. This house would not be sold like be left to one of the boys whatever, but it'll never be sold, go out of the family type of thing. They feel the same way about the boat. I mean these are all part of the family,

I mean the boat. The house. You know. I mean. All that boat there that's so it'll never be sold.

And we will never leave on a permanent basis. What we see for retirement is that the unless one of our sons moves home that's what'll surprise me [name of son] is building a summer home in Sandy Cove but it's as big as any house bigger than this house.

Whether they ever would.

I mean obviously if one of the kids ever moved back we wouldn't leave but it'll be their summer home and we will no matter where we go we'll always come back here in the summer. If we don't end up going somewhere where the kids live.

Excerpt 10 describes the kind of play her grandson can be involved in, which is narrated as different than what he can do in the city where he lives with his parents. Excerpt 11 describes the role of house and home in living the rural: the speaker feels a responsibility to keep up the home her sons grew up in and to offer a sense of rural childhood to her grandchildren. Important also is the emphasis she places on her desire to stay in rural Newfoundland even after her husband is retired from fishing, if one of her children moves back with his children (so she can live in rural Newfoundland and still be close to her grandchildren). Unless that happens, children, grandchildren, and grandparents will continue to gather in the rural home in the summer. Key considerations were where the grandchildren were going to live and offering, even in a limited way, a piece of rural childhood. This is reflective of the narratives as whole, in which women emphasized

that people were willing to make compromises and personal sacrifices in order to ensure that children, adult children, and grandchildren could either grow up in rural areas or have continued opportunities to visit and make connections with a desired rural childhood.

4.6 Discussion

This section considers the implications of women's narrated connections to changing rural childhoods in rural Newfoundland. This paper offers three main observations about women's stories about rural home in relation to childhood. First, women perceive that rural childhood is changing. Second, women narrate that these perceptions of change have an impact on the daily lives of rural inhabitants in terms of how rural is being lived and, increasingly, these perceptions impact the decision to live in or leave rural areas. Third, women's stories suggest that rural childhoods are valued differently than they were previously in Newfoundland: changing notions about the roles of parents in a 'good' childhood are impacting notions of idealized rural childhoods and leading to the creation of a new idealized rural childhood in Newfoundland. This new idealized rural childhood centres a high level of connectedness between rural and urban. In these stories, the decision to return to familiar rural home areas to raise children represented an important life decision. In deciding to return home women reflected on the rural experiences that benefitted them in their lives. In worrying about and continually reassessing their children's rural home experiences, they are returning to and assessing that important life decision: was it the right decision to move away from the urban areas in which they were living before in order to raise their children in familiar rural areas? These women's narratives do not resolve

this question, but live within its tension and the ambivalence it creates. These women do not want their children to have childhoods of lesser quality than urban children, but they want them to have positive rural experiences similar to those they had. This tension—a continual imagined comparison between what could have been provided to their children in an urban childhood and what actually is in the rural childhood—appears to be a motivator for women’s daily rural-urban connections and decisions to live rural. This tension is not a comfortable one for these women. In these stories of home women narrate their uncertainty as to whether or not they can offer to their children (or grandchildren) access to the new idealized rural childhood they have narrated—made up of a mix of easy access to urban and the positive experiences of rural, however imprecisely these rural experiences are understood. For those concerned with rural continuity, these changing notions of rural childhood demand attention.

The ambivalence relating to notions of childhood in rural Newfoundland in women’s stories suggest a four main ideas taken up in this paper. 1. The gap between the older and/or traditional idealized rural childhoods and the idealized contemporary rural childhoods that are being enacted on a daily basis suggest that there is opportunity to respond to the changing lived experiences of rural children and ideals through which these daily experiences are being lived. Given that a connected article suggests that women may choose to relocate to rural areas to parent (Porter 2015b, submitted), how do changing notions of rural childhood impact decisions to stay or to leave rural areas? How can changing rural childhoods be supported through rural policy initiatives? 2. The observa-

tion that notions of ideal rural childhoods have not kept up with changes in experienced rural childhoods suggests there is an opportunity to re-story and/or redefine the meaning of contemporary rural childhood. There are other questions. In what other ways do these notions of changing rural impact daily lives, life course decisions, and children's connections to rural places? How are notions of rural childhood gendered and/or racialized and/or connected to socio-economic status? How do these notions vary across geographies? Which life experiences are connected to particular notions of rural childhood? 3.

Women's narrated ambivalence involved a desire to teach children value for place-based relationships with the land *and* to build connections to urban-based activities and values. Implicated here is the nature of rural and urban themselves: how can we, as rural scholars, re-conceptualize these categories outside of their binary definitions, making certain that urban ways of thinking and doing don't overwhelm the rural. 4. By letting the stories lead, this project resulted in a focus on social reproduction—its work, its anxieties, and its impacts. Following the lead of these women, I argue that rural studies needs to find a way to forefront the ways in which the rural is made through varying and changing ideas of social reproduction and women's roles in that. To that end, I suggest an addition to Hal-facree's (2007) notion of rural space, making it a four-fold notion of rural space. Social reproduction is the fourth category suggested here, and would encompass consideration of family, home, and community organization and the organization of reproductive work and their impacts on other aspects of rural. This would allow social reproduction to become more visible and to add complexity to our considerations of rural places and connections.

