

Relational Child & Youth Care Practice

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Continuing Good Traditions

Aurora De Monte and Graham McPheat

It is with great pleasure that we introduce the third graduate issue of *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*, continuing the tradition that was kicked off in 2019 (Volume 32 Issue 3) and continued in 2021 (Volume 34 Issue 3). As we set out in 2019, our aim for these graduate issues is to provide a platform for students to showcase their work, to demonstrate that research, theory and intellectual engagement are now part and parcel of the full spectrum of activity that unfolds in Child and Youth Care (CYC), and to begin to bridge educational settings and bring together what we have previously done alone.

We continue to be excited by issues such as these. Working as educators in university with skilled and insightful students is a privileged position. We get to fully appreciate the passion and creativity that our students bring to their work and practice and to have the opportunity to showcase some of it in an issue such as this, helps to shine a light on the excellent work that is being undertaken.

This issue presents work from students from programmes at the University of Strathclyde, Concordia University, Toronto Metropolitan University and the University of Victoria. As such, we would like to thank the various faculty and advisors who supported

this undertaking and of course, the students/practitioners for taking the time to translate their academic work into these excellent submissions for a wider audience.

Hearing Silenced Voices is the focus of the submission by Anna Chadwick. Anna is an artist, art therapist, and clinical counsellor, working with Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC) youth and in her article reflects on the haunting legacies of political conflict and oppression. She discusses ethical witnessing and the need to create spaces where unspoken truths can be heard. Thinking about the implications for CYC practitioners, she suggests practices that include the integration of art making, witnessing, and acknowledgement of haunting in spaces with IBPOC youth where dignity, care, and connection take precedence.

Princess Arbour discusses Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and the role it can play in supporting children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Princess engaged in research which aimed to examine the effects of ABA therapy on children and youth. Her article considers both the short-term and long-term outcomes of ABA as well as the limitations and implications for practice and future research of alternative interventions or additional CYC relational practices that can be utilized or combined with ABA therapy when working with children and youth diagnosed with ASD.

Jillian Higgins considers the way in which relational practice, a central component of CYC, is embodied in practice, is often hindered by the managerial structure of North American care environments. With a focus on risk, touch, and boundary practices as well as how incongruencies are perceived by CYC practitioners, Jillian's research explored the experiences of three CYC practitioners who have been employed or have volunteered in a relational care work capacity in both North America and abroad. How these practitioners perceived and made meaning from their experiences in both contexts is explored.

The phenomenon of adultification of Black children and the challenges they face in loving their Blackness is the focus of the submission by Jahtara Hutchinson-Bobb. Jahtara introduces the concept of "loving Blackness" as a means of resistance against internalized racism and the white supremacist agenda and highlights its potential as a tool to disrupt adultification and create spaces where Black children can authentically

exist. Her conclusion calls for collective efforts to dismantle biases, advocate for equity, and create a society that celebrates and respects the identities of Black children.

Jasmine Singer's submission has a focus on the task of Supporting Wellness in Indigenous Youth in Residential Care Facilities. Jasmine explores how legacies of colonialism have contributed to the disproportionate representation of Indigenous youths in residential care in Canada and how despite this disproportionate representation, and the increased risk for mental health issues that follows, there is no research aimed at understanding how implementing Indigenous views and culture into residential settings may affect the wellbeing of Indigenous youths in care. Jasmine proposes decolonized research methods for future studies on this topic, whilst considering the ethical issues of token involvement of Indigenous youths in research.

For her article Sheva Leon focuses on the task of supporting student mental health in higher education and the challenges for staff involved in this task. Her research investigated the perspectives of CYC faculty in supporting student mental health via surveys and interviews with CYC educators from a range of Ontario colleges. Several important themes emerge from the analysis of her data, perhaps the most pertinent being the often-unacknowledged parallels between CYC practice and the containing and supportive roles that CYC educators are often required to adopt with students.

Continuing the focus on students, Kruti Patel explores the challenges of adjusting to a new environment with a particular focus on the educational challenges and needs of South Asian Immigrant Students in the Greater Toronto area. Kruti's research explores academic and social challenges and actors that facilitate school integration. The findings, with their focus on intrafamilial and extrafamilial relationships, can be used to begin the process of developing culturally inclusive school-based programming that supports the school integration of South Asian immigrant students.

