

ART, LEARNING AND LITERACY: PARALLEL MONSTERS FROM  
BORDERLAND SPACES

A Dissertation

by

LOBAT ASADI

Submitted to the Graduate and Professional School of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Cheryl J. Craig
Co-Chair of Committee,	Yolanda Padrón
Committee Members,	Sharon Matthews
	Patrick Rubio-Goldsmith
	Jeffrey Liew
Head of Department,	Michael De Miranda

August 2021

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

Copyright 2021 Lobat Asadi

## ABSTRACT

The three studies in this dissertation explore the benefits of arts-based educative experiences and art education amongst middle, high school and college level learners. The first study, *Parallel Monsters*, involves Monsterland, a pseudonym for a documentary-style performance theater. Monsterland emerged out of Edinberg, a small rural borderland town in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, where 87 percent of the student body at the university involved are Latin. The impetus to this play is important to explain because it triggered some of my own dormant issues related to grief, marginalization and immigration to the United States. In summary, Dr. Joseph Franklin, a pseudonym, came from the East coast of the United States, to the borderlands in the early 2000s to teach drama at a Hispanic Serving Institution of higher education, HSI. This is when he learned about the benefits of arts-education for marginalized learners, and pushed the university he works at to create more opportunities for the students to learn. Specifically, on top of a high number of reported and unreported crimes, community members were disappearing, and some of Franklin's own students' friends, as well as family members went missing.

The second study, *Poetry is not a Luxury*, involves young poets with an afterschool creative writing program, Writers in the Schools, WITS in the nation's fourth largest city, Houston Texas. In 2017, I began observing the youth in the urban metropolis of Houston in spoken word poetry slam performances. Organized by a non-profit organization, WITS, the creative poetry writing and poetry slams involve middle

and high school-aged youth who voluntarily enter the program. They are taught to draw from their own lived experiences to write poetry, which they may opt to present in spoken-word poetry competitive performances – poetry slams. These first two studies, *Monsterland* and *WITS*, consider the ways in which performance arts-based education may allow for lived experiences and related knowledge to emerge for the learner. These performance-arts educative experiences were informed by real-life events from vastly different settings in Texas.

The third study in this dissertation involves art teachers across five different middle and high schools in the Greater Houston area, using semi-structured interviews by the research team. This last study, *Art for Art's Sake*, explores art teachers' experiences in light of increasing school violence, as well as educational disruptions caused by natural disasters and flooding caused by hurricanes in the Gulf Coast metropolis. This third study investigates the impact of art practices and art teachers on the social and emotional health (particularly emotional self-regulation) of students. Given that this last study involves teachers, the study also seeks to identify the teachers' perceptions about the ways in which art-classes may have supported learners emotionally, as well as academically. Along the way, I consider who and why performance art may provide benefits to marginalized students such as multilingual or multiethnic learners. In working with these three research projects, I was able to identify a gap - very little has been documented about the educational benefits of qualitative performance-arts based educative experiences or the benefits of art education.

## DEDICATION

I owe everything I am, and hope to become, to my two fathers, Hormoz Asadi and Richard Bull.

They also granted me magical life experiences.

Hormoz taught me the value of living life to the fullest and following your dreams. He revealed the secrets that only animals, and their most dedicated protectors on the planet, can possess. He showed me tigers in India and cheetahs in Iran. He was a force of nature, and there he shall remain.

Richard has made me feel invincible through a steady flow of art, theater, music, writing, emotional support, and shelter since I was six years old. It is because of Richard that I have not given up on life, whenever my own monsters have emerged

Unknowingly, these two larger than life men, complemented each other when they formed me with their brilliant minds, kind hearts and words of wisdom.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have found my voice because of others.

Specifically, Dr. Cheryl J. Craig's unconditional understanding and support, which created the foundation for me to grow and develop as a scholar, researcher and human being.

In addition, it was Dr. Zohreh Eslami, who brought me to Texas A & M by nominating me for the College of Education and Human Development's Merit Fellowship in 2016.

Last but not least, Richard and Linda Bull let me stay in their house, and gave me space and peace of mind to be able to write this dissertation.

There were others, who helped me without knowing they were doing so.

Dr. Mario I. Suárez, who quickly took me in, as a friend and colleague, and showed me what strength and courage means.

The actors and staff of *Crawling With Monsters, Now*, paved the way for me to heal through the arts.

My cats Rishi and Maya helped me file papers and write manuscripts by laying all over me and my things. Without their love, the doctoral process would have been unbearable.

## CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

### **Contributors**

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of chair Cheryl J. Craig, Co-Chair Yolanda Padrón, and members Sharon Matthews, Patrick Rubio-Goldsmith, and Jeffrey Liew.

All other work conducted for the thesis (or) dissertation was completed by the student independently.

### **Funding Sources**

Research was funded in part by the CEHD and Catapult Grants and the Merit Fellowship.

## NOMENCLATURE

MLT	Multiple Literacy Theory
HM	The Heuristic Model of Child Self-Regulation, Reactivity and School Outcomes
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
ESL	English as a Second Language
ELL	English Language Learners
HIS	Hispanic Serving Institution of higher education
LGBTIQ	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES.....	vi
NOMENCLATURE.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Parallel Monsters Emerged .....	1
1.2. Teacher Stories .....	4
1.3. Contextual Historical Structures .....	5
1.4. Educational Problems.....	6
1.5. Three Research Studies .....	7
1.6. Theories .....	9
1.7. Method: Narrative Inquiry .....	19
2. ACT ONE: PARALLEL MONSTERS.....	25
2.1. Introductory Narrative.....	25
2.2. Monsterland.....	26
2.3. Literature Review .....	32
2.3.1. Geopolitical Backdrop.....	32
2.3.2. Historical Context.....	34
2.3.3. Borderland Thinking .....	35
2.3.4. Critical Pedagogy .....	37
2.3.5. Critical Media Literacy.....	38
2.4. Method: Narrative Inquiry .....	39
2.4.1 Participants and Sources.....	40



2.5. Parallel Stories.....	41
2.4.2 Connie and Monsterland .....	42
2.4.3 Dr. Fuentes and Felina.....	45
2.4.4 Cabrena and Lobat.....	48
2.5 Parallel Monsters.....	49
2.6. Discussion .....	51
2.7. Critical Media Literacy .....	52
2.8. Implications.....	55
2.8.1. Critical Media Literacy in Education .....	55
2.8.2. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.....	55
2.8.3. Teacher Education .....	56
2.8.4. Performance Arts Pedagogy .....	57
2.8.5. Further Research.....	57
2.9. Conclusion.....	58
3 ACT TWO: POETRY IS NOT A LUXURY .....	60
3.1 Introductory Narrative.....	60
3.2 Context .....	62
3.2.1 Multiple Ways of Knowing.....	62
3.3 Literature Review .....	63
3.3.1 Culture .....	65
3.3.2 Multiple Literacies .....	66
3.3.3 Stories to Live by .....	67
3.3.4 Arts-based Education .....	68
3.4 Theories.....	69
3.5 Method: Narrative Inquiry .....	72
3.5.1 Counter Story-Telling.....	73
3.5.2 Three-Dimensional Narrative Space .....	74
3.5.3 Researcher Positionality .....	74
3.6 Lived Experiences .....	75
3.7 Discussion .....	76
3.7.1 Cultural Literacy.....	78
3.7.2 Emotional Literacy .....	80
3.7.3 Bildungsroman .....	81
3.8 Recommendations .....	85
3.8.1 Visual literacy and Arts-based Education .....	85
3.8.2 Culturally Relevant Text .....	86
3.8.3 Bildungsroman & Identity.....	87
3.8.4 Further Study.....	88
3.9 Concluding Remarks .....	89
4. ACT THREE: ART FOR ART’S SAKE .....	91

4.1	Introductory Narrative.....	91
4.2	Context .....	94
4.2.1	Disruptions to Schooling.....	94
4.2.2	Benefits of Art Education.....	96
4.3	Literature Review .....	97
4.3.1	Art Therapy .....	97
4.3.2	Empathy.....	97
4.3.3	Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.....	99
4.4	Theory .....	100
4.5	Method .....	102
4.5.1	Broadening & Burrowing .....	103
4.6	Narratives of Experience.....	103
4.6.1	Edwin.....	104
4.6.2	Ang .....	105
4.7	Heuristic Model of Child Self-Regulation and Reactivity and School Outcomes.....	110
4.7.1	Self-Regulation.....	112
4.7.2	School Engagement.....	114
4.7.3	Risk/Protective .....	115
4.7.4	Academic Achievement.....	116
4.8	Further Study.....	118
4.8.1	Identity.....	118
4.8.2	Teacher Retention.....	119
4.9	Implications.....	119
4.9.1	Teacher Education .....	119
4.9.2	Empathy.....	120
4.9.3	Arts Integrated Curricula.....	120
4.9.4	Research .....	121
4.9.5	Art Therapy .....	122
4.10	Conclusion.....	122
5	CONCLUSION .....	124
5.1	The Master’s House .....	124
5.2	Limitations .....	126
5.3	Geopolitical Structures Impacting Education .....	127
5.4	Art Education .....	130
5.5	Arts-based Educational Research.....	133
5.6	Literacy.....	134
5.7	Cultural Studies & Pedagogy .....	137
5.8	The Tip of the Iceberg.....	139
5.9	Epilogue .....	140
	REFERENCES .....	143

APPENDIX A .....	156
APPENDIX B.....	157

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1 From Parallel Stories to Parallel Monsters.....	30

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1.1 The Three Studies in this Dissertation .....	7
Table 1.2 Narrative Three-Dimensional Space .....	22
Table 2.1 Parallel Monsters and Shape-Shifting Outcomes .....	50
Table 3.1 Multiple Literacy Theory – Definitions .....	71
Table 3.2 Literacies and Bildungsroman.....	77
Table 4.1 Environmental Issues Alongside Art Education in HISD .....	95
Table 4.2 School Narratives of Experience: Environmental & Personal Themes .....	107
Table 4.3 The Heuristic Model of Child Self-Regulation and School Outcomes .....	111

## 1. INTRODUCTION

“Do you worry about your city?”

“Yes, and my parents even more, because in their times they were able to play on the street and they would do whatever they wanted. but now it’s no longer that way, no more ... these things are happening frequently and well, yes, they do worry about the city’s future” (Fermin, 9 year old boy, CWMN script, p. 2).

### 1.1. **Parallel Monsters Emerged**

In 2007, when Franklin asked the Performance Arts Department’s leadership at the university he worked at if he could create a play in which the Latino/a students could narrate lived experiences from the borderlands, they declined. Not long after his arrival to the Rio Grande Valley-based university, Franklin witnessed disruptions in the social, political and governance of the community of learners he was teaching. “How could I go home and face my own children, when I saw this abuse happening all day long. What kind of father would that make me?” said Franklin, a white English only-speaking Anglo-American male playwright. He felt these issues, often related to border-crossing, criminal elements and sociocultural acceptance amongst Anglo-Americans, were blocking his students’ abilities to learn drama and grow as individuals.

There was very little reporting in the media of what Franklin and his students were witnessing, either. “I had to learn how to spot the cases that were not being addressed in the media, and navigate any harmful repercussions of sharing this knowledge” (Franklin, personal interview, 2017). Making matters worse, since the Latino/a students did not speak with a native accent in English, Franklin’s administration did not even permit Spanish speakers to perform in any of the other plays at their

university, either. The fact that his Spanish speaking students were denied the basics of performance arts education and practice, is why Franklin came to a boiling point and formed *Monsterland*, a qualitative play about the perils of life in the Texas-Mexico borderlands.

In this play, we enter a world where newspapers do not send their reporters. A very real world, although sometimes it seems like a nightmare, where very real people wake up every morning *to it*, and find themselves inside it -- with their children, and their parents, and their friends. *And yet!* All non-essential travel in this place should be deferred, according to the State Department. And colleges don't let their students go there -- that's right -- I teach near the Mexican border -- these are my students, or ex-students -- and (University's name) System does not allow us to go to Mexico (CWMN script, 2016)

When I saw *Monsterland* perform in 2016, I was a new doctoral student. I was so moved that I began to form my dissertation concept around it that I decided I would look at the benefits of performance arts and other arts-based educational practices for learners.

*Monsterland* quickly showed me that multicultural and multilingual learners in the borderlands were being stifled, vis-à-vis emotional, cultural, political and media-related erasures of their lived experiences. I also felt some of same feeling and had some of the same experiences described in the play myself, such as travel bans, and grief over inexplicable loss of a loved one, which is why the first study in this dissertation is named *Parallel Monsters*.

This initial finding that marginalized learners were being held back from learning in various ways, was corroborated by the second study in this dissertation, with *Writers in the Schools*, WITS, *Poetry is not a Luxury*. In this second study, more parallel monsters seemed to be developing as I learned about more personal and cultural erasures

and educational marginalization. This time the setting was in an urban metropolis. Thus, parallel issues were evidenced in both rural and urban parts of Texas, by people of different backgrounds and races.

This second study with WITS, which is called CCPD in this dissertation, also developed organically, when I was audience member in 2017, during poetry slams that were coordinated by the after-school creative writing program, WITS for middle and high schools students in the Greater Houston area. However, in this study, participants expressed having developed multiple literacies, when I interviewed the young learners in 2018. One participant, Oasis, explained that it was only after being involved with WITS for a year, Oasis made an important life decision, “I never thought I would go to college, but now, I can see it. I want to be a writer.” Oasis said had a paradigm shift because she realized that she has the passion and potential for writing, as a result of what she learned from WITS. Likewise, re-storying is part and parcel to the performance arts-based pedagogies in these first two studies in this dissertation, *Parallel Monsters*, and *Poetry is Not a Luxury* (Table 3.1).

I soon realized that narrative inquiry method is like documentary theater or poetry slam, which are generally based on the performers lived experiences or their own qualitative research. In narrative inquiry, a qualitative research method, participants’ life stories are lived, then they are re-told; the process of qualitative interviews and research can be very similar (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Through privileging lived experiences as life stories, “narrative inquiry integrates time with culture to make meaning of an experience from the view of the storyteller,” (Adama et al. 2016).



## 1.2. Teacher Stories

However, it was not until 2019, when I embarked on the third study in this dissertation with art-teachers as a Graduate Research Assistant, that I was able hear about the benefits of arts-education from educators. A novice teacher, Ang, who self-identified as an Asian-American gay male, described one of his students enthusiastically, “He’s also realizing his own creative potential. They just start trusting you and know that this is a safe spot. Like, now, out of all my students, her is one that actually sits down and works, started out as the most troubled.” Ang explained that he had several such successful encounters with learners, many of whom were foster kids (personal communication, 2019). Interestingly, Ang’s own volatile experiences growing up with family, who did not always accept him, motivated Ang to become an art teacher. Ang explained that his parents were traditional Asian family, while he was growing up Americanized. Unfortunately, cultural and personal differences escalated the disputes at home to the point of violence and self-harm.

“After I moved out, my brother told them I was becoming an art teacher, which was definitely something they didn’t want to hear.” Ang’s father had already “disowned” him, but now he was even more furious. However, Ang explained that art as a healing and empowering tool in this life, so as art teacher, he wants to “show them that this is what you can do, and this will possibly save your life.” The three studies showed me some important things that I weave into the dissertation. First, disruptions to education are highly problematic and can cause trauma that is repressed by the victimized learners because it is often overlooked by media, family and community. Second, there are very

real benefits to arts-based educative experiences as well art education in schools. Lastly, a high number of marginalized groups of people had emerged as benefiting from these educational experiences revolving around art.

### **1.3. Contextual Historical Structures**

The notion of the progress made in North America is visually demonstrated in the painting by John Gast, *American Progress*, by John Gast (1876) deserves a closer look. This happened in the Modern-era as technology, literacy, agriculture and land ownership became commonplace systems and representations of modern civilization. The goddess Columbia is holding a book as she works forward to spread progress to the North American frontier. What might this book be – educational and within the English language? What seems clear is that subjects were reimaged according to the colonizer, who privileged their knowledge, gender roles, language religion, culture and other practices. Educational opportunities were omitted under the original settler-construct of the Common School system (Duran, Duran, Heart, M. Y. H. B., and Horse-Davis, 1998). Conversely, natives who assimilated under colonialism would become more modern and enchanted with what it has to offer, such as economic, cultural, social and systematic means.

In Texas, Carlos Blanton (1991) looked into educational manifestations of Anglo-American colonization since the Hidalgo agreement of 1849 that granted them the land north of the Mexico border. One way coloniality is said to be maintained is through knowledge (Quijano, 2002). Blanton evidences this through court cases and historical documents and policies to outline how the educational praxis Mexican-Americans and

others from South and Central Americas have been subject to in K-12 schooling has held them back. Blanton explains that the monolingual curriculum served to rationalize corporal, linguistic abuse, as well as hindered the academic and social progress of Mexican-American, Mexican and other Spanish speakers in the United States, to this day. The most immediate impact may be the social and economic manifestations. For these reasons and more, decolonial theories (Quijano, 2002, Mignolo & Walsh 2018, Grosfugal, 2004) sees modernity as an extension of coloniality. Under the decolonial view, the aftermath of colonization encompasses every sphere of life including academic, economic, social, and governance, which decoloniality seeks to dismantle.

#### **1.4. Educational Problems**

Therefore, it is no great surprise that in the 21st Century, drop-out rates have been high amongst African-American and Latino/a students. The achievement gaps, as well as the educational opportunity gaps between people of color and their white counterparts have been increasing (Darling Hammond, 1996). Chicana scholar, Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1942-2005), who grew up and went to school in the same town that Monsterland originated, Edinburg, Texas, addressed education, sociology and research in literature that merges her ancestral bloodlines and can be considered decolonial (1987, 2002, 2009). Yet, Solorzano and Bernal (2001) call for more research into the plight of Latina/o learners. “Chicana and Chicano student resistance have been overlooked and understudied in sociology of education research,” (p.310). The educational relationship to culture and marginalization is important to explore as the United States becomes increasingly more diverse.