4.7 Conclusion

This research suggests that changing notions of rural childhood have material impacts on rural lives and rural continuity. Indeed, “[p]eople return to and wish to stay in rural places in order to parent” or grandparent (Porter2015b, submitted). The rural women interviewed in this project talked about people making compromises to stay in rural places, such as taking lower paying jobs and/or jobs that weren’t in their field. This could indicate that in these stories, the important thing was to stay in rural areas and to raise children in rural areas, not the particular work arrangements which made this possible. Additionally, this research suggests that the resulting rural childhoods no longer occur largely while parents are engaged in other work and/or teaching the children how to work alongside them. Rural childhoods are created through the performance of a set of values which defines good parenting as the quality and quantity of time spent with children, engaged in activities with the children that entertain the children and/or build particular desired skills during a scheduled time and/or maintain connections outside the rural. These usually require parents time and effort in organizing schedules, payment for activities and taking children to activities. The balancing act noted in a previous paper (Porter 2015b, submitted) speaks to Leyshon’s notion of the ‘betweenness’ (2008) of rural youth in which rural youth see themselves as at once located in rural areas and connected to the city and world beyond as well as able to recognize their exclusions from both categories: their lives do not live up to traditional and/or idyllic rural ideals and neither do they truly fit into urban. Tensions

apparent in the narratives suggest that they too experience a ‘betweenness,’ and a sense of not being able to belong to one or the other or both.

Research has repeatedly shown that rural places do not consistently involve better or ideal childhoods (Cummins 2009, Valentine 1997, King 2013, Leyshon 2008). And yet this seemingly commonsense connection remains a key element to narratives of rural Newfoundland. This research suggests that falling short of the ideal does not diminish the value of the rural connections created in reaching for a way of life that can never quite be attained. Simply because rural places fail to offer the idealized rural childhood does not mean that diminished or compromised rural childhood is not preferred or still considered better for the child than the alternative, the urban childhood (with its own set of ideals and failures). However imperfect, there remains a consistent belief among rural people that rural childhoods are somehow better than urban. Research with rural parents has shown that rural parents are aware that rural childhoods can be unsafe and increasingly so, but continue to maintain that comparatively rural childhoods were still better than urban (Valentine 1997). As the narratives here analysed show, connections between childhood and rural have a prominent role in the narratives these women tell about making home in rural places. In these narratives, the rural childhood sought and attained for their children is the result of a deliberate consideration of options and values and the desire for a rural childhood is the result of conscious choice rather than a side-effect of decisions based on other criteria. The Newfoundland women interviewed were aware of potential negative aspects of a rural childhood—potential isolation, potential lack of worldly (often equated

with urban) knowledge, potential boredom—but sought to offset these negatives aspects in particular ways, such as regular trips to urban areas and participation in similar activities as children enjoy in urban areas. At the same time, they struggled to maximize the benefits of rural childhood life. This suggests that the positive connections between the rural and childhoods have a salience much deeper than discourse or stereotype.

The desire to offer children a rural childhood motivates parents and parents-to-be to find a way to return to rural areas. The majority of the women interviewed had experienced rural childhoods and linked this to their desire to return to rural areas and to parent their children in rural areas. Women cite children as the reason they will continue to live in rural areas: to provide a rural childhood to young children; to keep up the family home for all the adult children to return to; and to provide a rural experience for grandchildren during visits. This paper makes the case for the continued exploration of the ways in which rural childhoods (and the meanings of these childhoods) are changing. Such research could continue with a narrative focus, recognizing that narratives of changing rural childhoods are not only shaped by but have the potential to shape changing rural conditions themselves.

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5. Conclusion

5.1 Rooted Connections

The papers that make up this dissertation are connected through their shared root and stem systems. The papers have not grown in a hierarchical order, one growing on top of or out of another, but represent an approach to learning and knowledge that encourages working at the edges, foundational connections, theoretical plurality, and horizontal growth. As Hall and Bavington both point out, there are limits to the reach of scientific knowledge (Hall 2013, Bavington 2010). Though there are empirically-based narrative methods, *Stories First* does not try to “pin down” the narrative like an entomologist does an insect in order to label its parts, but instead follows the streams of narratives to understand their meaning in a particular moment of connection even as they continue changing and flowing downstream. My approach considers some of the vernacular aspects of stories, home, and the rural. The three papers in this project have followed Illich’s (1973) ideas of space and place in relation to home: space, the house or housing, is often the object of study, while place is what is inhabited. Approaches that are in dialogue only with spacial considerations, some of which occur in research in housing studies (housing metrics), environmental approaches (eg. place as represented through ecosystem logic), and development (typically economic ways of representing place) are not entirely adequate to the scope of what home is, how it is lived, and how it shapes our world. Indeed, this dissertation has been able to examine only a partial portion of home. But these papers have turned away from the study of home as space and considered home instead as *gatherings*:

the meanings of our comings and goings, our pauses, our pasts, and our future. In grounding home in the vernacular stories of rural Newfoundlanders, “Moving Home” is a return to home as place and returns home to the realm of lived experience. The paired notions of house/home are in direct conversation with broader discussions about the implications of the dualities of vernacular/abstract and place/space. Having interviewed people who are creating stories of home (based on common conceptions of home, definitions of home, and multiple histories of Newfoundland) and having interviewed people who were living what was represented, this collection of papers shifts the theoretical discussion from an understanding of home as a static house to the movements in which we live. “Moving Home” suggests that, rather than emphasizing a crisis in housing or transience or refugees or mobilities, a more appropriate representation relies on horizontally-connected challenges of home, the rural, place and movement through considerations of the unseen roots.