The sharing and dissemination of student work such as this was a tradition that we started in 2019, continued in 2021 and is built on here again in 2024. Given the social and political challenges that we currently face, it could be argued that this space for the sharing of knowledge, practice, innovation, and research has never been greater. The themes present within the articles included here – particularly the task of providing

appropriate support and guidance to students – only feel likely to become more acute as we move forward. We hope that you enjoy reading and engaging with these submissions. Here's to the next time.

Aurora De Monte

is a graduate of the University of Victoria Child and Youth Care program and the University of Strathclyde MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies, where her dissertation explored relational teaching. Currently, she is full time faculty in the Child and Youth Care program at Fleming College, Ontario, and teaches in the MSc program at the University of Strathclyde. Aurora continues to practice supporting young people and families in a variety of capacities in the community.

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Hearing Silenced Voices: Haunted Histories, Art Making and Witnessing with IBPOC Youth

Anna Chadwick

Abstract

This article explores how art-making, witnessing, and historical trauma intersect with Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC) youth. As an artist, art therapist, and clinical counsellor, committed to upholding dignity and respect, I reflect on the haunting legacies of political conflict and oppression, and I emphasize the significance of collective art-making in providing spaces for silenced narratives to be shared. Drawing from personal experiences and diverse practice contexts, I discuss ethical witnessing and the need to create spaces where unspoken truths can be heard. With implications for CYC practitioners, I suggest practices that include the integration of art making, witnessing, and acknowledgement of haunting in spaces with IBPOC youth where dignity, care, and connection take precedence.

I acknowledge and respect the ɫəkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory I live and raise my family, and the ɫəkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. In making this acknowledgement, I commit to upholding dignity and respect in all of my relationships with Indigenous nations, their territories, and the caretakers of this land.

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As an artist, art therapist and clinical counsellor, how do I ethically witness the histories and stories of youth, families, and communities when they are Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC)? How do I generate creativity and connection while upholding dignity? How do I listen to voices and stories, so that IBPOC youth feel heard and validated?

These questions inform my work as an artist, art therapist, registered clinical counsellor, and child and youth care (CYC) researcher. Through my experiences of grief, displacement, and transitions, art has always been at the centre of making meaning about the world around me. In my therapeutic practice and research, I've come to understand art making as a process of reassembly, resurrection, and amplification of stories while reckoning with concealed truths. Over the years, I've witnessed the transformative power of creating spaces for artistic expression among youth to bring forth silenced narratives from past generations and to communicate vital truths.

Two decades ago, I started my career working with youth in East and North Vancouver as an art therapist for children, youth, and families. Some of the youth I worked with came from families who had immigrated from Africa and South Asia, and some were from the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation. After completing my internship, I moved to northern British Columbia where I worked as an art therapist and counsellor for 14 years. During this time, I collaborated closely with children, youth, and families from the Tahltan Nation. My MA graduate research in Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria explored the topic of sexualized violence in Indigenous communities through art-based methods. Currently, I live on ləkʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ territory, and I am a CYC doctoral student and work in private practice as an art therapist and clinical counsellor. For many years, my focus has been on supporting children, youth, and families impacted by trauma and sexualized violence. My diverse practice experiences, situated both in urban centres and the rural north, have brought me face to face with the systemic injustices that disproportionately impact youth from IBPOC communities who have experienced intergenerational trauma because of political violence and/or oppression.

In upholding my responsibility to promote dignity and respect, I engage in necessary critical reflection regarding who instigates change and how transformation occurs. This

dedication is fuelled by a desire to witness change that is urgently needed. As a critical CYC practitioner, I look to contribute respectfully to these conversations while remaining accountable to the communities I work alongside. In this paper, I explore how collective art making and creative expression in IBPOC youth communities, when paired with witnessing, can create a safer place for silenced narratives from past generations to be shared, and in ways that convey essential truths that may be difficult to express through words alone. Art serves as a powerful medium to give voice to hidden histories, even those laden with trauma.