The years of primary and secondary education have long been recognized as a vital formative period for students. The fine arts play an important role in this formation as demonstrated in the nation-wide of over 25,000 learners, Arts & Success in Secondary School Catteral (1998). In Texas, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), curriculum guidelines, for dance, music, theatre and visual arts (TEA- Fine Arts, 2016). While there is strong programmatic support for fine arts in the state of Texas (TEKS), art education has faced federal funding cuts since 1989.

### 1.5. Three Research Studies

Each study is presented as an act, and there are three acts that show their role in showing me the connectivity and understanding of the benefits of arts in education.

**Table 1.1 The Three Studies in this Dissertation**

<p>1. ACT ONE: <i>Parallel Monsters</i>, under pseudonym of <i>Monsterland</i>, Includes: interviews with actors, performance of the play and audience member Q &amp; A audio/video, the script of the play, as well as researcher’s field notes.</p>
<p>2. ACT TWO <i>Poetry is not a Luxury</i>, Writers in the Schools, WITS, under CCPD pseudonym, is about learners in a creative writing, poetry and poetry slam non-profit program in Houston for Middle and High school aged youth. Includes: poet interviews, one of the WITS’ teachers, as well as audio/visual material from poetry slams and researcher notes.</p>
<p>3. ACT THREE: <i>Art for Art’s Sake</i>, Greater Houston Spring ISD, all schools names have been changed to pseudonyms, art teacher study. Includes: five art teacher interviews and researcher notes.</p>

In each act, I strive to I show the ways in which arts-education can allow for learners to acknowledge and expand their literacies, as they incorporate lived experiences as forms

of knowledge into their educative repertoires. Given that most of the participants identified as marginalized people including, LGBTIQ, African-American, Mexican-American and Asian-American. I try to demonstrate that arts-education may be of particular benefit to marginalized people because arts-education can highlight multiple forms of literacy such as visual, cultural or media literacies. The research aims include:

- Demonstrate how arts-based education and educative experiences may benefit learners.
- Look at the ways in which literacy can be advanced through these practices.
- Demonstrate the learner benefits of performance arts-based pedagogies.
- Consider the ways in which performance arts may benefit marginalized youth in particular.
- Consider the relationship to arts–education and art therapy, and allows for expressions of linguistic, social and emotional knowledge to emerge.

This dissertation fills a gap about the benefits of arts-education for learners in K-12 education, teacher education, as the overall benefits of arts-education to society as a whole. I demonstrate how arts-education benefits learners, and potentially teachers because it has the qualities of art therapy, and allows for expressions of linguistic, social and emotional knowledge to emerge. Lastly, recommendations for art education policy and pedagogy are made using the lens of socioemotional learning, art therapy, empathy and emotional self- regulation.

## 1.6. Theories

The practices of the Aztec *nagual*, which she explains were people who were the shamans, and shape-shifters amongst some indigenous people in Mesoamerica, the Nahuatl, guide some of her thinking (Anzaldúa, 1987). For Anzaldúa, for example, in Anzaldúa's *Border arte nepantlera el lugar de la frontera* (2002, unpublished manuscript, Box 58.5 GEA archives) she makes a connection to *Nepantla* as an "artist's way to perceive oneself and move forward against the face of male-domination and patriarchy." Thus, *la nepantlera* are beings that shape-shift and reside in between spaces such as borders, nationality, gender and racial divides. *Nepantla theory* (2002) also refers to *la nepantlera*, who are borderland artists, transgender and/or queer people (GEA Archives, UT Bensen). In many ways, *Nepantla theory* seems to have been affirming the mixed ancestry bloodlines of the Tejano/a/x people in the borderlands of Texas and Mexico, where Anzaldúa was from.

*Nepantlera* can merge, exist, and when *nepantlera* are self-aware, they can thrive in the in-between spaces, which makes them a metaphysical, intercultural medium. Keating (2016) explains this notion as, "cultural workers... *Nepantlera* are threshold people: they move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds and refuse to align themselves exclusively with any single individual, group, or belief system" (p.6). Yet, since these factors also lend themselves to an individual's own perception of themselves, when *la nepantlera* are not able to do their work freely, oppression can permeate (1987, 2002, 2009). In these ways, it appears that identification with *la*

nepantlera, indicates that one cannot be colonized because, by way of knowledge from the past, nepantlera are no longer under the spell of colonial knowledge.

The understanding of one's own multiple forms of identification such as culture, race and sexual orientation, can lessen the impact of biases from the world around them. Intersectional ways of knowing for us to stop or isolating the multiplicities of personhood, and include them in, meaning-making. Cho, Crenshaw and McCall (2013) explain that intersectionality is a theoretical and methodological paradigm that examines the interplay of difference and sameness when considering "gender, race, and other axes of power in a wide range of political discussions and academic disciplines" (p. 787). That is, in cases where multiple minoritized identities, such as with queer people of color, it is important to understand the full person, not just one identity apart from the others. In doing so, we are able to understand the sociohistorical and political implications that race, gender, sexuality, or other identities have by looking the interplay of marginalization(s).

In a world with intersections of learners' identities, as well as rapid changes due to globalization, immigration and transnationalism, appropriate responses in pedagogies are required that provide students with opportunities to draw from their varied environmental and societal contexts (Bogue, 2009). While there are several concepts about multiple literacies, Multiple Literacy Theory (MLT), (Masny & Cole, 2007), which is based on the work of Gilles Deleuze, looks specifically at multiple literacies in education. Deleuze posits that literacy and discourse are tools of power that can be countered through performative affects that abstract binary perceptions (Del Rio, 2008).

MLT presents eight less commonly known literacies: Cultural, Digital, Emotional, Environmental, Numerical, Political, Scientific, and Visual Literacy. Moje (2009) explains:

Literacies make use of symbol systems and technologies for producing those symbols; they are not one and the same. But too often the terms are conflated in part, I imagine, because it is often difficult to tell where the medium stops and the practice starts; they are, after all, intertwined (p. 349).

Overall, scholarship into multiple literacies indicates that literacy can be performative because seemingly intangible items such as emotions and culture, are validated as informants of knowledge. Drawing from Multiple Literacy Theory, MLT (Masney & Cole, 2007), transcultural literacy is inseparable from sociocultural practices because an individual's trans-identity is on the fault-line between various and/or competing cultures (Kirkland, 2014). These latent literacies can be related to cultural funds of knowledge (Yosso, 2005). Pedagogies and curricula that allow for multiple literacies to emerge have also been called for in the field of communications.

Fiske (1989) defines what is the 'popular' in the media as that which audiences come to accept with a 'celebrity aura,' which commodifies the culture for use in industries. Critical Media Literacy, CML (Masterman, 2001, Kellner & Share, 2005), responds by calling people in the field of communication to examine the motivation, action and outcomes of the media on its audiences and the greater societal impacts. CML responds to the notion that 'Popular culture' is accurate and biased by calling for critical analysis of it and everything that becomes associated with it as being correct. In the end, CML asserts that there should be no instances of popularity that involve domination of



those considered as less popular (Kellner, 2001). CML scholars have asked repeatedly that the field of education support them by creating pedagogies that would teach learners to be able to discern and dismantle these power structures in the media (Cortes 1980). Greenhow (2010) explains, “a broader application of the digital media literacy skills students need to be prepared to employ when they are away from the classroom.” Excluding the ‘popular’ from dominating structures, actions and behaviors could reduce many instances of sociocultural oppression such as the lack of multiple literacies in education. The main distinction from MLT or transcultural literacy is that CML assumes that there are embedded messages, which stem from bias and power structures. The five core CML concepts: non-transparency, codes & conventions, audience decoding, content & message and motivation, include embedded messages, which are used by the audience to affirm, reject or inform their perceptions. Treatments of multiple literacies as they relate to culture, language and identity provide conceptual supports for one another, but other than emotional literacy in MLT (Masney & Cole, 2007), the benefits for traumatized learners is not indicated.

To elaborate, involuntary transitional experiences, be it from war, natural disasters or from parents divorcing, can involve terrifying circumstances that cause disruptions to learning. As a result, learners may have less motivation to participate in their schooling, and they may not be able to concentrate (Shin, Han, & Kim, 2007). In the 21st Century, immigrant children are unprecedented in numbers in the United States school systems (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Sadly, immigrants, including children are subject to cultural marginalization, exploitation and even human trafficking

(Sarther, 2006). Thus, globalization may only be a continuation of oppression, or worse yet, it may have worsened it for people who immigration from their homelands.

While post-migration adaption is largely ignored in the US, children may manifest posttraumatic stress and other related disorders. The distress causes anxiety, which remains largely unresolved in the classroom environment due to the standardized responses and unimaginative thinking processes (van der Kolk, 2005). This lack of control over their environment causes instability and confusion in their daily lives, causing lower performance (Carlier & Salom, 2012; Han & Huang, 2010) and depression (Shin et al., 2007). Emotional literacy has been linked to mental health and cognitive ability in children, yet, ironically, Rees (2013) explains that the optimal setting for emotional literacy contrasts with public schools. Specifically, the large numbers of teachers and peers in most K-12 public schools, makes meaningful interactions next to impossible.

Mental health, empathy, and emotional literacy in school settings are not separate constructs. The Heuristic Model of Child Self-regulation and Reactivity and School Outcomes (Liew et al. 2020), which is adapted from the work of Eisenberg, Sadovsky and Spinrad (2005) seeks to demonstrate levels of reactivity. To elaborate, “low levels of self-regulation in children are linked to more internalizing and externalizing behavior problems” (p. 44). The model explores how teacher–student relationships can create greater self-awareness, more learner willingness and engagement, which can lead to better academic outcomes. The internal barriers a learner may have due to trauma, displacement or other measures disrupting to learn were explored by Lockard et al.

(2014) amongst 1609 students across 10 different universities in the United States. They found that self-compassion is lower among anxious individuals than it was amongst depressed individuals. The study also examined potential differences in self-compassion based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender. Their results suggest that self-compassion is not a particular struggle for minority students, but fear of making a mistake does perpetuate anxiety.

Therefore, learners with lower anxiety and higher levels of self-compassion may be more able to move on from academic failures. To illustrate, Neff et al. (2017) surveyed 1354 people in the community, who reported fewer instances of dropping grades, when they also showed elements of higher self-compassion. Conversely, Weimer and Dowd (2016) found that autistic children had less resilience and used fewer words when asked to describe their impressions of images than children without autism. Based on these studies about the cognition and emotion, it concluded that an embodied relationship to seemingly invisible multi-literacies such as emotional and cultural exist. Kostogriz & Tsolidis (2008) postulate that “transcultural literacy grows out of border-crossing dynamics that extend beyond the binaries of ‘us’ and ‘them’ as these are lived within and between nations. In this view literacy is responsive to, and reflects, the various shifts between the local and the global; between place and space,” (p.125). Studies about emotions cognition, are rarely, if ever, informants of pedagogy, curriculum development, or policy decisions.

It is puzzling that researchers have found emotional regulation to be linked to educational outcomes through resilience, yet culture and cognition are not commonly

explored. Being displaced cultural entity grants lesser social and cultural value to an individual, according to social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1985). In this way, educational and corporate structures can be agents of greater control by building trust in their own formulaic social and culture norms. To explain, Quillian and Redd (2016) outline that shared objectives are most impactful when a group of people can act together because they are more effective in their pursuits. As a result, social groupings result, thereby, similarly conforming people(s) come together and gain social capital, which must naturally omit others to create the controlling social network(s). These theories and facts seem to elucidate why learners from globally dominant cultures have more upward mobility, access to education.

Consequently, pedagogies are better suited for the globally dominant sociocultural people. Given these cultural, social and human capital factors, the fact that Latina/o learners do not succeed proportionality to their Anglo peers in schooling is no surprise. In the United States, Latina/o K-12 learners have fewer academic successes (Alva & Padilla 1995; Kao & Thompson, 2003), and possess higher school drop-out rates (Valencia, 1991, 2002; Stone & Han, 2005; Battle & Cuellar, 2006). Adding insult to injury, in the in the United States, most teachers are monolingual white females, and as such are not well-equipped, to serve multicultural or immigrant learners (González et al., 2004; Stone & Han 2005; Valencia, 2002; Battle & Cuellar, 2006). Likewise, preservice teacher programs and professional development are not geared at culturally or linguistically relevant teaching methods. Furthermore, excluding ethnic studies from the nation's curriculum must be very demoralizing to Latina/o learners, who comprise well

over half of the people living in the United States (Valencia 1991, 2002). In terms of intercultural competence and interethnic alliances, the control and racialization of educational structures in the United States has hindered the learning of every learner in the nation, not only those being marginalized.

The world has globalized and issues multiplied since the 1900s, yet praxis lacks recent insights into how culture influences learning and responses in the brain (Hammond, 2017). In fact, meta-cognitive abilities seem to be greater amongst diverse learners. For example, multilingual learners have more neuroplasticity and may learn faster than their monolingual counterparts, across multiple content areas (Kuhl, 2011). Thus, being bilingual increases the brain's capacity to process multiple kinds of information. Put another way, Madden (2013) explains that multiplicities in ways of thinking are related to creativity because it also involves distinguishing divergent and convergent ways of meaning making. Despite the overall learning benefits of learning more than one language fluently, the United States Department of Education does not advocate second language learning for K-12 learners.

Not only is teaching and testing towards a dominant homogenous culture and their notions of literacy an inequitable teaching practice (Kumar, Karabenick and Burgoon, 2015), it is likely to be lowering the resiliency of multi-cultural students. In fact, creativity and divergent thinking also betters higher cognitive functioning. Activating arts in education can simultaneously teach and aid cultural and emotional literacy (Nixon, 2016). In a year-long study of a high school visual literacy program in Australia, ELVA, the Emotional Literacy through Visual Arts found:

...children who possess emotional literacy are emotionally aware, alive and connected with themselves, with others and with experiences and surrounding situations. As a result, they are better equipped to develop capacities to engage with and manage difficult emotional experiences, and, as a consequence, can be more resilient in the face of emotional challenges (pg. 181-182).

Despite these findings across various students, neither neuroscience nor emotional literacy inform educational standards in the United States. Fortunately, there are some private and non-profit organizations that do try to support more diverse, and arts-based learning methods. To elaborate, the Americans for the Arts asserts art education leads to “higher academic performance, increased standardized test scores, more community service & lower drop-out rates” (Catteral, 1998). Yet, school districts often face choices about how to distribute time and resources to fulfill core objectives as well as these recommended needs for cultural and arts-education.

Overall, most of the literature under culturally relevant pedagogy stresses advocacy, discusses issues such as segregation and stereotypes, and recommends sociocultural courses of action, but omit explicit connections to arts. However, performance arts have long been known as an emancipatory practice for marginalized learners (Boal 2000, Freire, 1996). While all students seem to benefit, there is evidence to suggest that minoritized students such as Latino/a, Foster, LGBTIQ+ may particularly benefit from fine arts (Early, 2003; Kalmanowitz, 2016). For this reason, the Association of American Cultures has outlined a need for ethnic-specific arts in education (Early, 2003). When emotional literacy is developed through to arts, perhaps cultural literacy is also furthered.

To explain, cultural literacy leads to the ability to teach with cultural responsiveness and is linked to development of one's world views (Ochoa, 2016). This internal process is evident in the research that expounds on how culture is a part of children's development and contributes to the shaping of a child's temperament (Valloton, 2016, as cited in Liew et al., 2020). Ajzen & Fishbein (2005, as cited in Kumar, Karabenick and Burgoon, 2015) explain that once implicit attitudes and perceptions are activated, they can bias future cognition and influence one's own behavior. Thus, the beliefs about a person within their society, can determine how they live and behave in their society. Sadly, the United States has been at unrest with equity and diversity in its educational systems, and as a whole, which is why ethnic studies were banned in Arizona, which sparked the Cabrera et al. study (2014). The study found that arts in tandem with ethnic studies, benefited the overall academic outcomes of students of all races in Tucson Arizona by as much as 9 percent.

Increasingly, these studies inform us of that which most every educator knows - a lack of mutual understanding between learners and their teachers may cause implicit attitudes about education that are counter-productive to learning. Unfortunately, culturally relevant pedagogies are rarely, if ever, incorporated into traditional education in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2012; Yosso, 2012). An empirical study related to culturally responsive pedagogy for pre-service teacher education by Natesan et al. (2014) assessed their cultural awareness. Their researcher developed survey instrument, CABI is based on eight factors - teacher beliefs, school climate, culturally responsive classroom management, home and community support,

cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy. In a survey of about 1500 high school teachers across the United States, Natesan et al. (2014) found that African-American students were the last to be perceived as academically competent. While the study was unique with its large national survey of preservice teacher educators and evidenced a problematic racial bias, there were no pedagogic recommendations made for pre-service teacher education.

In fact, there was virtually no literature evidencing pedagogies that benefitted K-12 learners in relationship to arts-education, literacy and marginalized learners in particular. Authors did draw on related areas of research, such as bias in materials, history and effects of bilingual education, desegregated schooling, teacher attitudes toward diverse students, the effects of media, and societal relationships across race, gender, and handicap lines. Thus, based on the literature I did find, it can be said that students of color are held to lower standards than their peers. By extension, it is clear that biases and racial divides are still being enforced in the United States' media and schooling, and socioeconomic disparities continue amongst marginalized learners and their white peers. In this dissertation, I have tried to work around these gaps, to the best of my abilities. I address the overall lack of research about the benefits of arts-education that I have unearthed, by considering interdisciplinary ideas and research, in each one of the three arts-based studies present.