5.2 A note on the role of one woman’s husband in this research project

During the writing process questions were raised about a particular aspect of this research project. One reader asked how it was that a research project that purported to be feminist could use quotations from a female participant’s husband. The answer I have to give to this question is a story. As is the case with all research projects, my results are partial. There are so many that are worth writing up, but that don’t make it into the final dissertation. In my case, these experiences and learnings are part of planned future papers. This is

one story that I put aside with the idea that I would one day write about it because of how deeply it impacted me.

From the beginning of this research project I was intrigued by the role of male partners. One woman interviewed is lesbian and partnered, but the rest of the women are heterosexual. The women who aren't currently partnered are widows. The women I talked to, early on, often spoke to me while their husbands were in the house. In many cases these husbands clearly wanted in on the conversation. I handled this desire in various ways, depending on the personalities of the people and couples involved. In one instance I openly said that if he wanted to participate (as he clearly wanted to do) he could, but only if his wife felt it would improve the interview. She laughed and made a joke about this being girls' time and her husband left to do something else. But he continued to come and go, hovering about the edges of the interview. After the interview, I stayed on to chat for a while and he joined us and we all just talked, sharing stories. This pattern repeated for women whose husbands were alive, but with the later interviews men weren't around and it wasn't an issue at all. (You can see how rich this subject would be to explore in a future paper!) The husband/wife dynamics played out in a very interesting way in one interview that changed the way I approached the partner dynamics in subsequent interviews.

I was interviewing probably the oldest woman in my research project in one of my earliest interviews. This woman is quoted quite a bit in the second paper in this dissertation. I had made the interview appointment through her son, who had interceded because she had been ill. When I arrived, her husband, in his mid-eighties, was just driving out of

the driveway in a truck. He stopped the truck and told me to go on inside. He apologized but he had to go pick-up one of their granddaughters after an event. He would be back soon, he said. He had a slightly bloodied bandage on his forehead. I learned later he had fallen out of his bed in the middle of the night. I didn't know that at the time. I only felt satisfied that I would be able to interview this woman without negotiating a husband who might potentially want to talk at length.

The woman's husband had said just go in. So I did. And there in the kitchen was a tiny woman who was trying to get tea on. I say trying because she was leaning on a walker. She sat down when I came in and told me to sit. We greeted each other and I found a smiling, cheerful, but tired, woman. After the initial pleasantries and the explanation of my research and some more conversation, I suggested we start the interview. She refused. She insisted we wait until her husband returned. I nodded. Okay, I said.

Although the interview wasn't important to her, getting tea, bread, and biscuits was. When she tried once more to get up with her walker, I jumped up and asked what I should get. I got tea on and arranged the table in the proper way she wanted. But she wouldn't stay seated and leave things to me. She would keep getting up and doing something, wiping this or fixing something I hadn't done properly. We talked as I tried to figure out how to do things her way. She had broken her hip—again—some months earlier and had only been let out of the hospital the previous week. She shared little more than the bare facts but, later, her husband would give me more details. He'd had to fight to get her back home and had to hire rotating home care and nursing help to prove to the doctors

she would be cared for. He said she wanted to be at home and was unhappy in the hospital, while she nodded slowly. Watching her in the kitchen, I could see how much she did love to be home. She stood looking out the window as we waited for her husband to return and she pointed to the flowers her husband had planted and placed there for her to see from the kitchen because she could no longer go out to her garden on the other side of the house (windows, by the way, were very interesting liminal spaces for every single woman I interviewed and I hope to write something about windows in the future). I did not push at all for the interview to start because I wanted to respect her wishes. She was old and frail and I thought she should have her husband there if that was what she wanted.

The interview began when he returned. I wasn't sure what to make of the dynamics at first but I was very close to calling this interview a miss or a failure. She didn't speak much. He spoke a lot. Sometimes I found myself speaking with him (sometimes she asked me to ask him about a question she felt he knew more about than her). At times, he referred to her in the third person. I did too, it was difficult not to. And yet, she made herself heard in particular ways I began to find interesting. She spoke up to correct him—and he deferred each time. She spoke when he didn't know an answer, a date, a story. She spoke up to agree with something he was saying and it was clear that her assent gave his story or assertion the strength of truth. Then something else happened that caused me to reconsider my own place in the interviews I was conducting.

The narrative nature of the interview had been fractured by these particular husband and wife interactions. Instead of broad narratives, I was getting mirco-narratives and

narratives told in a series of comments, assertions, and confirmations. So I ended up asking more questions than I did with any other interview during which my technique focused on asking as little as possible (this was a technique I became better at as time went on—initially it was difficult to not rush in, ask a question, fill a silence). I was curious to know how she spent her days. I have been very interested in how rural women’s daily lives have changed and how much of their daily lives were and are spent outside with and on the land and how they would tell their stories of their rural and home lives. In this case, I had to be flexible and veer away from the conversational approach I had planned. With this couple, the interview could not take the shape of a friendly conversation between two women. I asked about the work she had done on the farm. I asked this because I respected what she had done and because her husband had worked a full-time job away from the farm while she raised kids and worked the farm at the same time. Really, her husband was a part-time farmer, while she had been full-time. His response showed one of the ways the participants could potentially interpret my questions and research. The husband began to vociferously defend his wife’s work—to defend her from me. She’s done her share, he said at one point, more than her share. And I saw myself, the seemingly modern, educated woman who may have come to judge his wife for not going to school, for not working outside the home. I agreed and responded respectfully and positively to his challenge and he relaxed and began to see I was not the threat he had feared I might be. It was a turning point in the interview, but not just because he had come to trust me. It was a turning point because I came to accept the interview for what it was, that *this*