Reflecting on Identity

Exploring the intricacies of my identity and self-location through art and my work is vital for my accountability and respect for the youth and communities with whom I work. Depending on the context, I've been identified by others as mixed race, brown, white, or a person of colour. I was born in Ndola, Zambia, and when I was three, my family emigrated to Canada. My mother's ancestors were labourers from Southern India who migrated to South Africa in the late 19th century, while my father's roots trace back to northern Britain. Due to the restrictions of South African apartheid laws and the prevalent racism at the time, my family was prohibited from residing in South Africa. As a result, we migrated to Canada. My familial and ancestral journeys epitomize the complexities of my identity. For generations, my ancestors on my mother's side have contended with racist labels and forced displacement as a result of the inhumane racialized classifications of colonization. Consequently, I find myself in a complex relationship with rigid divisions and categorizations based on race. However, I recognize that the complexities of identity and self-location I encounter on the land where I now live are not uncommon. Growing up on *ləkʷəŋən* and *WSÁNEĆ*, territories, I did not witness the stark realities of inequality in Indigenous communities that were hidden away in communities outside of my middle-class Victoria neighbourhood. This contrast between my upbringing and witnessing the harsh truths faced by Indigenous communities incited my commitment to research and collaborate with IBPOC youth and their families.

Characterizing the youth I work with solely as IBPOC is complex. Acknowledging the importance of terms like IBPOC to support solidarity, labels like these can feel limiting when used to describe identity. I prefer to engage in conversations with youth about how their cultural intersections contribute to their identities, which reach beyond mere labels. Within communities, I acknowledge these intersections, recognizing the critical importance of allowing youth to express their identity in ways that are authentic to them. Every young person I've had the privilege to work with has expressed that their identities are beyond prescribed categories and, conversely, are multifaceted and influenced by rich histories, cultures, and ancestries.

To navigate these complexities of identity, I draw inspiration from Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) borderlands framework, which enables me to theorize and practice shifting in-between locations. Borderlands are characterized by identities that exist between boundaries and incorporate contradiction and ambivalence. This framework resonates with me because it defies categorization and rigid identity politics and focuses instead on the fluidity and diversity of identities as they shift across geopolitical, metaphorical, ethnic, and diasporic borderlands. Anzaldúa's exploration of identities *in the margins* rejects confinement within the constraints of rigid binary classifications based on race, gender, and class. Alternatively, her theory challenges established structures and encourages the creation of politicized spaces that foster resistance and transformation, ultimately creating conditions for more inclusive ways of life. Seeking to dissolve exclusive binaries, the concept of borderlands explores the complexities of blended identities where different cultures collide and give rise to identities characterized by multiplicity and uniqueness created from a multitude of diverse experiences. I identify with these spaces because they are recognized as places of strength and resistance where margins are welcomed rather than excluded.

Within these complexities, I acknowledge my immense privilege as I work and raise my family on łəkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ territories. I recognize how my privileges stemming from diaspora, social class, and education exempt me from navigating violence in the same way many IBPOC youth in Canada are forced to. My family's emigration to Canada, my European background, my Canadian citizenship, and the privileges I have been given

far surpass those available to many IBPOC communities and youth in this nation. While working in northern Canada, I possessed the economic privilege to leave the community whenever I chose. Similarly, during visits with family in South Africa, I am acutely aware that with my European background and subsequent Canadian citizenship, I have the privilege of leaving the injustices of apartheid – a privilege that Indigenous communities in Africa do not have. In this work, I maintain self-awareness of my non-negotiable accountability to Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence in Canada and my homelands. I also acknowledge the intricate entanglements of my diasporic threads and my commitment to supporting young people as they navigate these complex issues.