### **1.7. Method: Narrative Inquiry**

Story-telling is a common cultural practice across the globe. Craig et al. (2018) refer to life experiences that become personal ways of meaning making as “knowing



without words” that is conceptualized by interweaving (1) embodied knowledge, (2) experience, and (3) narrative. Fortunately, narrative inquiry allows for the researcher to engage and broaden personal stories so as to apply them to the larger sociocultural context and large-scale narratives. Thus, story-tellers delve into who they are through their personal histories, while the listener becomes shaped by the stories (Clandinin, Caine & Lessard, 2018). These ways of knowing can interlink human experiences and allow for everyone involved in the inquiry to think about any relational, lived experiences. Craig (1999) describes these experiences as; “relational, storytelling places where ‘people narrate the rawness of their experiences, negotiate meaning for such experiences and authorize their own and others narrative interpretation of situations as legitimate tellings,” (Craig, p. 399). In this way, the writer’s voice and own version of the truth to emerge in the narration and the (re)story-telling methods used.

Grasping the context in which our social, cultural and emotional landscapes have formed our personal practical knowledge are part and parcel to markers of individual identity. Clandinin and Huber (2002) have the stance that “For us, identity is a storied life composition, a story to live by. Stories to live by are shaped in places and lived in spaces. They live in actions, in relationship with others, in language, including silences, gaps and vacancies, in continuities and discontinuities” (p. 161). Given that meaning making is linked to identity in this narrative inquiry, I explore how the participants involved in the research studies are telling and retelling their stories, and how they are reliving their stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Through re-storying lived

experiences and embodying that knowledge, previously unexplored entanglements with the content of the research can emerge.

Three-dimensional narrative space allows for a similar process of knowing without words as the artistic and aesthetic experiences can merge with one's identity. Clandinin and Connelly (2002) drew from Dewey's work *Art as Experience* (1934) and outlined a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space that can serve to identify the interaction, continuity and situational aspects to the research puzzle. Specifically, these three dimensions of sociality, temporality, and spatiality, are factors that the researcher in a narrative inquiry study can use to interpret participants' lived experiences in order to consider to the stories' time, culture and space (Riley & Hawe, 2005). All three must be present and interacting for a research study to be a narrative inquiry. Through these dimensions, the process of identity development is traced through an in-depth understanding of dimension. In the dissertation, each of the three studies, as a whole, are analyzed with three-dimensional narrative space, as a space for identity development.

Because Application, Theoretical and Pedagogy emerged as main themes in the initial findings across all three studies in this dissertation, I added sub-categories to the three dimensions of narrative space. In doing so, I created—from the outset--- a guiding framework that I can apply to all three of the studies in my dissertation (Table 1.2). Further uniting the studies, I use Multiple Literacy Theory, MLT, as the overarching theoretical concept that is considered in relationship to the education outcomes of each study. Thereby each study seeks to “locate” the most relevant MLT literacies, as well as discusses any related pedagogic outcomes and implications of MLT.

**Table 1.2 Narrative Three-Dimensional Space**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Theoretical</b>	<b>Pedagogy</b>
<p><b>1. Interaction/Sociality:</b> The personal and social interactions in the story.</p>	<p>Considers the participants sociocultural, political issues &amp; the how this impacts participants' relationship with their environment as evidenced in the study.</p>	<p>This is discussed using include social capital theory and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1989, 1983).</p> <p>Multiple Literacy Theory (Masny &amp; Cole, 2007)</p>	<p>Art education benefits teacher-student school-based relationships and academic outcomes.</p> <p>Socio-emotional learning is indicated (Liew et al. 2020)</p> <p>MLT outcomes: Emotional literacy cultural literacy, visual</p>
<p><b>2. Continuity/Temporality:</b> he “time factor” of the story’s present, past and future.</p>	<p>The participants lived experiences, or the contextual experiences. The story’s past, present and future, and how these factors or knowledge impact the educational pedagogy (and participants experiences in the study).</p>	<p>This often occurs through pedagogy, but also includes the impact of disruptions to learning and education by participants’ lived experiences of racism, genderism, prejudices, immigration, nationality, legal status etc.</p> <p>Multiple Literacy Theory</p>	<p>Arts-based, performance pedagogy bildungsroman,</p> <p>MLT Outcomes: Visual, political, cultural literacy</p>
<p><b>3. Situation/Spatiality:</b> the place and space where the story occurs,</p>	<p>This is often given through the historic perspectives, criminal elements and related conflicted borderland spaces as the backdrop to these studies. Considers impact of disruptions to education by natural disasters and funding for art education courses in K-12.</p>	<p>This includes the coloniality of knowledge theory (Quijano, 2002) and the three pillars of knowledge, power and being.</p> <p>Multiple Literacy Theory</p>	<p>Documentary theater and play-building pedagogy</p> <p>Critical Media Literacy (Kellner &amp; Share, 2005) as sociocultural informant and learning tool.</p> <p>MLT Outcomes: Political, cultural literacy, scientific, visual</p>

In the first dimension of Interaction/Social, one is able to consider “what-if” scenarios that could have altered one’s life outcomes. For example, a transnational person may consider how their life may have turned out if they or their family had never immigrated, and their life was lived in the country where they were born. The

Interaction/Social dimension is applied to each study's participant group in the following manner:

1. ACT ONE: Actors (Monsterland), the participants in this documentary play are actors in a performance arts-based educative experience, as well as qualitative researchers, so they may experience a nuanced time-travel experience, a) into their own life history, and b) that of their community, in the borderlands, where the study is based.
2. ACT TWO: Poets (WITS/CCPD), as poets, the youth are asked to create autobiographical original writing inspired by their lived experiences, which are often informed by their most challenging life stories that have to be recollected.
3. ACT THREE: Art Teachers (Spring ISD/Summer), this participant group is asked to consider why they were motivated to become art teachers in the first place, so they "time-travel" to their lived experiences to recollect those reasons.

The dimension of Continuity/Temporality allows for the existent outward disposition of one self, to contrasted with the push into the present, silences, continuities and discontinuities of ideas, relationships and activities. Due to this tension, the temporality of a situation can be a tight rope walk in which the participants are stretched, pulled, and tense, like a rubber band. The individual time travels to their past, and whenever they are able, they return to the present to assess and mitigate their reactions in the present moment. Questions such as - what should my future look like if X, Y, Z had or had not taken place, arise under the tension of continuity versus temporality.

Lastly, the Situational/Spatiality dimension explores the past and present in order to assign lessons and grant meaning to lived experiences, through the creation of art. It is the aesthetic, artistic, altered space in which artists, shape-shifters and creative energies exist, without any of the common-place limitations of borders, categories and concepts. Spatial borders of inquiry are lifted when this hybrid space has been created, thus other ways of understanding can emerge. This can become a healing space because the restrictions and negations of normative thinking have been successfully altered. By working through these dimensions, narrative three-dimensional space allows for alternative ways of knowing, thinking, and being to emerge and become affirmative aspects of an individual's stories and embodied knowledge(s). The three studies that follow will explore these dimensions, and apply relevant theories and approaches to interpreting the qualitative research in order to highlight the benefits of arts-education and educative experiences.

## 2. ACT ONE: PARALLEL MONSTERS

### 2.1. Introductory Narrative

“He disappeared somewhere between Texas and Reynosa,” announced Cabrena, the stage manager of *Monsterland*, the documentary theater I worked with for two years. She barely glanced at me during the interview I did with her, which gave me mixed feelings as I already felt like a predator who had caused her to recollect this trauma. Yet, the more we spoke, the physical disappearance of her father seemed like a continuation of the pain she had felt for a long time as a result of being isolated from her family. “I am afraid to go to Mexico because of everything; I may be deported, even though I am an American, or maybe the narcos will get me.” Cabrena explained that she is birthright citizen of the United States, while her father and the rest of her family are Mexican citizens who reside in Mexico. “He was probably driving back to see his mother, or for work.” With an unspoken fury, Cabrena said she had always felt disconnected from her family, but when she began working with *Monsterland*, she found refuge.

Having revealed her father’s disappearance, I saw that Cabrena was not really a stage manager – she was the lead actress in *Monsterland*. In order to further unravel the impact of *Monsterland* on their staff, actors, and audiences, I used narrative inquiry’s tools of broadening and burrowing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) in this study. Broadening allowed for the demonstrated benefits of documentary theater to be examined holistically and ascribed relevance and value for education, and burrowing

enabled the research to explore individual and parallel stories (Craig, 1999) of the participants.

## 2.2. **Monsterland**

In 2007, *Monsterland*, a documentary play, which started as a qualitative research and report project, began to interview locals who faced violence and crime and narrate them with audiences. By the time I attended the play in 2016 the situation had worsened, and *Monsterland*'s concerned theater professor, Franklin, and his Latin/a students in the performance arts department of a large university system located in south Texas, decided to re-ignite *Monsterland*. "We were so upset that nobody knew or seemed to care, so we started to make signs just asking for help, and we sat by the Rio Grande River, talking, commiserating and dreaming up ideas" (Franklin, personal interview, 2017). I, too, was curious about why the violence and disappearances, coupled with border controls, that Franklin and his students were talking about, were not appearing in the media. In this way, the *Monsterland* actors perform a public media service because they report on issues in the borderlands which traditional news outlets cannot or will not report. That is one reason I began attending every *Monsterland* performance that I could in Texas and neighboring states for this three-year longitudinal study. In all of *Monsterland*'s performances that I witnessed, other audience members expressed the same shock and wonder that I did about a lack of information in the media about the borderlands.

Despite a vacuum of knowledge, prior to seeing *Monsterland*, many audience members named similar experiences within their own lives despite them being from

different nations, races, ages and cultures. These experiences of the participants, being actors and audience members of Monsterland, which were a part of the larger study, are narrated in terms of their parallels, or similarities. Overall, the initial findings showed that multiple ways of knowing, learning and imparting knowledge were part and parcel to the entire production of Monsterland.

One way to understand multiple ways of gaining knowledge and learning is through the eight forms of literacy described in Multiple Literacy Theory (MLT) (Masney & Cole, 2007). Namely, cultural, environmental, visual, numerical, digital, political, scientific, and emotional literacies are described in MLT, but none of these literacies are focused on the power of the media. Because Monsterland was formed out of the frustration that the borderlands were not in the media, and how it may influence awareness of the borderlands and reactions of audience members to Monsterland, I look especially to Critical Media Literacy (CML) (Masterman, 2001, Kellner & Share, 2005), which examines the motivation, action and outcomes of the media on its audiences and the greater societal impacts.

Like MLT, CML developed out of the ever-growing assertion from educators that literacy needs to be conceived of and encouraged to develop in non-traditional means such as; media, computer, social, cultural and political as a tool to counter stereotypes and biases about racial, gender, cultural differences. The main distinction from MLT's category of visual literacy in terms of the media, is that CML assumes that there are embedded messages, which stem from bias and power structures. The five core CML concepts: non-transparency, codes & conventions, audience decoding, content &



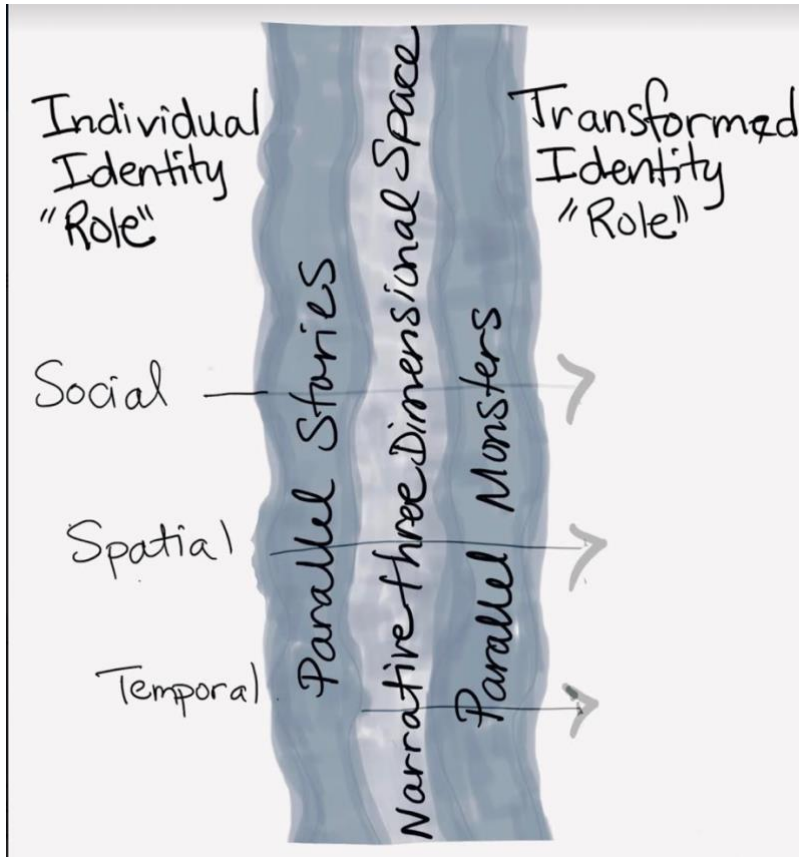
message and motivation, include embedded messages, which are used by the audience, to affirm, reject or inform their perceptions. Likewise, Giroux (1997) asserts that individual values and societal behaviors can be controlled by political powers and orientation. The CML category, “audience decoding,” aligns with the fact audiences are subject to “controls,” but differs slightly in that audience members are neither powerless nor omnipotent because they are simultaneously learning and interpreting what they are seeing. Thus, CML may be a good tool for educators and researcher alike because it includes the external and internal factors related to emotions and consciousness.

To demonstrate, in 2016, the fear of immigrants seems to have impacted presidential elections in favor of the Trump administration, according to a nationwide survey by Ipsos, a non-politically affiliated think tank. Specifically, Ipsos reported that in 2016, 29% of United States citizens believed that the country would be stronger if immigration stopped and voted for Trump because he said he would do so (Ipsos, 2017). While very informative, the Ipsos national surveys did not do an in-depth examination about the part the media played in the formation of those anti-immigrant sentiments. An application of CML may have uncovered where, why and by whom the embedded codes were in the media during the 2016 elections and assessed how audience took that information and responded based on their existent world views and experiences. Combined, the sentiments of Monsterland, coupled with the Ipsos survey results, and my own lack of knowledge about issues in the borderlands, indicated that there was much to be discovered and shared.

The overarching objective for this chapter is to disrupt the common perception that national borders and racial distinctions can determine how people may be able to empathize and form alliances with people from other backgrounds. In order to do so, I retell the stories that emerged as being the most important in terms of being educative to the participant and the objective of this paper, using one form of narrative inquiry method, parallel stories (Craig, 1999). To elaborate, parallel stories allow for first person shared experiences to be explored by the researcher, as well as the participants because through “telling and retelling” our entanglements became acute; “for it is here that temporal and social, cultural horizons are set and reset,” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). For instance, as both researcher and audience member, I saw Cabrena looked after the actors, set up the stage and managed the lights, so the actors could focus on performing lived experiences, many of which I came to learn, were Cabrena’s. Another way of understanding entanglement with Monsterland, through a process of exploring parallel stories and facing parallel monsters through the arts and the multiplicities of narrative space seems to have emerged (Figure 2.1).

Thus, the entanglements and lived experiences of participants in the study are analyzed with attention to the relevant intersections, as well as the obvious differences, such as time, space and the individual’s identity markers (i.e. race, gender, nationality). Specifically, three sets of parallel stories will be examined in the form of vignettes, the first of which is the parallel story about Cabrena and I that began in the Introductory Narrative. The second is with Connie, an international student and audience member, who shared parallels stories similar to that of some of the children’s, described in

Monsterland. The last parallel story involves Dr. Fuentes, a medical doctor in the borderlands, who altered her identity to an alias, Felina, that she used to report cases of violent crimes that came through the hospital at which she worked.



**Figure 2.1 From Parallel Stories to Parallel Monsters**

These issues of ancestry, border crossings and children that are explored in the aforementioned sets of parallel stories. Chicana writer, Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1942-2004), also considers a myriad of issues from the borderlands. Similar to Felina, the alter personality of Dr. Fuentes Anzaldúa, who, as a child, lived in the same city in which

*Monsterland* was conceived, also felt empowered by a theory of shape-shifting, Nepantla theory (2009). Tying the threads of exploring reactions to *Monsterland* vis-à-vis parallel stories, and Anzaldúa's Nepantla theory, is CML advocacy that cultural texts be accessed. Cultural texts to be used in order to a) universalize meanings within the discourse of critical theory, or b) to critique the illusions of civil society. Thus, Nepantla and borderland theories are texts, which, under the framework of CML, can be applied to the parallel stories in this paper, which are analyzed in terms of their similarities, many of which have been critical, oftentimes traumatic lived experiences.

Since *Monsterland* was the vehicle by which the parallel stories in this paper emerged, as well as being an educative experience for audience members, the benefits of documentary theater are considered and recommendations made. This research fills gaps about a) the benefits of documentary theater and implications for education, and, b) the benefits of engaging in parallel story-telling, and if one may be able reconfigure their identity or world views through the sharing of similar life experiences. In doing so, I hope that any emergent stories of disinheritance are given agency by looking to Nepantla, metaphors, ancestry and identity to "solve problems and create intercultural communities" (Keating, 2007). Lastly, this study responds the *Monsterland's* stance that borderland issues have not been in the media by looking to Critical Media Literacy for indications and reasons as to why that may be so.