was the way this woman wanted to communicate with me, through the respect, adoration, and protection of her lifelong partner. It was a shock to me to see that he felt the need to protect her from me. But he was right: here I was with my life so different than his and his wife's, the kind of life that often judges theirs, particularly the choices of a stay-at-home rural woman. He was right—I could have projected my own life experiences as a judgement of hers. I didn't. But I had been projecting my experiences with my partner onto this woman and her husband. My partner does not speak for me and I would not want him to dominate a discussion about my life and work. But this was what she wanted and it suited her version of her life. She corrected him and she confirmed him and, when she did speak on her own, she spoke about her garden, her kids, and her love of the life she had lived. She would live it all just the same, she said. I'll always remember the contentedness she had about her. He did not interrupt her when she spoke. He gave her space to speak, but spoke for the both of them when she wanted him to. In this context I felt that I could and should use his comments about her rural work and life (along with her confirmations of it) in one of the papers. I remained ambivalent about his role in the sense that I didn't know how to count that interview. I never did count him as one of the people I interviewed (in my official number of women interviewed for this project) but only counted her, and he remains there and yet not there. Still it was through this interview with this couple that I learned a lot about the ways in which my life experiences and the unseen parameters of my *self* can impact a research project. It was a realization that called to mind Geraldine Pratt's descriptions in *Working Feminism* of learning how her position

in relation to her Filipino participants shifted as group dynamics changed. Both my experience and Pratt's are reminders of what Kim England observed, that "[w]e do not conduct fieldwork on the unmediated world of the researched, but on the world between ourselves and the researched. At the same time this "betweenness" is shaped by the researcher's biography, which filters the "data" and our perceptions and interpretations of the fieldwork experience" (1994, 251).

5.3 Reflections on the research project: Small steps and radical interventions

Reflections on my research project turn up a number of other considerations. This section will focus on those that will shape my future research. The three papers that make up this dissertation are the result of an analysis of narratives of home, place, and rurality in Newfoundland and Labrador. Together their overall impact is to call attention to the importance of understanding the storied and movement-based nature of people's lives. It is through understanding the stories which motivate decisions and actions that we can more fully make sense of behaviour. It is not enough just to track behavioural patterns and movements: researchers need to understand how people themselves make sense of their behaviour and experiences through narratives if academics are to effect change both in people's lives and in the academic frameworks through which we create knowledge about ourselves and each other. Each paper in this dissertation contributes to this discussion in a different way.

This research project was conceived as a narrative-based research project. As such, the project did not initially choose the particularities of what would be investigated

in the analysis and dissertation. The project was designed to collect narratives and to uncover what these stories revealed about rural, home, and these women's lives. The project let the stories lead to the topics taken up in each of these four papers. The main linkage between all three papers is the fact that each of these topics emerged directly from engagement with the stories collected during the narrative research process. The weakness of this approach is also its strength: while the topics approached in the four papers are not all strongly linked thematically because the papers have responded to the narratives rather than particular theoretical inquiry, there is strength in the diversity of the topics and there is strong potential to follow this exploratory research with new research projects which are informed by this kind of narrative complexity. As such, one of the strongest contributions of this dissertation lies within the realm of narrative studies, and particularly the study of oral history. As the literature reviews in this dissertation have shown, much oral history research has focused on collecting and understanding stories of the past; however, this project is a strong argument for the importance of contemporary oral histories in understanding rural, place, and home today. Moreover, this project also shows the importance of understanding how rural, home, and place are narrated across time in ways which can unravel the processes through which change is happening in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Furthermore, this dissertation provides a robust addition to the body of research which focuses on Newfoundland and Labrador's rural areas by bringing attention to the complexity and scope of information available about the province from narrative research.

The project focused on women's stories of home and their experiences with the rural places in which they live in order to understand how these categories have been and are constructed by this group of women. For this reason, ideas of rurality, place, and home are topics at the centre of these papers. These narratives have provided a valuable understanding of the processes of rural change on the island of Newfoundland.

Analysis considered the particular ways in which broader concepts—including place, rurality, home, decolonization—have been constructed and understood through narratives in particular contexts in Newfoundland, Canada. For this reason, this dissertation, in the way of all research and research narratives, is partial, situated, and place-based. This dissertation is bound by the place in which it occurred, the time (year and season) at which the interviews took place, the choice of participants (their gender, class, and age, sexuality, family status, and race). And yet, these very limiting particularities also give the dissertation its breadth of vision; for it is by looking at the particular that we can see how the general and the broad play out in place and time. Each of the papers discussed the various literatures associated with the geographies of place, home, the rural, feminism, and decolonization and places these literatures in Newfoundland and Labrador. At the same time, through its exploration of the particularities of these concepts in a limited set of stories, this research has provided insight into new conceptualizations of these theoretical constructs. The first paper here asked what is home? and its analysis found tensions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal conceptualizations. The conceptualization put for-

ward (home as ways of gathering) offers a tentative step toward linking movement, gathering and home.