Haunting

I am currently a student in the PhD program in Child, Youth, Family, and Community Studies (CYFCS) at the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. Using critical, arts-based narrative methodologies, I research the systemic ways in which intergenerational histories of political conflict and oppression continue to affect the lives of youth and families. My current ongoing research centers on the intersection of collective art making and the concept of *haunting* (Wale et al., 2020). Haunting is a remnant of past collective political violence that emerges in the lives of post-conflict generations, families, communities, and systems. Unangax̄ scholar Eve Tuck and her colleague C. Ree, who is an artist, filmmaker, and member of the Super Futures Haunt Collective, define haunting as “the cost of subjugation” (2013, p. 643). They write, “It is the price paid for violence ... This is difficult, even annoying to those who just wish to go about their day. ... Erasure and defacement concoct ghosts; I don’t want to haunt you, but I will” (p. 643). Haunting can emerge as collective memories or in the everyday lived experiences of suffering and exclusion that communities and individuals experience despite post-conflict political narratives of democracy and liberation (Wale et al., 2020). My current research, which explores haunting and spectres of violence, involves delving into the intersections of family narratives and the historical contexts of political violence and oppression. These intersections are not easily perceptible. I am acutely aware of how, under the guise of benevolence, many nations silence and bury vital stories of how

past political violence continues to affect the everyday lives of youth and their families. The spectres of past violence, visible and invisible, haunt as they bridge the past that lingers in the present. Haunting is expressed through material and structural systems in social, economic, and political forms (Frosh, 2012). Kim Wale and colleagues (2020) speak to this phenomenon in post-violence communities in South Africa as “haunted freedom” (p. 51). They describe haunted freedom as past violence that does not submerge calmly beneath the surface of the present. Despite living in the “post-apartheid” era, youth and families in South Africa continue to live with everyday experiences of suffering, exclusion, and injustice and with false political and collective narratives of freedom (Wale et al., 2020).

In Canada, with its history of colonization, I have witnessed how the youth and their families with whom I have worked, predominantly from isolated Indigenous communities in northern British Columbia, experience haunting. The creative work of youth in these communities encompasses finding expression to speak about violence, intergenerational trauma, and the grief of the loss of language and culture (Chadwick, 2019) despite collective past violence imposed on communities.

My work with IBPOC youth and their families entails more than mere art making and creation; it necessitates presence amid these tensions created by haunting, the violence of disconnection from family and culture, and the untold, unspoken stories that linger below the surface. These unspoken narratives and histories have been silenced, not by choice but out of fear that they would remain unheard or be disavowed. There is a critical need for spaces where the unspoken can be heard — spaces that often exist beyond conventional systems. This is what fuels my practice and my desire to show up as a witness in these spaces. In my practice, witnessing is vital in acknowledging the past in ways that uphold dignity and respect.

Witnessing and Art Making

How do art making and spaces of community witnessing support care, validation, and dignity? My objective in this work — to provide an ethical space for witnessing through art making — is to recognize that past and ongoing events must be acknowledged.



Information

Relational Child and Youth Care Practice (formerly *The Journal of Child & Youth Care*, established 1982) is committed to promoting and supporting the profession of Child and Youth Care through disseminating the knowledge and experience of individuals involved in the day-to-day lives of young people.

This commitment is founded upon the belief that all human issues, including personal growth and development, are essentially "relational".

Certain pieces in *RCYCP* have received peer review. However, we do not peer review all articles as we choose not to exclude those voices where peer review would be inappropriate - or on request from writers.

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Relational Child & Youth Care Practice welcomes submissions on all aspects relating to young people, families and communities. This includes material that explores the intersectionality of Child and Youth Care practice and the lived experiences of all who are engaged in Child and Youth Care practice. Considerations will also be given to interpersonal dynamics of professional practice and all submissions that assume a relational perspective. This might include topics such as cultural values, ethics, social policy, program design, supervision, education, training etc. Welcomed are also submissions that address advocacy, social justice and reconciliation practices within the diverse spaces and places of Child and Youth Care. Each issue may include refereed articles that comply with acceptable ‘academic’ standards; submissions contributed by regular and guest columnists; short pieces that describe particular relational experiences and reflections; poetry; artwork and photographs.

Material should be submitted by email to rcycp@press.cyc-net.org in standard word processing format (eg. .doc, .rtf). Formal articles should not exceed 6000 words in length (excluding references). Referencing should conform to either APA or Harvard format. Author-date citations should be used within the text and a double-spaced reference section should accompany each article. In all submissions, authorship details including an abstract of no more than 150 words should be included, as well as a short list of keywords at the beginning of the article, a headshot photo and a short author bio of about 100 words to publish with your article. Importantly, authors should also indicate whether a peer review is required (in addition to the standard editorial review).

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