## **2.3. Literature Review**

### **2.3.1. Geopolitical Backdrop**

The borderlands of Texas-Mexico between the Rio Grande and Nueces Rivers where this study is situated is not often represented in North American media. Sociopolitical narratives about nativism and nationalism as well as the lack of media coverage may negatively influence perceptions about people who have immigrated to North America, making matters worse (Ipsos, 2017). For instance, a 2017 national survey found that President Trump's successful election, was due, in part, to anti-immigrant views such as nationalism and nativism (Ipsos 2017). It was the detention of youth in ICE centers in 2017 that first introduced the foul conditions of the ICE centers to most of the general public, including educational organizations (AERA personal communication; UCEA personal; communication). The lack of information and inconsistent regulations in the region, unofficial power structures such as gangs and cartel have grown in the US-Mexico borderlands (Massey, 1997; 2016; Wiley, 2015). As a result of harmful narratives about immigrants, the lack of attention about the perils of life in the borderlands may continue, as criminal elements grow in numbers.

In addition, people wishing to cross the border are at risk of being used as drug traffickers and forced to commit other crimes by crime cartels (Massey, 1997; Dunn, 2009). Criminal organizations, who promise to smuggle people over the borders, have made circumstances more dangerous and escalated crimes. While border-crossing immigrant apprehension rates in the US have decreased from 1998-2013, the numbers of dead bodies have been increased and many mass graves have been found; yet most

bodies are never identified (Reineke, 2016). There is a lack of media coverage about these issues, and journalists are not granted permission by their news agencies to travel to the US-Texas borderlands, making it harder (Wiley et al., 2015). “I went online to do the research; I do that kind of research, and I was shocked. There was an ocean of violence that these children were swimming in,” explained Franklin, the professor in the Department of Performance Art at a university in a small town located in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas (personal communication, 2017), who formed *Monsterland*.

The introduction to *Monsterland* explains in vivid detail why the students and Franklin felt it was vital to provide first-hand reports of the issues they witnessed and heard of happening in the borderlands to a wider audience:

After we got home from performing in New Orleans, we heard the news, 72 migrant workers were murdered. Then after Chicago, 193 bodies were found in mass graves. And after New York, two online bloggers were kidnapped, tortured and killed, and their bodies displayed. After we performed at our university...49 mutilated bodies (*Monsterland*, 12:11-12:53).

The qualitative documentary play involves monologues selected from the actors’ interviews with people who live in the borderlands, but the actors also make their heartfelt own monologues in *Monsterland*, such as: “We go to a world where news and media do not send their reporters, a very real world although sometimes it seems more like a nightmare...where all non-essential travel to this place should be deferred according to the state department” (8:53-9:40, 2017). Another monologue from a former student turned teacher, who still acts in *Monsterland*, describes some of the denial and erasure of what can only be upsetting family circumstances:

Even colleges are not letting their students visit Mexico. I teach near the Mexico border and these are some of my students, and yes, the university system forbids us from going there which is very strange because we live there, our families, our parents, my uncle, my son live there...(Monsterland 8:53-9:40, 2017).

The lack of media coverage and awareness of the general public about students and family being kept apart and unable to cross the border, coupled with the increases of disappearances and crimes in the borderlands region, seem to support the CML assertion that political interests control the media (Kellner & Share, 2005). Yet, no analysis of the lack of media coverage versus the resultant feelings and response of audience members to the information they glean from performances of *Monsterland*, have been conducted to date.

### **2.3.2. Historical Context**

The Hidalgo agreement of 1848 granted Anglo-European settlers and delineated North America from Mesoamerica with borders. This delineated physical border began much earlier by changing education with legislation in 1823, when the Monroe Doctrine, laid out the blueprints and the systems to maintain the Anglo-American Empire (Passe & Wilcox, 2009). In fact, education was meant to create a monoculture, and change people who held onto heritage knowledge, “take the native out of them,” (Duran et al. 1998). One such concept stems from the Nagual who were shamans or shape-shifters in the Nahuatl language, an indigenous language of Mesoamerica. Yet, because they were feared and likely undermined by settlers, such indigenous knowledge has been colonized (Quijano, 2000). In 1894, the only known colonial era research report about the Nagual, James Brinton warned Anglo settlers of their powers:

The conclusion to which this study of Nagualism leads is...by necromantic powers and occult doctrines; but, more than all, by one intense emotion—hatred of the whites—and by one unalterable purpose—that of their destruction, and with them the annihilation of the government and religion which they had introduced (Brinton, 1894, p. 69).

The Nagual spoke the Nahuatl language, and the word ‘nepantla,’ means “place in the middle” (Mora, 2008, p.5). This nepantla space is creative, similar to the narrative three-dimensional space because it is fertile with never before examined stories which defy the easier to define ways of being that exist within borders.

### **2.3.3. Borderland Thinking**

Over a century after the settlers wrote about their concerns about the Nagual, the people living in the Texas-Mexico borderlands, where Chicana feminist, Gloria E Anzaldúa was from, are having a hard time navigating the hybrid waters. “The struggle is inner, and the psyches resemble the border towns and is played out in the outer terrains,” Anzaldúa explains (1987, p. 109). When living between two nations, ambiguity over laws, languages, behaviors and cultures become a permanent space.

Just as the Nagual were said to have resisted colonialism, Anzaldúa resisted monoculture. She integrated borderland thinking, and conceived of shape-shifting people, la nepantlera. Described as “gatekeepers,” and “artists,” nepantlera are products of in-betweenness (2016):

The mestiza’s multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness. In a constant state of mental nepantilism, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways, la mestiza is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another...the mestiza faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a dark-skinned mother listen to (p.100)?



Ironically, Keating (2006) explains that la nepantlera exist precisely because of a lack of normative explanation, and categorization:

This refusal is not easy; nepantlera must be willing to open themselves to personal risks and potential woundings which include, but are not limited to, self-division, isolation, misunderstanding, rejection, and accusations of disloyalty. Yet the risk-taking has its own rewards, for nepantlera use their movements among divergent worlds to develop innovative, potentially transformative perspectives (p. 6).

In these ways, according to Anzaldúa, Nepantla; a shape-shifting, non-conforming, yet empowering existence can develop, when one shifts from the hegemonically engineered structures of binary thinking, into an aesthetic in betweenness in thinking. To explain, Anzaldúa (2002) identified the nepantlera as being metaphysically different people:

Though tempted to hide behind racial lines and simplistic walls of identity...la nepantlera know their work lies in positioning themselves, exposed and raw, in the crack between these worlds, and in revealing the current categories as unworkable (as cited in Keating, 2016, p. 35).

To Anzaldúa (2007), consciousness can transform between borders because out of the rubble of demolished traditions, people and land, another life can emerge through a new consciousness. In fact, in Anzaldúa's writing, nepantlera are often referred to as borderland artists, transgender and/or queer people (1987; 2009; GEA Archives UT Bensen), who shape-shift. In many ways, by merging notions of Nagual indigenous knowledge, with modern-day fragmented borderland identities, Anzaldúa was affirming the personhood of those, who do belong to a single nation, race, culture or other categories.

#### 2.3.4. Critical Pedagogy

Monsterland is composed of Latino/a artists from the borderlands, who began the play because they wanted to “do something” about the perils of living in the borderlands because media was not doing reporting enough about it. In addition to a lack of media literacy, this may be because Latino/a are represented by certain stereotypes in Western media (Yosso, 2002). Even more problematic is that prejudices are enforced by the school system because they perpetuate the stereotypes and false ideas to learners, adds Yosso (2002). Unfortunately, Valenzuela (2019) explains that educators are the product of a Western-centric educational system that tend to repeat colonial indoctrination of curriculum and pedagogy, which evident in the long-standing resistance towards K-12 + ethnic studies in the borderlands (Cabrera, Ayala, Valenzuela). However, in Monsterland, the actors are first researchers who conduct qualitative research in their community, who script and perform the research, thereby serving as educators who take audience members through borderland lived experiences. The actors resisted their university’s ban on the use of Latin performance art, as well as the Spanish language and actors with a Spanish accent, in the creation of Monsterland.

A similar resistance to social and educational equality for the mixed-race peoples of Brazil resulted in a critical pedagogy by educational philosopher Paolo Freire (1984). An overarching problem in education is what Freire describes as a “banking” model of education, where the learner is not recognized for their personhood and lived experiences. Schooling wrongly assumes that every learner’s mind is an identical space

for knowledge to be inserted, as if it were a piggy bank. Thus, creative, nuanced pedagogies that look to the arts, media, and narratives are usually omitted.

### **2.3.5. Critical Media Literacy**

Art is a creative vehicle that allows one to resonate, relate, engage, or even reject experiences. In media, even though an audience or viewer may appear to be inactive, they are engaging their own memories, experiences, and social construction via a meta-cognitive merging with embedded messages in the media (Kellner & Share, 2005). These resonances have applicability in a variety of literal and inferred ways that can impact perception of space and time in which they may have been originally experienced. Thus, Critical Media Literacy theory developed out of the ever-growing assertion from educators that literacy needs to be conceived of and encouraged to develop in non-traditional means such as media, computer, social, cultural and political as a tool to counter stereotypes and biases about racial, gender, and cultural differences. Specifically, CML addresses different ways of learning about media codes, conventions and motivations through core concepts, non-transparency, codes and conventions, audience decoding, content message and motivation.

In these ways, an aesthetic experience of visual or performance art can be simultaneously transcendental and relevant. To elaborate, Eisner (1995) explains that art is a creative vehicle that culminates the process of learning. Ethnographic documentary theater in particular, which embodies and narrates the lived experiences of multicultural and multilingual people, can be a powerful tool in education and research (Saldaña,

2005). The emotional, social and lived experiences can create connections for the learner or audience to the knowledge being relayed, and or the actor relaying this information.

#### **2.4. Method: Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry calls for techniques of broadening and burrowing, (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which in this paper has been done so far by examining the larger narratives in society, such as border controls and travel bans; and burrowing was started in the Introductory Narrative by mentioning the parallel stories that connected Cabrena and I. To elaborate burrowing into the relevant stories of the participants, stories can take different narrative forms such as stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Clandinin & Huber, 2006), which I will explore next by investigating three cases of parallel stories and locating the benefits of any identified sharing lived experiences between the participants (Table 2.1). In narrative inquiry, “stories to live by” describe meaningful, self-defining stories which are re-storied and relived by the individual (Clandinin & Huber, 2006). Lived experiences can become guiding life stories to live by for those individuals. Similarly, documentary plays are based on lived experiences or their own qualitative research, in, narrative inquiry, a participants’ life stories are lived, then they are re-told via investigation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). In these ways, the ability to merge individuals’ life stories with their context, culture, and ethnicity, alongside the lived experiences that inform documentary theater, displays the congruency of narrative inquiry and documentary theater.

This study seeks to understand how people understand themselves and are shaped by their own life stories in relationship to that of other people, places, and circumstances

in their environment. Since narrative inquiry is the “experiential study of experience” (Xu & Connelly, 2010), and “narrative inquiry integrates time with culture to make meaning of an experience,” (Adama et al. 2016), I am able to weave various documentary sources as I consider the holistic complexities of the inquiry. Such sources were selected for the parallel story narrated about Dr. Fuentes, also known as Felina, which were obtained from social media accounts on the internet from Twitter and Facebook who followed Felina (Appendix 1&2).<sup>1</sup> All of the participants’ names have been changed in this study except for my own as author of this paper.

In one of the parallel stories, I burrow into the scripted and internet-derived cultural artifacts about Felina, which was one woman’s alias, used to disseminate information about lost loved ones people may have been looking for. This situation is evidenced narrative inquiry in action, which is it is “fundamentally concerned with human activity and how humans make meaning as individuals and in community with one another,” (Craig, 2003, p.7). Felina decided to warn and inform online audiences about the individuals and incidents that she was privy to as a medical doctor, Dr. Fuentes, in her real life.

#### **2.4.1 Participants and Sources**

As a documentary play, *Monsterland* educates audiences and explores some complex sociocultural issues in the borderlands, which actors perform in front of live audiences, followed with an audience Question & Answer session. Therefore, this study,

---

<sup>1</sup> Graphic material including violent images are in Appendix 2, and viewing it is optional.

I include several different sources for the research data including, script, video, participant interviews, audience Q & A sessions, which can be considered participant focus groups, as well as my researcher field notes. At the time of this study, the actors were all present or former students in the Department of Performance Arts at a university in the Rio Grande Valley a few miles away from the Texas-Mexico borderlands. Franklin, their professor, who explained that not all but many of the Latina/o students in his theater classes wanted to be involved with *Monsterland*, also participated in the study. Furthermore, audience members, who participated in the Q & A aspects of the *Monsterland* performances, were of varying backgrounds, races, genders and age groups, included as sources in this study. In addition, Connie, as well as myself as a researcher turned participant, were audience members.

## **2.5. Parallel Stories**

Using vignettes from the play, I use a form of narrative inquiry methodology, parallel stories (Craig, 1999), to narrate three different sets of parallel stories, or lived experiences described by audience members, community members, as well as some of the actors and staff in *Monsterland*. First, I narrate the parallel stories of Connie, an audience member, and international student from China, with stories and themes from *Monsterland*. Next, I describe Felina, a brave community advocate and medical doctor, who shape-shifted to another personality online. In order to anonymously report the cases of brutality caused by criminal elements in the borderlands, Felina transformed her tense experiences helping victims of crimes, at the hospital where she worked, to help others by raising awareness. Lastly, I complete the introductory narrative and describe

why interviewing Cabrena, the stage manager of *Monsterland*, helped me develop courage to explore my own grief, and develop my own ideas about the healing benefits of performance arts, and documentary theater.

#### **2.4.2 Connie and *Monsterland***

Connie approached me after one performance of *Monsterland* because she wanted to be interviewed. She looked startled. She dived in by telling me about her experiences with children as a teacher in China:

I was thinking about my children back home all the time when I was watching the show. I felt kind of the same like I want to help all of them, I want to adopt all of them, but I can't. And they are always more, more children that need help. Some are adopted right after they are born, for example if they have Down's Syndrome or some other disease, some parents will just abandon them. Others are either their parents died or sent to jail, so they were sent to an orphanage. Here they are abandoned by the government, they are like orphans. If I lived in that area, I would try my best to move away. But not everyone can do that, it is their home, they were born there, their whole family is there.

I asked Connie if she had ever heard about the violence and the problems in the borderlands. "No, not a bit. That was the first time I had heard about this thing," she replied. Connie cited the media, much like the audience dialogues theme. "The reporters don't want to go there. And maybe people from other countries think this is not my business. Maybe Mexican government is controlling it." She needed an explanation, so I explained that the actors also struggle with it. For example, Vanessa, an actress in *Monsterland* said, "I have been in other plays, but once the lights go off and I am alone, I know who I am at the end of the day, but this...these are not characters, these are people and they are still living there, and I can't just forget that.

I added that learners have a historic memory of being able to cross the border to go to school or visit relatives, and that not being able to go back and forth now due to national restrictions, is challenging. I asked Connie what she thought of Emilio's disappearance.

Even I walk late, around the campus at night, because I felt like it was a safe place, but after I watched the show, it made me realize that there are people who are hurting each other for no reason. The saddest part of that story for me, is when his friend was taken away by those criminals, and the others are just reaching out to their own friends for help. Not the police. Not the government. It changes the whole thing. People who are supposed to be there to help you are on the other side.

I wondered if Connie had ever heard of such violence before; "There are criminals like this in China and it could happen in China, but if one thing happened like this as in a person was killed it would be big news. If someone was killed for no reason, but here there is no mention that a lot of people were kidnapped and murdered, tortured." As I witnessed her shock, similar, but perhaps more emotional to that of most American audience members, I asked about her thoughts on the lack of media coverage.

After the play I began to think, it's the drug dealers and they have some relationship with the government. That's why they're doing it. But I don't understand why they (criminals) are after children on the street or getting someone else to do their work. It would make more sense if they want laborers as in to get a man to work for them and make drugs, but to get him (a college student), torture him, kill him, it doesn't make sense.

I circled back to the beginning of our conversation and asked about the orphans in China. Connie interrupted me with her excitement over this connection. As a teacher, you should also "just give care," explained Connie. "It's a very sad thing. I feel like I want to do something. I would love to wrap up those children and take them away," she replied.



I was thinking about my children back home all the time when I was watching the show. I felt kind of the same like I want to help all of them, I wanted to adopt all of them, but I can't. And they are always more and more kids.

Sometimes people were silent, while others had a lot to say, as some audience members would leave immediately after a performance. In the case of Connie, she appeared backstage after the Monsterland performed at her university, which was in another town in Texas, to meet the actors and I. "It seems like there should be more control over the lawlessness on the streets and less control over the legalities of crossing the border, especially for students" expressed Connie. I was fascinated as to how and why Connie, an international student, noticed the odd juxtaposition of borders versus lawlessness, while others did not seem to notice this. Connie responded:

Probably because of so much experience with working with children and coming from a peaceful environment of being blessed with a good life since I was born. It just reminds me of the people I have been working with. I know some of my classmates were also there and they just left right after the show. Others may think 'it's none of my business it's far away from me. I am safe here.'

Connie was lively, curious and engaged enough to extend this conversation with me about North America. Yet, when I asked if she would ever live here, she said she has no such plans, or a desire, to immigrate to the US. I wondered if people in China perceive cultural diversity in the same ways as in the US, to which she replied:

It becomes a very sensitive topic when it comes to race. There are words you cannot use and things like that. I don't know about the last generation or my grandparents' generation, they might have different ideas. But the way we were taught in (China) school and our parents raised us is that being a minority ethnicity is pretty cool. If you are from a minority, it's special and different.

Perhaps, for people who come from regimes where they do not practice freedom of speech and peoples' voices are suppressed by authorities, such as China, the internet is more than an entertainment or research tool.