The second paper in this dissertation investigates the ways in which narratives of parenting in rural areas suggests a fracture in theories of progressive senses of place and the new mobilities, arguing that women's narratives show a tension in described attempts to maintain global connections and mobilities. People are much more limited than is currently acknowledged in the ways in which they are able to access mobility and benefit from global connections, particularly during parenting. In fact, the narratives analyzed here suggest that it is during parenting years that the new expectation to be 'global' while living 'local' are experienced as particularly stressful. The related concept of rural childhood is taken up more fully in response to narratives which feature descriptions of childhoods past and the childhoods of current generations. A neglected area of research, rural childhoods are posited in this paper as an integral part of the way in which the rural is understood and a key motivator for living rural in Newfoundland and Labrador today.

This finding itself can and should point to new areas of rural research in Newfoundland and elsewhere but is also important because of the complexity of the categories of the rural and urban in contemporary rural childhoods in the province. Parents seek to give their children rural and urban childhoods at once, a desire which is changing the way rural Newfoundland is being lived today. The final paper shows how geography cannot be separated from movement and the people who live on the land, showing in a different way how mobility and place are intertwined in rural Newfoundland. The following few

paragraphs consider the partial nature of the research, and suggest areas of future research which could build on the findings in this dissertation.

The first paper contributes to work already done in home studies which seeks to broaden academic conceptualizations of home. Home, this paper purports, is made through movement. As a result, this first paper, “Gathering Home,” suggests conceptualizing home as ways of gathering and this analytical focus anchors the following three papers through their consideration of the movements described in women’s narratives. The impacts of this way of understanding home are broad but transformational. If we accept the conclusions of this paper (and others which also suggest the multiplicity of people’s lived home lives) then home must be understood and supported differently. Governance structures will need to respond to people’s mobile home lives, taking consideration of the reasons and ways people move between homes and over territories which create their senses of belonging and materially create their daily lives. This paper is a radical and liberatory intervention, calling for academics and non-academics alike to reject the commonsense notion that people must conform to an ideal home-life which is to live in one location, a non-mobile notion of home which makes people easier to govern, but which ignores the movements through which people make meaning of and live the story of their lives. In response to an approach such as this, research, governance, and policy structures would need to become flexible and ‘movable.’ While the implications of this approach are broad, this paper focuses on the challenge in reconceptualizing home.

In considering movement, the second paper analyzes women's narratives of leaving and returning to rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. "We Would Never Have Encouraged Them to Stay" notes the importance of women's narrative interventions throughout the generations and notes the daily movement and place tensions women experience as a result of attempting to enact new storied narratives of opportunity for their own children. This paper also upends the typical economic focus which tends to treat people's personal lives as relatively irrelevant to development, governance and policy concerns. Instead of focusing solely on jobs and industry, it suggests that governance and/or development structures can re-orient and focus on the reasons people are living the rural in today's world. This paper observes that parenting is one of the key reasons people interviewed returned to rural Newfoundland and Labrador to live. However, the paper notes that women narrate challenges in their daily lives as parents and that these are important policy areas to pay attention to in order to support a sustainable and robust rural: if women in rural Newfoundland are unable to parent in the way they desire from rural areas, their connections to rural places become much weaker. Further, women tell stories of the use of narrative interventions used by parents, each generations telling stories to their children about their potential futures.

Turning from parenting to the experience of childhood itself, a consideration of the ways in which rural is made for and with the young. Women's narratives show that people are choosing to live in rural Newfoundland specifically to provide young people with connections to a rural childhood. This third paper explores how rural women's narra-

tives of home and rurality show that the changing nature of rural childhood is in turn changing the way the rural is lived. Women's narratives suggest that both the imagined ideal of rural childhood and the everyday lived rural childhoods in contemporary rural Newfoundland have changed. "For the Children" follows the daily movements which make up the stories of childhood in women's narratives and explores their narrated impacts on rural life. Whereas historical rural life was narrated as being shaped and revolving around rural work, today's rural childhood is no longer linked in stories with work, but activities and/or recreation. Childhood is key category in rural Newfoundland around which many rural lives revolve. This observation has the potential to impact the way in which the rural and rural development is approached. At a time when young people are leaving the rural and many rural development efforts and policies are focused on the aging of rural populations, youth are a neglected category in the existing policy and research. This paper suggests that rural today is in fact for youth and that rural policy must pay attention to this in order to build a stronger, more sustainable rural.

The partial nature of research has already been discussed in this dissertation. In an attempt to focus on the narratives themselves and what they have had to say, this research project has necessarily had to exclude much else. The small sample size precludes the use of these findings to generalize about the entire population. While the themes picked up in the narratives can be perhaps indicative of general trends, such a statement would require backing from more empirically and/or statistically robust research. However, the significance of this kind of research is to uncover observations which would not be picked up

through empirical research, such as the use of narrative interventions, the importance of the notion of childhood to the survival of rural areas, the tensions within normative ideas of home and place, and particular reasons that people have for movements.