### **2.4.3 Dr. Fuentes and Felina**

The Internet can be a platform to fight back and protest under some semblance of safety and anonymity, which was the case for Dr. María del Rosario Fuentes-Rubio, a medical doctor by trade, and a borderlands-based internet-vigilante, by night. Felina, a character who appears in Batman and other Marvel comics, who defended people from the perils of life in Gotham City, was her selected online persona and alias. In the Marvel comics, Felina does not take sides based on right-doings or wrong-doings, rather Felina's internal sense of ethics is what motivates and guides her vigilantism. Similarly, Dr. Fuentes, who was working in the hospital Emergency Room near the Texas-Mexico border, became so outraged by the senseless violence she saw inflicted on victims who came through the ER, and lack of media about it, that she decided she provide the service herself.

That is when Dr. Fuentes began using the alias Felina on social media pages, especially on the one known as Valor de Tamaulipas, to report incidents (McGahan, 2019). Dr. Maria Fuentes, operated several other sites such as Twitter and Facebook, alerting people to gunshots and violence in the borderlands, under her alias persona, Felina. At other times, she would post images and kind words on social media accounts to simply memorialize the victims. Valor de Tamaulipas, and other sites she operated, were considered to be safe spaces where people could post pictures of missing loved

ones to ask if anyone had any information as to their disappearance. Felina was also the only one who shared the identities of the victims who had died in the hospital she worked at, so their family members may find some solace in knowing.

However, that all changed in early October 2014, when the beloved Felina, the 36-year-old general practitioner began getting intimidating messages from other users; “Felinaaaaaa, haven't heard from you, where are you?” tweeted a user mockingly on her Twitter account on October 7<sup>th</sup>. “Now you all have your tails between your legs, because we are locating those who upload photos here,” the tweet read (La Silla Rota, 2014). This threatening tweet was not the only one – it was followed by more warnings (Appendix 1). On October 16, 2014, Felina’s followers saw a post on her page at 5:04 am: “Friends and family, my real name is Maria Del Rosario Fuentes Rubio, I’m a doctor and today, my life has come to an end, @Miut3.” The grim post was obviously written by somebody using Felina’s social media account. The tweeter continued by warning three other users; “I found death and got nothing out of it. @Bandolera7, @civilarmado\_mx and @ValorTamaulipas, death is closer than you think,” (Alexander, 2014). Evidently, Felina’s real identity, Dr. Fuentes, and her whereabouts had been found out by enemies.

This fact was evidenced at 5:11 am in October 16<sup>th</sup>, when Felina’s Twitter page read: “Close your accounts, do not risk your families the way I did. I ask you all for forgiveness.” This final post was followed by two photos of Felina, but this time, it was evident she was Dr. Fuentes, and not a superhero, because she wore bloodstained medical scrubs. In the first photo, she was in a chair, her huge eyes looking somberly at

the camera. It seemed like Dr. Fuentes opted to look past the criminal holding her phone, so she could impart her goodbyes to her followers, friends and family. The second photo showed a much more gruesome story. Her hair and arms were obviously ravaged by a struggle that was not caught on camera. Her life story ended with her body lying in a pool of her own blood (Appendix 2). This was the way that Dr. Fuentes' loved ones found, and Felina's followers found out about the death of their heroin, mother and friend. After hours of reading all the tweets I could find, I believe that Felina reported incidents to another target audience of other vigilantes, who were also working against the criminal organizations. "I can only tell you to not make the same mistake I did, it does not benefit you, quite the opposite, as I realized today" (Alexander, 2014). The grim photos and tweets of Felina were intended to serve as a message to others who may have been considering vigilantism, according to Felina's last tweets.

Despite these findings, it is of little comfort to know Dr. Fuentes was the real hero. Yet, it is a reminder that it is very easy to dismiss who online aliases may really be, and what they may be trying to hide. In the case of Felina, as well Anzaldúa, their alias identities seem to have been informed by myths, animals, as well as own their desires to empower themselves enough, so that they could respond to their life challenges. To elaborate, as Gloria E. Anzaldúa gathered pictures and artwork of human-animal hybrids, such as a jaguar, and otter, alligator, owls and more, which are at the Alteras Collection at University of California Santa Cruz (2018). Similarly, Felina was a physical manifestation of a shape-shifter, what Anzaldúa would consider *la nepantlera* because Dr. Fuentes reinvented herself as a vigilante figure to embark on a mission for

the greater good. Just like Nepantla is a space between borders, or right and wrong, and left or right, Felina was a gatekeeper and protector of the people in the borderlands.

#### **2.4.4 Cabrena and Lobat**

As a researcher, all of the interviews I conducted with actors and audience members of *Monsterland* were meaningful. However, on one occasion, after a performance of *Monsterland*, I was in the midst of interviewing several of the actors in the play, when Cabrena came into the interview room. “I wasn’t going to talk about it, but they said I should. They said its important. It has been about two years now, so, I guess I talk about it.” Cabrena sat down and said she wanted to be interviewed because her father had disappeared somewhere near their hometown in the Texas-Mexico borderlands. Despite any familiarity with the topic I may have had by now, when Cabrena became grey-faced and emotionless, as she delved into the story of her missing father, I grew overwhelmed as I realized that some of the stories in *Monsterland*, were Cabrena’s. “He disappeared when he was driving to Mexico to visit his family, we think. By now, we just know he is gone,” she said, shrugging.

Cabrena said she and her mother eventually came to accept the death of her father, as well as the fact that they may never know any of the details. “My parents were already divorced, so I had already been living with my mom a long time. He was not around much. We weren’t that close anymore,” she explained with a wave of the hand, and a shake of the head:

I heard about it a few days later, nobody even told us, maybe nobody knew. We didn’t live together because my parents are divorced. I guess we weren’t that close or in touch. But, when we found out, we asked all our relatives in Mexico if

he ever made it there. They said he never did. Then they said we could not keep asking.

After Cabrena shared the circumstances surrounding the loss of her father, I felt a connection with her pain.

Wow. Can I tell you something? (Cabrena nodded), I lost my dad in a car accident, too. It was in Iran, and like people in the borderlands, I cannot go to back to Iran, to see my family because of politics and travel restrictions. I just have to accept that I will never learn more about it.

As I shared this with her, Cabrena's face was still stoic and emotionless. However, her fingers were fighting with her curly hair as she said:

Right. I can't even go there to visit my family and find out anything myself. I used to go more as a kid, but I guess it's not safe anymore. They don't really understand me anyway, my Spanish is not that great. But I remember my grandmother and her house. It used to be a safe place, but not anymore, they say (Cabrena, personal interview, 2017).

By this point, I realized that I had so many emotional entanglements with the stories and issues raised in *Monsterland*, such as travel restrictions, but what I did not realize is that the violence of losing a parent in a mysterious way, was still haunting me, over 10 years later. After this interview, I saw that the benefits of being involved in *Monsterland*, were impacting many more people than I had previously thought. It was not only helping the actors and educating audiences, *Monsterland* was helped people in its periphery, such as Cabrena, Connie and even myself as the audience member turned researcher (Table 2.1).

## **2.5 Parallel Monsters**

All of the participants, who are women from three different marginalized ethnic groups, namely, Mexican-American, Iranian-American, and Chinese, had to shift their

perspectives. Being that this study is situated in the borderlands, understanding theories, people and intersections of experiences or “bordering experiences” (Clandinin & Rosiak, 2016) are considered for their benefits and outcomes.

**Table 2.1 Parallel Monsters and Shape-Shifting Outcomes**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Parallel Monsters: Similar lived Experience(s)</b>	<b>Benefits: Stories to Live by</b>	<b>Outcomes: Nepantla shape-shifting</b>
<b><i>Cabrena</i></b> Mexican-American female, performance art college student 17 years old at time of study.	Father disappeared, when driving a car towards Mexico.  Cannot go to Mexico due to travel restrictions on US citizens.	“Sharing something so personal with other people has been very therapeutic. I was never open with my story until I became a part of the show.”	“There are so many emotions going through your head when experiencing this kind of heartbreak, and having somebody else sharing a similar story was almost comforting.”
<b><i>Lobat</i></b> Iranian-American female, curriculum & Instruction graduate student, 45 years old at time of study.	Father passed away in a car accident in Iran.  Cannot go to Iran due to travel restrictions on US citizens.	“I was inspired by the bravery of Cabrena & Monsterland to share their stories. I began writing about losing my father and have healed grief I did not realize I still had.”	“After years of research and consideration of Monsterland, I feel like I have healed a lot of fears and emotions related to immigration, and being isolated from family in Iran. The similarities are striking, but I am now able to claim my own story, and share it from a less emotional space, now.”
<b><i>Connie</i></b> Chinese female international student of ESL Methods ,23 years old at the time of this study.	“The children suffering in borderlands and orphanages in China, full of kids because of the one-child policy. Both are innocent. It is their government that is causing the problems.”	“Things are not that different here with the way the government treats children in the borderlands, to the orphanages in China. But the crimes, that really shocks me. I never knew this was happening, and that would never be ignored in China.”	“Somehow I feel better that I know these things are happening in the borderlands, but I like I have to do something. When I finish my MA, I will definitely go back to China and help the orphanages one day.”
<b><i>Felina – Dr. Fuentes</i></b> Mexican-American medical doctor, a female 36 year old at the time of her death in 2014.	Both Felina and Dr. Fuentes wanted to help people, be they victims of physical injuries or the victims of lost relatives and a lack of media information.	“Do not make the mistakes I made...do not risk your life and families like I did.”	“Friends and family, my real name is Maria Del Rosario Fuentes Rubio.”

It is evident by the participants’ quotes in Table 2.1, that they had to expand their concepts of empowerment in order to understand, cope, heal and reinvent their lived experiences to become, their stories to live by. These shared lived experiences, benefits

and outcomes of parallel story-telling described by the participants, identify there is a link between residents of the borderlands and people who come from similarly restrictive governments with tight, controlling borders on their lives, as Connie described: “Both are innocent. It is their government that is causing the problems.” when she said the one-child-policy in China was what caused orphanages to overflow with kids. As result of the push-and-pull of both sides of any given border, the participants’ ways of knowing and resultant interpretations of Monsterland, may have stemmed from political controls, both inside the US and out, that they have had to endure.

## **2.6. Discussion**

The outcomes of Table 2.1 draw from the imaginary, myth, emotions and personal histories that inspired the participants, after engaging in the study. These outcomes are similar to Anzaldúa’s *Nepantla* theory, which emerged from the rubble and ambiguity she felt in the borderlands and re-envisioned as space of refuge instead. However, in the case of Felina, the outcomes are quotes that were derived from articles and social media, since unfortunately she was murdered before the time of this study. Thus, it is hard to account for any benefits of parallel story-telling that Felina, being Dr. Fuentes, may have experienced. Yet, by highlighting Felina’s vigilantism, the risks some people are willing to take in order to report the crimes she learned of, may reignite and improve media coverage and news reporting to resume in the borderlands. Ironically, boundaries are generally considered as divisive factors, but in the benefits and outcomes of Table 2.1, we can see that exploring border thinking and parallel stories seems to have



increased a sense of interethnic alliances and empathy amongst people from vastly different cultures, ages and backgrounds.

## 2.7. Critical Media Literacy

*Monsterland* offers a thorough look at painful individual lived experiences because it presents cases related to national border and immigration policies as well as the criminal challenges in the borderlands. Fortunately, unlike generalizable systemic research, narrative inquiry is also highly contextual and deliberately specific to the person(s) context (Craig, 2003; Craig Oh & You, 2017). Thus, in this next section, I access all of the qualitative research material in this narrative inquiry, using the core concepts in CML, non-transparency, codes & conventions, audience decoding, content & message and motivation, to interpret the script, interviews, and other material at hand.

In Critical Media Literacy, there are *codes and conventions* which illustrate how signs and symbols function in media. Meaning there are signals such as violent images or pictures of poverty which can indicate bias or create negative or positive feelings when things are not explicitly stated. This can be true in any kind of media, including self-representation. For instance, Felina presented herself as a comic book icon. She used images related to Capitan Felina and Cat woman from the Batman comic series to hide her identity, which simultaneously created an air of female empowerment, superhuman powers, as well as childish wonder about the harsh circumstances she was sharing with the online world.

*Motivation* is the core concept that encourages consideration of why the message was sent and who it was sent by. Therefore, all of the stakeholders should be considered

such as advertisers, governments and other organizations that yield power over the media. The *media content and message* concept questions ideology, bias and implicit and explicit connotations, indicating that education should teach one to distinguish between literal reference and subjective meanings based on ideological and cultural codes. *Monsterland* does this by presenting incidents reported by teachers, students and parents. For example, Rosa, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student, recounts an incident in her classroom:

Well I was in my classroom, we were working on an exercise that the teacher assigned to us, and then a teacher ran in screaming *to get on the floor, to hide under the desks*. We started to cry, “what happened?” Then we all got silent and heard the bullets, and everybody screaming and crying. They started telling me to calm down, that nothing was going to happen. I did calm down; I did, but not completely. Then a classmate started playing with me, and then, I wasn’t that frightened anymore. Then we were looking at our classmates crying and screaming. Later, a soldier walked in, with a weapon about his same height, because the gun was very big. I got very scared, but since he didn’t do anything to us, I assumed he was one of the good ones, and I was less scared.

Connie, demonstrated how she was interpreting the play when she likened children being abducted, or traumatized in other ways due to violence in the borderlands, or the sound of gunshots, to the orphanages in China. “The kids in the borderlands who are scared, it’s just like the kids in the orphanages I would visit in China. They are all suffering because of conflicts and policies that they have no control over,” (Connie, personal interview, 2018).

What appears in the media about the borderlands may need to be understood by witnessing it first-hand or in a documentary form. Especially to those who are not privy to it due to cultural divides, such as Connie and the many audiences members, which may be intensified if those people also assume that media is the only source of truthful information. For example, when Eduardo, a student at a university in the Rio Grande

Valley, reveals that his friend was kidnapped, the audience was generally moved to tears:

I'm going to tell you about what happened, so me and classmates, Mario and Emilio. We were getting out of our last class and we all said we were going home, so we each went to their car. Emilio went to his truck and Mario saw some people were getting close to his truck. Mario just stayed there observing these people were talking to Emilio and saw them get into his car. I mean the people got in his car, and left in the truck with him inside! That's when my friend called Emilio to ask "Who are those people? Where are you going?" and he said; "Oh, I am just going cruising." But Emilio had just told us he was going home. "I am just going cruising. We'll talk later" and hung up. So, we all left the parking lot. Mario called me about 15 or 20 minutes later. I didn't answer immediately because I had fallen asleep. They called me to tell me that some guy took Emilio and they didn't know where he was. When I saw all these messages on WhatsApp, I sent Emilio a message and I told him "What's up?" and I received reply that just said, "What's up?" I thought it was a strange, but when I saw the message, I assumed that he was safe, so I went back to sleep. When I woke up the next day, my friends said that they hadn't found Emilio yet. That's when we decided to go to the university for help. They said they tried to do all they could to find him, but it was not even on the news. That day, at about 8pm, Mario called me to tell me that they had found Emilio's body. They couldn't even hide the marks on his neck at the funeral (Monsterland script).

While all categories of CML are important and used as interpretive tools throughout this paper, "audience reactions" to Monsterland emerge as most vital to this study. At every audience dialogue, the shock and aggravation over the fact that the media had not reported the cases of missing people, numbers of mass graves or mass shootings.

Another audience member in Texas, Roxanne, (2016) expressed outraged, "I am very angry that I have not been told about this before. I consider myself an educated person. I watch the news. Not a word has been said to me about all of this violence – and in my own state!" Fortunately, Critical Media Literacy allowed for these social and historical

realities of the borderlands to be acknowledge, which seems to have helped audiences gain a better understanding of the causes of oppression and inequality.

## **2.8. Implications**

### **2.8.1. Critical Media Literacy in Education**

The emergent themes examined in this paper through the individual core concepts of CML beginning with *non-transparency* as the strongest indicator that CML would benefit education focused on culture. To elaborate, CML states that media represent those more favorably who are in line with their own corporate interests and advertisers, which was demonstrated in this paper. In fact, the core concept of *non-transparency* aligns well with the multicultural education tenet of “the use of teaching approaches and materials that are sensitive and relevant to the students’ sociocultural backgrounds and experiences,” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1986). It is hoped that educators can observe these parallel stories, and find ways to recognize and access the sociocultural matters related to their students, as emancipatory knowledge. Critical pedagogies and help construct knowledge of “contradictory elements and tensions linked to the negation of oppositionalities” (Dardar, 2019 p.67). In other words, the task of education should extend beyond the more overt spheres of learning and social justice equity.

### **2.8.2. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Documentaries such as *Monsterland*, may be particularly important in multicultural education as it imparts the nuanced experienced that marginalized people in the United States have faced such as equity in education, land and property rights (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Furthermore, ethnic studies scholars of the Southwest state that

a new ontological lens derived from the geopolitical and sociocultural context of the postcolonial aftermath of the borderlands is needed (Ayala 2019, Valenzuela 2019). Likewise, the cultural deficits created and perpetuated by the marriage of education and media, need to be expanded towards an understanding of racial representation in the media about racialized people. Given that racism is defined as “a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-American, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms and color” (Marable, as cited in Yosso, 2002, p 53), educators are being called to dismantle any educational systems.

### **2.8.3. Teacher Education**

It is important that educators acknowledge and create tools that allow for learners to discern between real and inferred messages in the media. This stretch, or put into different words, to ‘meet people where they are’ at a tenet of multicultural education (Ghollnick & Chin, 1986). Unfortunately, in most teacher education courses, only one multicultural class is required, and others are optional (Sleeter 2001; Neito 2015). In contrast to one class, there are multiple aspects to culture in North America for teachers to grapple with, for instance, how colonization may have impacted indigenous knowledge is omitted from the commonly taught curricula (Valenzuela 2019; Ayala 2019). Furthermore, according to recent statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, 86% of all elementary and secondary teachers are European Americans, which evidences the need for more cultural and critical studies in teacher education.

#### 2.8.4. Performance Arts Pedagogy

Monsterland started as a way to share newsworthy events and have them be represented, similar to the roots of theater in ancient Greece. In fact, documentary theater may be vital to the social and emotional development of audiences who are not informed about issues in the borderlands, as well as that of the actors, who are also from the conflict-ridden areas where common reporting measures are restricted. For example, the case of Fernando, a 17-year-old boy interviewed by actors of Monsterland:

I was walking home from work, and a car drove by next to me. Two guys came out and pushed me into the car. They gave me a bag and drove me somewhere, I don't know where, but it was not far from me. They told me to go inside and give it to a man inside a tailor shop. I did that, but came running in and they killed him anyway. I don't know why. Then one of the guys looked a time and stared at my Saint Jude.

The aesthetic experience of learning about such sociocultural issues via documentary theater potentiates the benefits for students, researchers and audiences alike. Connie said she will take the stories of Fernando and Felina back to China, potentiating the efficacy of play-building pedagogy for interethnic alliances.

#### 2.8.5. Further Research

Emancipating the voices of marginalized people in the borderlands and allowing for their cultural context and life stories to emerge seems to have supported perspective-shifting and developed empathy in this study. Future studies could be related to social capital theories and postcolonial issues in education, which as Yosso explains, influence how cultures are represented and ascribed social capital (Bourdieu, 1985) in the North American media (2002). Yet, given that race is not an explicit factor in social capital theories, critical media literacy, as well as ethnographic documentary theater, may be

used as pedagogic tools with which to observe and deconstruct racism “disguised as entertainment media” (p. 52). For example, people with Western social capital may have had different responses than that of Connie’s as a Chinese international student or myself as an Iranian immigrant. Potentiating that the amount of Western social capital audience members may have could impact their responses to the issues presented in *Monsterland*.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

The waves of immigration since the 1900s from Asia, the Middle East and Southeast Asia to North America indicate interethnic alliances and multiple forms of literacy and learning are needed more than ever. Furthermore, often times, underrepresented minorities are depicted using stereotypical standards of their culture and people(s) (Yosso, 2005; Halliday, 2007). Divergent pedagogies and parallel storytelling were very beneficial for building interethnic alliances, re-envisioning and shape-shifting one’s identity to be more empowering, and for the overall sociocultural awareness and cultural education of the participants in this study.

However, unfortunately, the field of Communications and Education have not managed to successfully merge these three strands into pedagogy, and neither is CML used as a theoretical and pedagogic tool for Multicultural Education, despite its roots in critical theories (Harshman, 2017). Audiences also learned and benefitted in ways they would not have imagined after watching *Monsterland*. The pedagogic freedom in documentary performance arts and theater, such as *Monsterland* and *Theater of the Oppressed*, may allow marginalized learners to address social injustices and heal trauma as well as inform. It is hoped that more artistic and diverse methods of addressing

sociocultural issues in North America may bring the much-needed advocacy and learning mechanisms for marginalized people such as the youth in the borderlands.



### 3 ACT TWO: POETRY IS NOT A LUXURY

*"Poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge" Aimé Césaire*

#### **3.1 Introductory Narrative**

I interviewed Oasis. Oasis believes poetry has saved her life; "This poem only lived on stage for one night, but it saved me," she said when I interviewed her as a participant in a research study about creative writing and poetry slams, operated by Classroom Collaborative for Professional Development (CCPD) & Innovation. Oasis continued, "There were things that I could not say, and express to people close to me. Like things that have happened to me, but it just comes out in a poem when I sit down to write" (personal interview, 2018). I was reminded of a line from Oasis's poem, which she performed when I was an audience member at a poetry slam she competed in; "His arms were around me in an uncomfortable hold..." I began putting the pieces together – she had just said to me in our interview; "this poem only lived for one night on stage, but it saved me." It became evident that in this instance, poetry served as a remedy and protective element for Oasis, a self-identified Black woman.

Thus, I proceeded gingerly when I asked Oasis, who was a 17-year-old high school student at the time, how it felt to share such personal experiences on stage during poetry 'slams,' which are performance-arts competitions where poets present their usually autobiographical poetry in front of an audience. Oasis became wide-eyed and boasted, "I like to perform." She added that it was because of CCPD, a non-profit run by

teachers and writers in their spare time, that she found herself reading and writing more than any other ever before. “Now I want to go to college, I never wanted to do that before!” She said she had shocked everyone, including herself, when she became interested in a degree in English explaining that other woman of color, who wrote about challenging life circumstances inspired her. “It was after reading Tony Morrison, that I realized I could write about anything.” In fact, Toni Morrison is considered a self-defining, coming of age autobiographical writing, *bildungsroman*. Likewise, Oasis was delving was writing poetry that re-storied her life experiences, which motivated and empowered her.

Over a two-year period of time, I watched Oasis, Edward, Emily, Michelle, Celine and other young middle and high school-aged poets articulate and interpret their lived experiences with impressive emotional, cultural, social and political forms of knowledge – multiple literacies. Later, the aforementioned poets agreed to be a part of this narrative inquiry, which is a research method that uses broadening, burrowing, storying and re-storying as its tools (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In the initial broadening process of this narrative inquiry, writing and performing poetry increased the poets’ interests in reading and writing as it amplified other types of literacies. The knowledge the poets gained surpassed that of the traditional schooling they had encountered. What I have shared thus far about the literacy benefits of being in CCPD is part of the broadening process of narrative inquiry. Furthermore, burrowing was demonstrated when I learned about Oasis’s emotional challenges being overcome by reading Toni Morrison, another Black female writer, writing about her own brush with

sexual harassment, and sharing it with audiences so that she may heal, protect, as well as pave the way for others to overcome their challenges. Much like bildungsroman, it seeks to show growth and development of the individual in narrative inquiry, storying and re-storying, the research device used to show change.

These stories prompted consideration as to why reading and writing poetry as well as arts-education may be part and parcel to the development of multiple types of literacies amongst learners who may be considered members of marginalized youth populations. Thus, without privileging any single grand-scale narrative about learning, this narrative inquiry study allows for the flow of the participants' voices by including their poems, as well as themes from semi-structured interviews they participated in. Lastly, I make pedagogic recommendations for educators in formal and informal learning programs and identify areas of further study.

## **3.2 Context**

### **3.2.1 Multiple Ways of Knowing**

Educators have asked traditional schooling to incorporate more languages (National Council of Teachers of English, 2013), lived personal experiences (Clandinin, Caine, & Lessard, 2018), ethnic studies (Valenzuela, 2019), culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995), ethnographic research (Bhattacharya, 2009), ethnographic theater (Saldaña, 2016), and the arts (Greene, 1995) for decades. Multiple-award winning scholar Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings was consulted about providing better education for already marginalized and vulnerable learners in post-conflicts spaces, including the aftermath of COVID-19:

I think the pandemic has taught us a lot about education. We are all in the same storm, but not on the same boat. Yes, we are all facing a pandemic, but we also know Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Katrina were also encountered very differently, based on race and economic status. What I hope is that we don't go back to the way things used to be in education before the pandemic (Ladson-Billings, Personal Interview, January 27, 2021).

As previously mentioned, the study is centered in Houston, Texas which previously felt the impact of Hurricane Harvey's disruption to scheduling, and the trauma of natural disasters. The Prophetic City (Klineberg, 2020) is also known to be demographically representative of the shifting population demographics of the U.S. as a nation. This means, among other things, that there is an increasing population of historically marginalized populations.

For these reasons and more, this study looks to arts-education and, by extension, to the literary writing style of *bildungsroman* (Morgenstern, 1819 as cited in Swales, 2015) for their relationship to writing poetry and performative poetry slams such as that by CCPD. Like the poetry undertaken by CCPD, *bildungsroman* is a creative literary genre in which a youth undergoes psychological and moral growth until reaching adulthood. Similar to the learner identity and academic achievement-boosting benefits of arts-education (Bowen & Kisidia, 2019a), in *bildungsroman*, the protagonist's character change is important because they examine their relationship to their society and environment (Boes, 2012).

### **3.3 Literature Review**

In response to the expanding notion of literacy to encompass the changing landscape of the 21st century, new frameworks, pedagogies and perspectives are needed.

Bildungsroman allows for personal narratives to answer the bigger questions about race, society, politics, culture and more. Bildungsroman should entail the writer's realization of their own capacity to make a personal or social difference through their writing (Boes, 2012). Thus, reading, feeling, writing, research, examinations of society, and other factors involved in bildungsroman, serve as the sources of literacy. Literacy, once defined as simply reading, writing, and communicating, is thereby viewed from a broader lens. One lens is multiple literacies, a pedagogical framework by a scholarly group, the New London Group (1996). Literacy has been expanded to include "the ability to understand, respond to, and use those forms of written language that are required by society and valued by individuals and communities" (i.e., multiple literacies) (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 13). Literacy attained through non-traditional schooling is pertinent to people of color and other marginalized groups such as immigrants, because like non-traditional learning, they are also under the surveillance of normative discourses (Campano & Griso, 2011).

Furthermore, literacy can be performative in the sense that when learners read, write, and/or embody the text, such as in a poem slam, they are not only imparting meaning, they are interpreting it. To explain, when students respond to knowledge performatively, they are demonstrating their knowledge, but also their abilities as "literary critics" (Sipes, 2008, as cited in Enriquez et al. 2015, p. 44). Learners are performing as they are disrupting normative understandings and assumptions (literacy) through their own critical performances of literacy (Enriquez et al., 2015). In this way,

poetry can be performed in a transactional sense because the performance displays the learner's understandings.

Reading can inspire writing poetry because bildungsroman and multicultural texts can stimulate as they may relate to the learner's own personal lived experiences. In addition, multiple ways of knowing such as reading, researching, analyzing, interpreting, and creating, are involved in the process. In the case of CCPD, the process of reading poetry to write poetry, transferred to a performative literary product that made the learners, poetry slam performances (CCPD teacher, personal communication, 2019). Creating knowledge through meaning-making in the poet-participants' lives depended on their prior life experiences, just as bildungsroman, or coming of age writing, relies on lived experiences that propel the writer to grow, and even inspire social change (Boes, 2012). Marginalized people are faced with challenges such as language barriers, immigration, gentrification, ostracization and other challenges. This indicates marginalized people inherently possess and readily attain more multiple literacies, but their literacies remain underdeveloped and underappreciated in their environment.

### **3.3.1 Culture**

Unfortunately, cultural and linguistic knowledge that is deemed outside of the boundaries of tradition schooling are often forsaken, thereby restricting any multiplicity in literacy and learning. For example, Texas has been embroiled in social instability and educational controversies because of its English-only education and practices since its inception (Blanton, 2007). Likewise, formal schooling in the US tends to subtract culture from the curriculum, which is an extension of one's family history and lived experiences

(Valenzuela, 2019). This lack of representation and understanding in the education system and curricula, impacts people of color negatively (Ladson-Billings, 1995). However, cultural understanding and representation can be activated by educators through youth participatory action research (Cammarota & Fine, 2008), bildungsroman and creative writing (Anzaldúa, 1987) that stems from the lived experiences of people of color and otherwise marginalized people.

### **3.3.2 Multiple Literacies**

Just as there are multiple cultures, races, languages and other multiplicities, there are multiple ways of knowing. Multicultural learners need education that allows for a convergence of their culture and cognition to inform their literacy (Hammond, 2007). Education is often considered as a purposeful, constructed process taking place in a carefully designed exclusive space for learning – most commonly thought of as a school. Yet, Bakhtin (1984) asserts that the language (of learning) is itself immersed in social and cultural contexts. "Language is not a neutral medium that passes easily and freely into the private property of the speakers' intentions; it is populated - overpopulated with the intentions of others," (Bakhtin, cited in Kramsch, 1995 p. 27). Bakhtin states a universal linguistic code that acts as one voice for all speakers cannot exist because language use is related to history and power (Kramsch & Widdowson, 1998). Bakhtin (1994) believed that history itself is an internal drive that produces states of language, which in turn, produces conflicting forces. By extension, we can assume that one can explore their personal history by looking backwards into their lived experiences.

Niemeyer and Sands (2011) studied learning across space and time in an analysis of letters written by women in the 1700s-1800s to understand “informal learning” of the marginalized gender. They concluded that space-times of education are not limited to certain places. Instead, they open up in the course of history whenever the relation of individual and society, self and world, enters in a process of transformation. Therefore, a learner can reflect upon their own life and learn in various informal ways, across different moments in time, if their personal experience identifies with that historical rendering in time. In this analysis, the marginalized people were women, who, among other restrictions in the 1700s, were not able to attend schooling as openly as men were, but they were able to learn by writing letters and reflecting upon their experiences in the writing sharing of these letters. Likewise, with CCPD, we can see how writing and self-reflection may be particularly beneficial for people who may be “voice-less” and under presented in education, and overall, in society. Through such reflection and self-study, poets and other writers can build, or *bildung* in German, meaningful writing – *bildungsroman*.

### **3.3.3 Stories to Live by**

Reflecting on oneself and determining truths through writing that explores personal, historical narratives are outlined by scholars in various ways, and oftentimes the writing style has its own focus. Spence explains that narrative truth permits one’s lived experiences to fortify one’s future (Spence, 1984, as cited in Craig, 2020). In this way, out of lived experiences, one develops a “story to live by” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Likewise, *bildungsroman* is a genre that can be described as coming of age novels



that place emphasis on the individual as a human being having transformative experiences which are explored through their authorship (Kim & Zimmerman, 2017). In these ways, bildungsroman develops one's personal identity as it endeavors to understand how the Self is interrelated with the world.

While many writers have called for writing as a method of knowing and inquiry (Richardson, 1999), what is different about the concept of bildungsroman as a genre of writing, is that it builds a personal biography and presents an individual as capable of political impact (Boes, 2012). Writing bildungsroman is dependent on one's knowledge about the relationship of the Self to society, thus the writer is understood as being capable of social or political impact. In bildungsroman writing, an individual is an autonomous subject within their own larger societal framework, who demonstrates personal growth and change as a result of their autobiographical, lived experiences (Boes, 2012). As the bildungsroman develops, the writing shifts focus to one's individual transformation as a result of their challenging life experiences and indicates the writer is capable of greater social change.

#### **3.3.4 Arts-based Education**

The aesthetic world of visual, written, and other forms of art are frequently considered something of minimal value in educational settings, and is not associated as a necessity in life. Yet, from time immemorial, we can see how human beings have looked to music, theater, poetry, the visual arts, and other aesthetics, for both learning and pleasure. The arts can open pathways to the imagination of the learner (Greene, 1995) as well as offer their own means of learning and research (Barone & Eisner, 2012). To

elaborate, artists can choose to challenge audiences about their perceived social and political inequities in society. Critical thinking, writing, and the arts can be combined for a variety of political, social statements that protest oppressive or otherwise dominant standards (Bagley & Castro, 2012).

Furthermore, using the arts in education as well as art education classes in K-12 may benefit cognitive functions and hold keys to developing a society that has increased empathy and understanding. For example, the arts benefit learners far beyond what achievement tests can display, such as advanced cognitive skills (Hargrove, 2012), the ability to cope with stress, enhanced self-awareness (Autry & Walker, 2011), as well as overall life skills (Clinton & Hokansen, 2012). In fact, art-making can empower learners with difficult, often racialized realities by transporting learners into a realm that allows for free ‘speech’ and expression (Lee, 2013). Overall, by participating in community-based art projects such as plays, murals, and other arts, a greater sense of overall comradery amongst youth, as well as adults, can result.

### **3.4 Theories**

The concept of multiple literacies is based on the Multiple Literacies Theory (MLT), the work of late philosopher Gilles Deleuze, which looks at the role of multiplicity in literacy instruction. MLT allows for this learning to take on a natural and organic quality by providing a means for students to integrate and work within contexts, authentically (Bogue, 2009). This is because MLT expands the concept of literacy instruction from that of a linear, sequential process to one where “communication abilities form feedback loops and aggregate internal and external ways” (Masny & Cole,

2007, p. 3). Theoretically, when equipped with the ability to read, write, and communicate across multiple literacies, students are able to tap into an affective domain that permeates future decision making.

While other ways of looking at literacy have been identified by other theorists, I have chosen MLT because the theory had the most accurate overall reflection of the cultural, emotional ways of knowing, alongside the reading and writing outcomes expressed most by participants. MLT outlines these literacies: 1) Cultural Literacy, 2) Digital Literacy, 3) Emotional Literacy, 4) Environmental Literacy, 5) Numerical Literacy, 6) Political Literacy, 7) Scientific Literacy, and 8) Visual Literacy (Table 3.1). Like MLT, writing *bildungsroman* also calls for and seeks out lived experiences as sources of knowledge. Fortunately, neither mode of literacy, MLT or *bildungsroman*, nor my chosen method or narrative inquiry, seeks to silo skills or isolate one's personhood from meaning-making. In order to assess the impact of poetry and poetry slam performances in tandem with multiple literacies, I use Multiple Literacy Theory, MLT (Masny & Cole, 2007) as an interpretive tool alongside narrative inquiry's conventional tools of broadening, burrowing and storying, re-storying, as well as counter-storytelling.

### **Table 3.1 Multiple Literacy Theory – Definitions**

Cultural Literacy	The ability to apply literary and cultural studies skills and knowledge in order to read and interpret cultural artefacts (LCS) while being open to modify such artefacts or one’s attitudes towards them for the greater good. (García Ochoa et al., 2016).
Digital Literacy	The attitude, ability to identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize digital resources and tools to construct new knowledge, create media expressions, and communicate with others. (Pow & Fu, 2012, p. 288).
Emotional Literacy	The ability to demonstrate resilience that supplements the cognitive performance of a learner by aiding in self-regulation that leads to character development (Van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996).
Environmental Literacy	The capacity of a person to successfully engage in society and natural systems by taking the appropriate environmental considerations about sustainably in daily decision-making about consumption, lifestyle, career, as well as taking civic action (Masny & Cole, 2007).
Numerical Literacy	The ability to use mathematical concepts that are not just limited to the use of mathematical operations, in learners’ lives. (Kramarski & Mizrachi, 2006).
Political Literacy	The ability to understand party differences through basic political concepts and facts (Cassel & Lo, 1997, p. 317).
Scientific Literacy	The knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, economic productivity, and participation in civic and cultural affairs (National Research Council, 1996, p. 22).
Visual Literacy	The ability to interpret and create visual representations of ideas and information (Silverman & Piedmont, 2016).