Like all knowledge, in focusing on one area and not the other, the knowledge explored through this dissertation is built around silences. Absent from the discussion are the life experiences from the points of view of men and children. Although there is not a lot of racial diversity across rural Newfoundland, the diversity that is there is not the focus in this dissertation and the possibilities offered in such a focus (eg. diaspora studies and/or critical race studies) are not taken up. The women interviewed were predominantly heterosexual and so the body of narrative analysis reflects the concerns and life-experiences of heterosexual women. Some of the research that has most challenged academic approaches to the study of home have involved gay and lesbian experiences at home and/or gay and lesbian home-related life histories (e.g. Gorman-Murray 2006). While this project did not exclude lesbian women or couples, this project did not explore the nature of Newfoundland lesbian home(s) itself, choosing instead to keep to the broader category of women. Future research in this area would yield very interesting results and insights into how rural Newfoundland is changing. This project did not critically consider the role of socio-economic status in the results and chose instead to allow the stories to lead to academic engagement with the ideas that emerged from the stories told. However, a critical study which considers the way in which socio-economic dynamics are changing various parts of Newfoundland would be fascinating and is indeed right now part of a large

research project focused on employment related mobilities (On The Move Partnership: onthemovepartnership.ca).

The list of absences could go on, but this collection of papers demonstrates the value of the topics with which I did engage. Decolonizing home, contemporary struggles with parenting in place, notions of childhood, connections between rural place and movement: these topics have yielded incredible learning opportunities. These papers are not intended to be comprehensive. They are intended as exploratory interventions which work to point toward possibilities for the radical reinvention of the rural. These represent the end stages of a research project completed toward a doctoral degree, however they represent the beginning of a life-long research agenda. For that reason, both the research objectives and outcomes are broad and reflective. These results will lead to new research which more fully explores the topics and themes here discussed. From this foundation will emerge a strong and robust research agenda, one that continues to be founded on the hope for, and excitement about, the radical possibilities of the rural, place, home, and movement.

5.4 Looking toward the future

This research project has been able to point toward numerous future areas of productive research, including but not limited to: the application of home as ways of gathering to decolonizing research projects in the province; on-going contemporary narrative-based research that identifies and explores people's negotiation of current rural (and urban) issues in the province (and elsewhere), recognizing the importance of listening to the ways in

which people actually make sense of their lives in their own words; the importance of parenting and childhood as two separate but related categories which shape the way the rural is lived (in the province and elsewhere); alternative possibilities for future ruralities and future ways of gathering which anticipate and plan for the coming political and environmental changes (the largest currently expected having to do with climate change).

Beyond these, there are two general areas of study I would like to explore in the future. I am interested in exploring the connections between mobilities and place. I would also like to explore the creative possibilities of narrative through an immersion in life-writing theory, practice and analysis.

This dissertation did not engage with mobilities theories, instead choosing as much as possible to use the word movement and to use the word mobility without reference to the broader new mobilities literatures (Cresswell 2010, 2012, Sheller and Urry 2006). This was deliberate. I did this because I have been uncertain exactly how I link to the new mobilities literatures (one of its well-known theorists being Tim Cresswell) that have moved away from a place-based focus to framing human interaction through mobility. This literature urges researchers “not to start from a point of view that takes certain kinds of fixity and boundedness for granted and instead starts with the fact of mobility” (Cresswell 210, 551). This focus is itself a criticism of place and theories which take on a ‘sedentarist’ bias and seeks to “question the perceived prioritization of more rooted and bounded notions of place as the locus of identity” (ibid). This focus has seemed to to me at times to have reversed the bias of place theorists who were criticized

for having a blind spot for the ways in which mobilities, change, and connection make a place in both negative and positives ways. At a time when place has been increasingly critical of and aware of the impacts of long-held assumptions about the boundedness of places the complex, historical, changing nature of place (Cresswell 2012, Massey 1994), mobilities offered the possibility of leaving place behind altogether. As a scholar who leans toward explorations of place and meaning and as an emerging Métis decolonial scholar for whom connections to place are sacred aspects of culture, meaning, continuity and home, and because I am a descendent of members of a marginalized group whose claims to place have long been part of their oppression, I have not been able to follow the lead of the new mobilities scholars in celebrating what seemed to me to be a troubling dissociation between place and movement. The decolonization framework itself requires a return to a particular kind of respectful relationship with place and land and the new mobilities paradigm does not engage with place in this way. Everyone does move and in some ways the claim that we are more mobile than before can be held to be true in that some people have access to technology that takes people farther faster. In response to my uncertainty about the new mobilities literatures I decided to focus on aspects of place and explore how those were narrated in rural Newfoundland places while also recognizing mobilities as part of life in place through the gathering framework. It is only now at the end of the research project that I have found a way to articulate my relationship to both place and mobilities literatures and planned out a way to move forward within and against what I have perceived as a dissociation between place and mobilities in these literatures.

The focus on mobility as *the* foundational fact the world (Cresswell 2010, 555) can have the effect of, as I think Illich would argue, turning peopled places into undifferentiated, un-meaningful space and in some ways overlooks the marginalized groups of people who have had to fight for and/or lost their right to place (including the right to define place in and through meanings made in mobility and movement). The first paper in this dissertation is reaching for this understanding, but I wasn't quite there yet (this does not represent a failure of the paper, as the topic wasn't about mobilities, but rather home). When I wrote that first paper, I did not fully understand how I was situated with regard to the new mobilities literatures. The arguments in the first paper do support and lead to an approach to place and movement/mobilities as co-creators of the same phenomenon: *gathering*. Gathering as a decolonizing framework for the study of home avoids interpreting the movements which make up both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal home as movement unrelated to the bounds of place, but as movements that actually create place as it is in the moment it is experienced; and so place and movement/mobility are built together. The remaining three papers do not explicitly engage with the new mobilities literatures, but are in themselves arguments for the deep connectedness between place and mobility. It will be the work of future research to explore and argue for greater attention to decolonizing considerations, theories, and connections between new mobilities theories and ways of approaching place-based research.