Just as reading a text must be combined with other literacies, such as visual, cultural and political, schooling is not an isolated event - it is a part of a learning process. Masny (2012) explains, “Within MLT, discourse is taken up as an assemblage of texts that come together as sensation (affects) and resonate becoming” (p. 126). For example, under MLT theory, understanding multiple languages and being bicultural indicate that the learner has multiple literacies. Yet, unfortunately, in the United States, where

bilingual education is not the norm, and educators continue to fight for the right to teach ethnic studies (Cabrera et al. 2014; Valenzuela, 2019), a monocultural curriculum and monolingual pedagogy dictates who and how one is deemed literate. While MLT has expanded notions of literacy, unless these literacies are acknowledged and accepted within our K-12+ pedagogies and curriculum, nuanced ways of meaning-making are still left out of schooling.

### **3.5 Method: Narrative Inquiry**

I have selected theories and methods that converged culture, personhood and knowledge because I believe them to be the least invasive to the already vulnerable population of learners involved in this research. Fortunately, since political and social issues continue in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for people of color, the LGBTIQ community and others, more research methods which benefit people of color, as they permit their stories to be told, have taken flight. Some research methods include testimonial (Huber, 2012) emerged amongst Latinx people, and ethnography (Cottom, 2018), has been recommended for African-Americans populations. Yet, testimonial and ethnography were sufficient for this study as they focus mainly on culture and social interactions among one group of people rather than on experiences of different marginalized people in a larger, shared space. Narrative inquiry research method offers several tools that are aligned with concepts in this study, such as the narrative dimensions of space, time and culture (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000), which impacted the participants stories. Furthermore, in narrative inquiry, the researcher is often informed through counter

narratives that oppose mainstream stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), similar to genre of bildungsroman.

### **3.5.1 Counter Story-Telling**

Counter stories are real-life experiences that run opposite dominant narratives; any stereotypes and so-called normative thinking about marginalized people can be addressed, which will also help identify multiple literacies. Counter story-telling is a form of the narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999; Craig, 2020) that supports the understanding of one's lived experiences that may run counter to the grand-scale "mega-narratives" that dominant society (Olson & Craig, 2009). In fact, these narratives that run counter to larger, grand-scale narratives, are often the stories of the marginalized people who may live in the periphery of society. In our multicultural world, with rapid changes in social, technological, and economic developments, the central question for educators should not be "How do we teach children to be literate?" Instead, the question should be, "How do we help children learn to learn the new literacies that will continuously emerge?" (Leu, 2001, p. 568). One way may be to allow for counter stories through performance art because "People of Color *respond* to racial microaggressions in numerous ways (*e.g.*, self-policing, proving them wrong, creating counterspace, and engaging various art forms) (Solórzano et al., 2020, p. 187). Rejecting knowledge gained in informal settings, be it from traditional schooling, dominant society or positivist research can stifle education, diversity, multiculturalism and interethnic alliances in the United States. Therefore, in this paper, I explore multi-faceted lived experiences of the

poets using narrative inquiry and the poets own counter story-telling, in order to examine what literacies they may have gained

### **3.5.2 Three-Dimensional Narrative Space**

Research methods that generate narratives and counter-stories involve aspects of the bildungsroman genre because they are derived from lived experiences that can transcend time and space. Therefore, in order to consider the temporality, sociality and spatiality of the participants stories, the narrative inquirer may interpret emergent key issues in relationship to time, culture and lived experiences (Riley & Hawe, 2005). To elaborate, past life stories are lived, then re-told and re-lived, when they are reconstructed, so they become stories that inform us that tend to “live by” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1998). In these ways, the three dimensions of narrative space - temporality, sociality and spatiality (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) are considered as they emerge in the analysis of this study. In this study, the participants poems, as well as their recounted experiences they shared in during interviews, often transcended the time, culture, and sometimes even their own lived experiences.

### **3.5.3 Researcher Positionality**

As time, culture and people are considered important aspects in narrative inquiry, the relationship of the researcher must also be specified when analyzing participants’ stories. As a researcher, I conduct field-based narrative inquiries with marginalized learners, such as immigrants and people of color (Asadi, 2020; Suárez et al, 2019). To explain, Craig (2000) states “the researchers’ personal thinking and narratives become revealed. This is because our wonders and ponders inform our inquiries and our

relationships with participants are essential to how research puzzles become understood” (p. 355). For these reasons and more, I pay close attention to narrative inquiry methodology’s capacity to uncover the experiences of socio-culturally marginalized learners.

### **3.6 Lived Experiences**

Both as audience member, and later, as a researcher, it was evident that poetry was a way to speak out or revolt against oppressive experiences for the participants in this study. I include the gender, race and orientation self-identification of Oasis, Edward, Emily, Michelle, and Celine because during interviews or poetry slams they often described instances of racism, genderism, and anti-immigrant sentiment that they had encountered. For instance, Michelle explained what it felt like to be reduced to a slur in choir class by the director:

My Freshman year, I followed nightingales until the choir officer sneered “choir queer.” *Choir queer?* I swear I’ll be one this year! I will sing our queerness loud and appreciate it like a Latin hymn. The kind of music that echoes when it abandons rhythm because love is so beautiful that things stop mattering in the moment... Maybe it’s time we struck a different chord and let it ring until homophobes listening learn to appreciate dissonance.

Another poet at a poetry slam shared what it was like to be a Black driver:

My mother always says don’t give them any reason to pull you over - always take care of my car to make sure it doesn’t need any repairs, don’t forget to buckle up. Blacks between the ages of 15-29 are more likely to be pulled over than any other race. I am 17. I am still getting used to way things are. The first time I got pulled over, he never asked for my license, so I wondered if he wanted my life. Everything was mangled, even though my car was fine. If a cop pushes you off the road, and nobody hears you scream is it still considered an accident?



Celine, a Black woman, also wrote about culture and power, when she performed a piece about what she hopes to pass on to her future daughter:

Mama was a poet that found refuge from rapids in nothing but a stage, mic, teeth and tongue striking together like flint and steel to raise enough sparks to make a shimmer, then a burn. I never thought I could be a poet, not when I could barely breathe, not when each attack was relentless. Your voice is a hard thing to find when it is at the bottom of an ocean, but this is what it looks like to drag yourself out and stay alive. I will tell her how words kept me warm so I could sing my name across every stage.

Like the young poets, Aimé Césaire (2000), who was from the French-colonial nation of Martinique, used his words against those who would oppress him: “In the end, Discourse was never intended to be a road map or a blueprint for revolution. It is poetry and therefore revolt” (p. 28). In all of the poetry performances I attended from 2017-2019, the young poets used poetry as a tool of resistance, while they interpreted and owned their most challenging life experiences with pride and knowledge.

### **3.7 Discussion**

In Table 3.2, some of the quotes that aligned with emotional and cultural literacy, which the participants shared in unstructured interviews, were selected for their cultural and emotional implications. It is important to note that I did not specifically ask participants about literacy nor did I ask for any specific cultural or emotional narrations. The last column, *Bildungsroman*, highlights statements that indicated the participant reflected on their personal history and lived experiences in order to grow and overcome any challenges. Thereby potentiating *bildungsroman* as a beneficial and congruent writing style with MLT because their experiences either informed their writing or their writing informed their personal growth and “coming of age.”

**Table 3.2 Literacies and Bildungsroman**

Name & Self-identification	Emotional Literacy	Cultural Literacy	Bildungsroman (personal identity development through writing)
Edward White male, gay	I'm really interested in work that is able to speculate anything existing in a space and this weird place in time.	We see so many people sometimes put in a position or told that they're in a position where they're powerless at the ability to create spaces even imagined it to be really powerful.	My grandmother as a librarian I think is one of the pivotal people in my life that led me toward writing. When I told my grandmother I was writing poetry, she told me when she was a librarian there was conflict around books Baptist preachers and very religious people were trying to get Harry Potter books banned for promoting witchcraft. And so my grandmother was fighting to keep the books in her school's library.
Emily Asian female	Sometimes whenever we feel really strong emotions, it's really hard to say what we're thinking and what exactly it is that's bothering us, because these emotions are so overwhelming, but, through poetry, I not only break down the problems that I was facing, but also allow other people to understand me.		I had a very difficult time conveying my anger growing up as a kid. Uh, so poetry was a good way to express myself and find the words to convey that anger without using insults without hurting other people's feelings and generally just getting to the point, in a more direct way. It also helps me convey my sadness.
Michelle White female, queer	If I just had some sort of big events in my life in any direction, if it's really exciting work, it's, it's traumatizing somehow.  I don't usually like to write about that very immediately because I don't. I think when it's fresh, we aren't able to think as critically about it.	I was reading some texts about foreign languages and I read about a tribal language in which directions are always cardinal. So, instead of right and left hands, it is east and west. When you shift where you're facing, it then becomes a different direction. So, they are constantly perceiving the world as a moving compass.	like the banking system of the classroom as it generally is set up is to, for students to be very receptive and, and it almost feels, I would say dehumanizing, but it just feels, um, very degrading to, to that application that will be no nothing. And we are only here to receive from these teachers who are sometimes put in a light of this amazing, like almost omnipotent power, like, you know, all, all of the information that I need and I'm only here to receive it from you.

Organically, many other literacies including political and environmental were indicated in the interviews, and oftentimes the multiple literacies were interlinked. Meaning one literacy seemed to lead to another, or several literacies were indicated in the same statement. Yet, for an in-depth discussion, as well as consideration of these literacies to coming of age writing bildungsroman, the scope of this study and length of the chapter was limited to just two literacies – cultural and emotional. The next section discusses cultural and emotional indicators of literacy using the interpretive lens of MLT. As a pedagogic tool, bildungsroman is highlighted because the literary genre is similar in outcome to the benefits of growth and self-development that CCPD poets derived from writing about their life experiences. Lastly, visual literacy and performance arts-based education are discussed.

### **3.7.1 Cultural Literacy**

In this study, I opted to look at cultural and emotional literacies in detail because I wanted to identify and consider any relationship between multicultural people (cultural literacy), marginalized people (emotional literacy) and MLT. Ignoring racial creolization of people's personhood as well as their knowledge in literacy in traditional schooling has initiated a crisis of cultural transmission, which continues to oppress already vulnerable populations. Emily said it was very eye opening for her family to learn a little bit more about Emily through poetry:

It has helped me connect with my parents as well because my dad is also a huge fan of poetry. And so that helped us kind of come back together and rebuild our relationship. Getting into poetry actually helped me come to terms with my identity as an Asian-American, a girl who is the daughter of two immigrants.

In addition, the cognition of one's surroundings can vary based on the privilege one has in that space (Allen, 1999. The emergence of transnational spaces in North America and elsewhere has created cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 2012; Anzaldúa, 1987). Emily explained:

*Bloodline* is about coming to terms with my heritage. Whenever me and my mother talk, especially like whenever we get heated, I'm sometimes, like we'll say things that the other person doesn't necessarily understand. And so it makes it hard to convey our feelings, but if we were writing things out, if I had time to sit and write things out, in Vietnamese, maybe it'd be easier for my mother to understand my feelings because when I'm talking to her, just saying things right off the top of my head, I don't necessarily have all the words I need at the time.

Michelle, a white female, discussed her new found fascination with other cultures and how what she has learned about an African tribe, has helped her in conceiving of new ways to write and use language:

I was reading some texts about foreign languages and I read about a tribal language in which directions are always cardinal. So, instead of right and left hands, it is east and west. When you shift where you're facing, it then becomes a different direction. So, they are constantly perceiving the world as a moving compass. It is also very stationary because the directions never change where their bodies are. The things around them change. That's really amazing, and I was thinking that we too can access a type of language or a specific way of directing our language to pursue the world around us.

When imagination and creativity are granted alongside the technique of reading and writing poetry, things related to personal lived histories and time-space related contexts, emotions, culture, and challenging life experiences can collide, but also help the learners grow and learn in ways that compartmentalizing learning cannot. "I'm a very emotional person, so I felt like it was a good outlet for me to sort of control those emotions and find a way to express them without any widths. Destructive to myself or

other people,” explained Emily. In these ways, permitting the poet’s entanglements with aspects of life such as sociocultural, familial, political, sexual and other matters can influence learners to dig deeper than standardized methods of reading and writing may afford.

### **3.7.2 Emotional Literacy**

Writing poetry versus performance of their origins poetry may have added additional aspects of learning and literacy to the learners’ expressed forms or knowledge and personal development. Yet, through exploration of their feelings about family, love, race, gender, the learners all said they were able to transcend prior beliefs about themselves as well as their most challenging life experiences such as coming to terms with sexuality and race. For instance, through poetry slam pedagogy, Oasis found her voice about an otherwise shunned topic, sexual harassment:

When it comes to writing very vulnerable pieces, I tend to pull from my own life experiences because I'm not there to tell anybody else's story. I find a lot of breathing room and closure in being able to be that vulnerable. I wanted to comfort people who have gone through a very frightening moment in life, so they know there are other people who have gone through and that can help them heal.

Edward said he found emotional acceptance and awareness about his sexuality as a queer man through writing poetry:

I, as a queer person, I met somebody who is saying it was very easy for them to be queer, and that it (queerness) should be a celebration, but I became very angry when hearing that because I had to work so hard to reach that point. If this is the way it should be for people and why am I holding so much resentment? I was extremely angry when I found out and I don't know, I don't think queerness should be something that needs to be worked towards, but to me it felt like I had to, and in a way I feel like I earned my right to feel good about myself, somehow, through poetry.

I recollected being an audience member at a poetry slam in which Edward presented a poem about being queer. “It was beautiful to witness your performance about claiming your sexuality at the Space City Poetry Slam, but I also felt sad because when I was in high school, my friends and I were not afforded such an opportunity to reconcile sexuality, our identities.” What I did not tell Edward is how learning about his development of self-awareness made me wonder if one of my high school friends, who we lovingly called Puffy Shawn, because of his fluffy, curly blond hair, would have benefited from writing poetry, too. I suspect if Puffy Shawn would have been able to develop enough emotional literacy and self-love, to accept and talk about his sexuality, which he hid from his family, he may not have taken his life at the age of 15.

### **3.7.3 Bildungsroman**

Being at the crossroads of youth and adulthood, poetry and performativity seems to have supported emancipatory self-expression for the performers at the brink of making career and life decisions for themselves. These memories capture the moments or periods in one’s personal history (or bildungsroman), when the relation of self and surrounding - subject and world - is ultimately transforming (Boes, 2012). Emily elaborated:

One of the most beautiful things about the human race is that we always find ways to communicate with each other. I want to become a writer because you can put emotions and feelings into words and other people will be able to understand what you are feeling in a moment by reading what you have written about it.

Narrative inquiry’s three-dimensional space’s notion of spatiality looks at personal and social interactions in the story, and its notion of temporality/time factor, considers the history of the story. Likewise, the poets said re-storying their life experiences and

placing them in a different space and time, such as in front of an audience, positively impacted them. Michelle explained how narrative creative writing can be emotionally supportive and multi-dimensional:

Language kind of helps put it out there in a way that is not as, it does not make you feel as vulnerable even if you're writing about something that's sensitive to you. Adding a little bit of creativity to it and making it into something that tells a story and instead it's like, it's like that in itself, like you're telling a story instead of putting yourself out there.

Lynn echoed the sentiment about spatiality:

There is always a space where you feel like a teacher because you have to guide your audience through your world. Um, and it, I think it is very empowering in that sense to say that, that I know more than anybody else on this topic or whatever it is.

Bakhtin (1994) explains that in order to create meaning out of language we process the historical connotations and genre conventions embodied therein. Likewise, the poets' feelings were pulled from multiple lived experiences as articulated by Edward, who felt what his grandmother encountered as librarian, impact him today:

She was working in a community that sought to ban literature such as Harry Potter because they had magic, which that community considered as being against their religion. She really fought against this and risked losing her job. I see how much she influenced me, just in terms of sign language, literature and freedom of expression. So, I'm really interested in language right now in terms of its inability to shape the way we perceive the world.

Within their writing practices, the poets seemed to have developed the language, creativity, self-awareness and overall intellectual capacity to construct affirming ways of orienting themselves in their respective environments and lives. Edward elaborated:

Capturing the self as flawed can be something very difficult to do. It is very easy as a writer to write yourself or your eye as this amazing human being who is doing all these wonderful things, but then to interrogate the ways in which I am

flawed or my speakers are flawed can be really difficult. Or even, what am I trying to say? Like very complex emotions that come from different positions.

In many ways, the learners had devised literary ways and cultivated the necessary strength to distribute their history, knowledge and feelings through their writing, indicating a three-dimensional narrative space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The multiple ways of affirming, knowing, living and reliving, demonstrated by the poets, can expand literacies and build upon literacy projects that are embedded in different spatial memories of the learners. For instance, Michelle illustrated how relying information through poetry can shift awareness when it also is performed:

Performing time either was slower or faster than you are, so time is not under control for me in a sense. The connecting with an audience is odd for me. It sounds like that comes naturally, but I like when you are up on a stage performing, the impact is different than individual impact. This is a sort of responsibility because you have to convey something to everyone in the audience and to do that. The writing world is not all about what your words are like, a lot more of it has to do with planning and sometimes hosting events and getting along with people.