As an emerging writer I am absolutely thrilled about the future opportunities I have in front of me in the form of research projects that explore the creative possibilities

of narrative through engagement with life-writing theory, practice and analysis. I had early on considered writing an auto-ethnography for my doctoral thesis but decided against it for several reasons, the primary one being that I wanted to use these last few years as a student to learn as much as possible about research and stories. In focusing on my own story, the writing would have been easier and better (depending on the format in which I wrote) but my learning would have been narrower. I have a background in journalism (having worked as a daily reporter and award-winning freelancer), have continued to write creative non-fiction and am emerging as a fiction writer. I am now working with a provincial literary and cultural magazine—one of Canada's oldest magazines. It would have been much easier for me to pursue a creative dissertation project and the increased flexibility in writing style that goes along with such alternative approaches would have come much easier to me than did the writing style required by the manuscript format (the collection of potentially publishable papers). In choosing manuscript style I decided to use the writing of the dissertation to force myself to become more comfortable with condensed academic-style writing. Two pieces of evidence suggest that I have been successful in this. First are the editorial suggestions of the three journals and their request that after some editorial changes I resubmit my papers. Second are the articles I have been asked to review for *Gender Place and Culture* and the *Journal of Rural Studies*. The writing required for academic style papers has not come easy to me, to say the least. I have struggled and have been surprised how hard it has been for me to find my voice in academic writing. As with most early scholars, my writing continues to be a work in progress.

I am much further along the path than I was before and am looking forward to the post-doctoral project I would like to undertake, during which I have plans to combine my academic and creative voices, to bring what I have been learning in academia to the creative writer that I have always been. I have felt at times like an artist who agreed to take her drawing exams with her left hand only, when she has always created beautiful drawings with her right hand. And yet, it is only through this difficult and challenging learning process that I am able now to consider the next steps I might take and I find myself open to the possibilities in life writing, particularly in ethnography, autoethnography and in the variety of kinds of writing styles that can be used in contemporary academic research. I am invigorated by the work of geographers using ethnographic fiction (e.g. Jacobson and Larsen 2014) and creative approaches to life story research (e.g. Woodley, Lawthom, Clough and Moore 2004). I continue to be interested in considering other scholars' analyses of women's stories McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance 2014). I am interested in explorations of different approaches to auto-ethnography (e.g. Spry 2001), particularly by the feminist approaches to auto-ethnography (Skott-Myhre, Weima and Gibbs 2012, Ty and Verduyn 2008, Perreault 1995).

Life writing approaches offer both creative and critical analyses to life stories (Kadar and Perreault 2015, Kadar, Warley, Perreault and Egan 2005, Perreault 2005). These represent areas yet to explore and a future research engagement through which I can build on the work I am just now bringing to a close.

5.5 Moving on with Stories First

In this final section I will bring my research story full circle. I will begin with the ending of this research story and end with the beginning of the next. I will start with a story about my time in journalism school and end with a story about my time in another journalism school. In between I will reflect on the ways in which the stories in this research project have been part of my life, my work, and now my plans for the future.

Years ago, as a fledgling, painfully-shy, undergraduate journalism student, I decided to write about an event memorializing the Montreal massacre for one of my news-writing classes. The instructor of this class has always held a special place in my memories.

The instructor of whom I am thinking wasn't everybody's favourite. In fact, the instructor was as much the object of ridicule over coffee in the students' lounge as every other instructor in the program. I can picture all of the journalism students of that year, too-young and embarrassingly green, sitting around cheap tables in the cafeteria and, in the manner inexperienced wanna-be reporters, criticizing everything in failed attempts to sound like hard-bitten, cynical journalists. This instructor I remember so clearly wore the same faded blue sweater every day over a sloppy shirt and creased, sagging jeans. He didn't care about clothes. No, not him. But he knew stories. For this reason, I loved his classes.

We'd enter his class one day and he'd put together—on the white board and in his storied lectures—one solid, believable version of the world. And that was comforting, to

feel that we knew what the world *was*. We'd leave the class secure in our intelligence and our growing breadth of knowledge. We felt we knew what it was we needed to know about the world and that was that. But the next class he'd turn it all on its head. He'd build a different story of the world, using different evidence and stories. Then we became dizzy. He unbuilt everything he'd built up the class before, this time showing us how unsubstantial was its foundation, how shaky and incorrect. He'd offer us a new story—only along the way we learned to be more critical of what he was offering us. We learned to ask more questions and to understand that any position we took up could be taken down. That was the beginning of learning to filter knowledge and to consider other ways of thinking about any story we wrote. In this way he showed us that all our knowledge and everything we wrote was in conversation with everything we'd known, experienced, heard, and researched. We were dealing with conversations and that was the most important thing we needed to know. He didn't tell us what to do with this awakening: he let us leave school and go into the workplaces to figure things out ourselves over time, as we made our own life stories.

As I mentioned, the assignment that stands out in my mind related to the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. I don't remember which anniversary it was—how many years after, I mean. But it doesn't really matter. What mattered to me was the few words he scrawled in pen. I don't know if I still have that story somewhere in my drawers. I know I kept it a long time and it moved with me over many miles. But I have let go of so

many things to make room for new things as I have moved from one place to another, from one part of my story to another.

On the top of the story I had written was the ‘A+’ he had given me. But at the bottom of the second page at the end of the story, he had nevertheless pushed me a bit further. In writing about the massacre I told the reader that it was wrong and why. In response, my instructor wrote that I didn’t need to tell the reader why it was wrong. Tell the reader the details, bring the reader into the story, and readers will build their own stories around it. That, he wrote, is more convincing. He was telling me to let the story be a conversation and not to make a story into a monologue. Readers like to be brought into a story and not to be told, he pointed out.

Looking back, I consider that advice with new eyes. I had to learn to let the story I was telling work in dialogue with the stories of others. Nearing the end of a doctoral degree during which I have studied stories, I think of his advice in yet another way. The stories I tell are roots. A number of plants grow from these roots that, above ground, look unconnected. But beneath the ground they are nourished by, and connected through, shared roots.

Like the writing of Thomas King, that instructor’s advice on that one assignment was a root planted in my consciousness. It has shaped the way I approach stories. It is a lesson I’ve had to learn again in different ways. In this way, that instructor’s advice worked in the way roots from some plants work. The plants and roots can appear to die. But, with the right conditions in place, life again grows from underground stems and

roots. Having moved on from journalism to other work, I didn't nurture that instructor's advice. I moved on to new things. Yet, near the end of my academic studies as a student and I have come full circle. Conditions were such during the research I conducted and the studies I undertook that the many new plants have grown from that old, unwatered, storied journalism root. These are new plants, but having grown from that root, they are connected. I worked hard to structure my research as a conversation or dialogue between myself and the woman I was talking to. The methodology on which *Stories First* was partly based has the word dialogue in it (DNA or dialogical narrative analysis). Back then, I wrote up a story about a feminist memorial event. In my doctoral research I centred women and relied on ideas borrowed from Feminist Systems Theory. In forming *Stories First*, I was building on that instructor's advice about stories, that we don't tell people the answers but we let the stories lead our readers to it. This was obviously constrained by academic writing conventions, but I struck a compromise that itself is working as a root that is nourishing new ways of thinking about stories in my future career.

As I am writing this last section to this dissertation, I recognize that I am finally writing in my own voice. For the first time since I began my doctoral studies, I am recognizing myself and the words I am putting on paper. For this reason, I know that I have made it through intact. More than intact, I have made it through this academic journey and gained new voices, new ideas, new connections. I can see that I lost myself for a time in the structures of academia and lost my stories in its stutters. I struggled to link the academic ideas I was exploring to the stories I loved to write. It was only in trying and fail-

ing and trying again that I found my way back to stories and found a place for Storied First in my academic approaches. It was Stories First that allowed me to find my way back to myself within academia. It got me through and gave me a part I was comfortable with in the conversation that makes up academia. The Stories First approach that I have explored in this dissertation is more than a research method, it was a way of entering the academic dialogue as a storied person.

This research story isn't really ending. This ending marks the closure of one circular journey and the beginning of another. As I tie up these academic theoretical loose ends, I am getting ready to move on. In this, so many of the elements I have discussed in this dissertation are evident. In moving on I am gathering through movement from one place to another and from one conversation to another. The places, the conversations, the gatherings, and the movements are all connected through the root of stories.

At the end of this journey, I have returned to the stories and the journalism from which I started. As consultant with the *Newfoundland Quarterly* magazine, I have been hired to create online conversations about the cultural and literary stories of the province—creating online content and bringing new literary voices to the magazine from across the country. In this arena, Stories First allows for the solid beginning of a new circle of stories. I am asking where the province's stories lead the magazine and how the magazine can use its stories to lead its readers to critical engagement with the province's arts and culture. It is a challenging and exciting time to be working in the media industry. So many newspapers and magazines are failing. I think many of them fail because they

have forgotten that a media story is a conversation between the publication and its readers. The Stories First approach will grow and become stronger as I explore the cultural and literary stories of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am using the Stories First approach to inspire a new generation of journalists as an instructor with a journalism program at a provincial college in Newfoundland and Labrador. This generation of journalism students is savvy; they are aware that everything is changing and nothing will stay the same. And yet, by staying close to this Stories First approach, these students will learn about stories and storytelling, able to adapt to whatever platform they are asked to use. One of the students from another instructor's class recently interviewed me about the stories that trend in social media. The instructor told her that I had a folklore background (my MA) and that I would be a good source. What does it mean that 'silly' stories trend on social media, she asked me? There are so many answers to that question, I thought. But I decided to say this: mostly, what it means is that we all need to tell stories and to be part of stories. Look at the stories that have been told for generations in Newfoundland, I said, the Jack stories. Jack goes off on an adventure and he makes a fool of himself and fools of all the kings, queens and noble men and women he encounters—the celebrities of his time. Newfoundlanders have been telling these stories for generations, I said, because it's the way people make sense of the world and it's the way people converse with each other and the world. The interview ended and the student went away satisfied. This teaching journalism is new to me and I find myself feeling intimidated as I once felt with academia. I will go forward the same way, with

Stories First. I don't know how long I will be teaching journalism. But I am hoping my students will learn what I learned all those years ago: their stories are conversations that are happening in a particular time, place, culture, and subjectivity. I will teach them to let the stories lead, because we are all of us made of stories.

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