Michelle, who at the time was a 15-year old poet, who self-identified as queer, said time, history, and poetry have impacted her with literacies such as reading and writing, but also in some intangible ways:

I've always loved Emily Dickinson. I just tend to like historical writers, especially ones that leave a little mystery to them. I don't know why but I believe in all kinds of magical things, so whenever I read Emily Dickinson I always imagine her with me because no matter how you read it, she is always playing a trick on you, as a fairy would.

Be it through mystical, familial, or cultural or other forms of inspiration, the participants indicated that writing poetry and developing multiple forms of literacy has helped them build relational experiences that surpass time and space. Hooks (1994) argues for



educators to “celebrate teaching that enables transgressions - a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement that makes education a practice of freedom” (p.12). Likewise, rather than placing hybrid, multicultural or alternative learners at constant conflict because their ways of meaning run counter to traditional schooling, curricula, structures and/or dominant societal stories, education in the 21st Century must find ways of supporting them. This may not be as complicated as traditional schooling would have us believe. Oasis articulated the sentiment:

Poetry is like you are telling a story instead of putting yourself out there. Now, I tend to think critically about the curriculum in school. Is the structure of this classroom conducive? Adding a little bit of creativity to it and making it into something that tells a story has made me want to learn more about English and go to college.

Clearly, pedagogic and linguistic innovation is a necessity if we are to have variable ways to look out for marginalized learners. When given a chance to explain their understanding of the world around them, the poets prefer their own analysis over that of a formal curriculum. Furthermore, in analyzing the poets’ interviews and having heard their poetry it is clear that their experiences with traditional schooling, which separated their culture, lived experiences, as well as their emotions, from learning, meant these learners had to rely on other people for interpretation of meaning in their lives. Yet, this enforcement of normativity and normative learning and pre-ordained knowledge, segregated learners from their internalized knowledge, personhood and their own lived emotions.

This ostracization from the Self further marginalized already oppressed learners who identified as being queer, sexually minoritized, sexually harassed, who were

oftentimes also culturally marginalized. The learners in this study all said they were unable to express their multiplicities before having come to CCPD and learning to read, write and express themselves vis-a-vis poetry and poetry slamming. Upon completion of this analysis about multiple literacies, it is clear that literacy can emerge as dependent upon one's personal lived history, as well as the space and time continuum, but it is also vital to afford learners, especially marginalized learners, the credibility to determine what is put into text.

### **3.8 Recommendations**

#### **3.8.1 Visual literacy and Arts-based Education**

An important understanding that emerged was that multiple literacies accessed through art-based education may advance the skills of monocultural and monolingual learners. Given the results of this study show overwhelmingly positive support for learners in conflicted spaces derived from creative writing and performance arts in education, which aligns with the notion of arts being able to support traumatized learners (Appleton, 2001), more research studies are needed to explore the benefits of the arts in education, as well as the benefits of arts in education for marginalized learners. In performing their poems, and honoring their personal multiplicities, the learners also affirmed their ways of knowing, thinking and existing in the world. All of participants said they deliberately faced some of their most difficult life challenges through the artistic process of writing, reflecting and performing. This study indicates that multiple literacies may be more evident through non-traditional, arts-based pedagogies. Overall, the arts-based, performative outcomes of the CCPD participants' autobiographical

poetry, seems to have encouraged multiple literacies. Moreover, being able to articulate the less tangible aspects of literacy such as cultural and emotional was clearly affirming to the poets' personhood, who all self-identified as being from marginalized groups.

### **3.8.2 Culturally Relevant Text**

Previous notions of language, writing and imagination need to be renegotiated because people should not be confined to a culturally dominant discourses that limits the validity of their lived cultural, emotional, political, environmental and other literacies, or experiences. These grand narratives may seem phony to marginalized people who are at odds with conformity. Ces re rightly coins hegemonic narratives as "omniscient and na ve conquerors" (as cited in Sartre & MacCombie, 1964, p. 15). Clearly, marginalized people are not comfortable with the large-scale stories or "mega-narratives" as Olson and Craig (2009) called them, because they are unable to map their relational positions within those hegemonic confines.

Overall, the poets said they put their tensions into their poetry in order to overcome them, whether the poems culminated in a performance or not. This is similar to the process of bildungsroman in which the writer conquers the gap between this normative expectation and tension, through joy of validating their knowledge in personal narrative-style writing or poetry (Kim & Zimmerman, 2017). Furthermore, the sharing of a final product, or poem, which I have entangled with multiple literacies, could easily be transferred into assessments by educators, which may further benefit anxiety-ridden test takers and non-traditional learners – of all backgrounds

### **3.8.3 Bildungsroman & Identity**

The fact that humankind has globalized and sociocultural issues have multiplied in the 21st Century, yet educational praxis lacks recent insights into how culture (Hammond, 2017) and emotions (Lin, Liew, & Perez, 2019) influences learning and cognition, is nothing short of problematic. In fact, bildungsroman seems to offer multiple benefits of culture, literacy and self-development. Boes (2012) explains that each person and culture prefer to have their own responses historical events. Rather than a monolithic view of lived experiences and personal or large-scale historic events, diverse stories need to be included because they yield vital information a meaningful holistic well-being of society. Many times, poets said they put their tensions into their poetry in order to overcome them, whether the poems culminated in a performance or not. Likewise, in bildungsroman, the writer conquers the gap between this normative expectation and tension, through the joy of validating their knowledge a personal narrative-style (Boes, 2012). The relationship of bildungsroman, poetry and multiple literacies is drawn in efforts to impart the benefits of all of these forms of learning since this study with CCPD poets revealed the learners' experienced personal identity development and confidence and deepened their literacies.

Whether the poets were reading, writing, or performing poetry, the poets reported experiencing personal development alongside literacy. Celine explained she experienced being on stage:

Personally, I find a weird kind of comfort on stage. I am a person who has grown up, very anxious, and scared to participate in most things. It is different for me to project into a room rather than one on one with because I feel like the more kind of intimate space is, the more afraid I am to express those emotions. When it

comes to poetry performances, you still have that intimacy, but it's kind of dispersed throughout the crowd.

Given that the participants in this study all self-identified as being from marginalized groups who benefited from being able to write using personal reflection, it would appear that bildungsroman could be a useful pedagogic response to the struggles that minorities may face. It can also be argued that in fact, autobiographical poetry is bildungsroman and spoken word poetry is simply a performative version of it. However, bildungsroman is privileged as a literary genre, whereas spoken word poetry is not considered a literary genre. This raises further questions and concerns about who has the power to determine what literacy is, and why alternative voices and literacies are not as respected.

#### **3.8.4 Further Study**

Unless we address the needs of marginalized learners and update pedagogy to meet the globalization of today, transcultural incommunicability will be worsened when the educational foci are segmented and look at literacy but miss the multiplicities involved in literacy, and we must respond as educators and policy makers. Further study into the benefits of performance art (i.e. poetry slam performances) is needed. To elaborate, being able to place oneself in relationship to social issues that may leave one feeling marginalized, and facing issues of equity all emerged in this study through a reflective form of creative writing, namely poetry, which culminated in a performance seems to have supported all of the participants in this study. For instance, I wonder would MLT-related educational experiences that may be especially well suited for people of color because they can access their cultural knowledge, be transferable to other

marginalized learners? Inquiries such as; how might MLT be a more culturally relevant way to look at educational learning outcomes for people of color, may provide additional educational methods and identify more benefits for marginalized learners, amongst others. This study also indicated that there may be considerably beneficial educational aspects of MLT, art-based education, and bildungsroman that warrant further research and can benefit multiculturalism and interethnic alliances. For example, multiple literacies may have been attained by audience members, who were introduced to social, political and cultural ways of knowing through the lived experiences of the poetry slam artists.

### **3.9 Concluding Remarks**

Unfortunately, meanings of words are enforced by dominant ideologies and controlled by educational institutions that are often unwilling to incorporate alternatives such as arts-based pedagogies and multiple literacies, as demonstrated in this study. Yet, the findings of this study, as well as the theories and participants' statements, which align with my own research observations as an immigrant, multilingual, multicultural person and educator, indicate that we can support a healthier society. Foremost, institutionally, education can open up moments or periods in one's personal history or lived experiences by empowering students' personal narratives, as demonstrated in autobiographical poetry and bildungsroman. Through this "time travel" the learner may alter and even reformulate their understanding of situations that once vexed them, and as such, learners can fly above and beyond oppression.

Overall, arts-based education, art-education and creative writing need to be accessed more by traditional schooling and educators alike. Unfortunately, arts stimulus funds under the Obama administration, and the creation of the National Arts Policy Committee, were stamped out by the Trump administration in 2016 (Americans for the Arts). CCPD's funding was also cut by their benefactors and caused them to close their doors. Conversely, studies have found that alternative arts-based pedagogies, which tend to include or permit the expression of culture and personal experiences, may improve the student's relationship to schooling (Bowen & Kisida, 2019). These reasons and more are why instead of repeating the pedagogies that seem to perpetuate racial wars, and suppress diversity and impose monocultural practices on the youth of the United States – we must respect personhood and activate creativity in education.

## 4. ACT THREE: ART FOR ART'S SAKE

### 4.1 Introductory Narrative

Edwin, an art teacher of 18 years who the research team interviewed, was disheveled and apologetic for being late when he raced into the room where the research team was waiting to interview him. "I am very sorry, I had to break up a fight," he sighed while trying to fix his hair and straighten his torn shirt (participant observation session, personal interview, 2019). Edwin claimed he was not one to run away from conflict, "I don't care how big the kids are, how many kids there are. I was in the military, so it doesn't scare me like it does others." Unfortunately, at Season High School, where Edwin worked as a teacher at the time of this study, school violence was a long-standing issue that once led to death of a student, according to local media.

One September morning in 2013, a fight broke out in a corridor between some students, and some were known to belong to certain "gangs." At the time of the incident the Black students involved were calling themselves "Drama" and Hispanic students, were said to be chanting "Brown Pride" (Christian et al. 2013). A member of the "Brown Pride" group, Luis Alonzo Alfaro, a 17-year old student at the school who was carrying a knife, felt he had to "just start stabbing the people around him," according to his police statement (Christian et al.2013). While the Assistant District Attorney said "I'm not saying that's not true," the police said they thought the incident was gang related. Paradoxically, Joseph Broussard, who Alfaro stabbed many times in the abdomen, or any of the other students were victims, were already known to be in a gang (Christian et



al, 2013). The upshot of the disturbing incident was that 17-year old junior, Joseph Broussard bled to death in the hallway of Season High School.

Apparently, school violence and ethnic tensions between rival gangs at the high school were known to exist at least a decade before the 2013 violent stabbing incident. "In my nearly 30-year career, this is the one thing you pray never to experience," said Season Independent School District Superintendent after Alfaro killed Broussard in school. It additionally is widely believed that the influx of students after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, added to the strained racial tensions on the campus on top of the disruptions to people's lives and schooling (Christian, 2013). One fact that is referenced is that the racial demographics changed dramatically in Greater Houston area when an influx of people moved there after Hurricane Katrina devastated their homes and lives in Louisiana (Horsewell, 2013). Be it from influx of displaced people and/or rapidly changing demographics, there has been a steady rise in violence in the Greater Houston area since the early 2000s (Gun Violence Archive). Combined environmental, social and racial changes disrupted learning in the city and seemingly overshadowed the shock or dismay after the violent stabbing.

Furthermore, all of the teachers in this study, Lara, Kersten, Edwin, Piper, and Morgan, who were located across four urban middle and high schools in Houston, all spoke about the social and environmental disruptions to schooling. What is both troubling and touching, is that these participants wanted to improve the overall well-being of their students by providing them with the emotional and academic support that they needed. Despite these strenuous circumstances, overall, the art teachers flooded the

researchers with stories of youth who had benefited from of art education, often citing those who are immigrants, displaced, homeless, or otherwise traumatized or marginalized learners. This enforces Eisner's (1992) assertion that neither emotion or art are barriers to learning and rational thinking:

Emotion has long been regarded as the enemy of reflective thought: the more we feel, the less we know... Not to be able to feel, say, a human relationship is to miss what may very well be its most critical features (p.593).

To elaborate, Eisner (1992) explains that the prevailing misconceptions of the arts misconceive their primary feature of supporting emotional experiences.

Due to this interesting situational juxtaposition of art teachers supporting learners with traumatic experiences to overcome through teaching art, questions about art and emotions arise. Did the emotions the participants experience overpower their teaching abilities, as well as classroom instruction time, to be able to teach - art for art's sake? In order to explore this question and more, this paper digs deeper into the social and emotional aspects of art-teachers and their students. The guiding research questions are:

- a) how art teacher-student relationships impact students' overall academic achievement
- b) what are some of the teachers' lived experiences, or, stories to live by (Clandinin & Huber, 2002), which may have impacted their empathy for the students. The understanding of which may aid in teacher education certification programs and support the creation of professional development for in-service teachers.

The Heuristic Model of Child Self-Regulation and Reactivity and School Outcomes (Liew et al. 2020), which has been shortened to HM, is used as an interpretive tool to analyze the ways in which art teachers and classes may have supported the

learners in this study (Table 4.3). The HM framing helps identify emotional regulation factors and outcomes of teacher-student school relationships because of its categories. Overall, it is hoped that the multiple benefits of art education described in this paper highlight the social, emotional and empathic work that many art teachers undertake, as enforcing the known benefits of teacher-student relationships across all content areas.

## **4.2 Context**

### **4.2.1 Disruptions to Schooling**

This narrative inquiry, which is part of a larger study (Asadi, Craig, Bowen & Liew, 2019), explores stories narrated by art teachers in Greater Houston, which is located in Texas, which is a Gulf Coast state prone to hurricanes and the nation's fourth largest city. Furthermore, gentrification has already changed the landscape of the schooling demographics in Houston (Johnson, 2017). Along these lines, the impact of natural disasters on people should be evaluated with consideration to race, argues Giroux (2006). "New Orleans in 2005 revealed a different image of the racial state, a different modality of state terrorism ... displacement of race as a central concept for understanding both Katrina and its place in the broader history of U.S. racism" (p. 174). Thus, consideration of the natural disasters, school-based violence and other disruptions to education and art classes in Houston (Table 4.1) may provide the context of the impact(s) of these disparities.

**Table 4.1 Environmental Issues Alongside Art Education in HISD**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Result</b>
August 2005	Hurricane Katrina <b>displaced more than 370,000 students</b> in Mississippi and Louisiana, and many moved to Houston, Texas.	Large influx of students from Louisiana came to Houston Independent School District, HISD. People were homeless and jobless, over a decade after the storm.
September 2013 School Violence at Spring High School.	Knife stabbing violence at Spring High School (Lezon et al. 2013). Houston area violence rises (Sparber, 2020).	<b>One student was killed and three students were wounded</b> by stabbing. Increased stress on teachers and art curricula.
Hurricane Harvey 2017	A delayed start to academic year in September -November 2017. The impact of the hurricane is still felt in the Houston area.	About 200 schools <b>damaged as a result of Harvey</b> (Waldren, 2017). <b>53 schools had severe damage</b> (Fox, 2017).
Academic year 2017	<b>Over 160 Texas public school districts and 30 charter schools</b> were closed (Goldstein, 2017).	High influx of students to nearby school districts in HISD.
May 2018	Marshall School Districts stops all art education classes due to budget concerns.	Some of Marshall’s art teachers moved to other districts, while other teachers leave HISD, Houston, and/or their profession as art teachers.

While all of the art teachers in this study said teaching art that academic school year was next to impossible, due in great part to trauma of displaced or otherwise disadvantaged students caused by hurricane Harvey (2018), they all said learners benefitted from art classes. Thus, in this study, art education is explored as disruptions to

schooling and their impact on teachers and learners in Houston are considered and presented in the Analysis section of this paper (Table 4.1).

#### **4.2.2 Benefits of Art Education**

The initial findings about the experiences of art teachers indicated there was relationship between art, emotions, and academic achievement. In fact, arts education and art-based education have been found to positively impact the academic achievement of K-12 students in several studies (Bowen & Kisidia, 2019; Cabrera et al. 2014). Specifically, in the “prophetic city” of Houston, the benefits of art education were documented in a Houston, TX-based study with 10,000 students by Bowen and Kisidia (2019) to find more art classes correlated with better overall academic achievement in Elementary and Middle schools.

Art education may be a critical part of academic, social and emotional well-being of learners that is unvalued and underutilized in K-12 education in the United States. However, despite the benefits of art education, unfortunately, the past several decades, the arts have been defunded and undervalued in the United States (American Association of the Arts). It is hoped that by exploring lived experiences of teachers and their experiences with learners benefitting from art education, a stronger case for art education will be displayed, as well as some ways in which learners can be supported across the United States’ public school systems outline.

### **4.3 Literature Review**

#### **4.3.1 Art Therapy**

Art therapy has long supported youth as well as adults, who have experienced trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2015). To illustrate, art therapy has been used to calm youth who have faced traumas such as a natural disaster or conflict zones, those from diasporas, political refugees, and prime them for learning (Appleton, 2001). In fact, art therapy has proven an effective way of providing emotional support to learners challenged by diaspora, immigration and/or political conflicts (Reynolds, Nabors & Quinlan, 2000). In educational contexts, Cornelius-White (2007) explains that students feel safe enough to self-assess their emotional state and its self-regulation is improved when teacher-student relationships demonstrate that the teacher can see the students' "perspective and communicate it back to them" (p. 12). The therapeutic effects of art classes were recognized by the art teachers and re-storied in their narrations about their students' experiences in art classes.

#### **4.3.2 Empathy**

The definition of empathy used in this study is: "to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioral expressions (and) to psychologically project oneself into another in an attempt to understand his/her thinking or feeling" (Zahavi & Overgaard, 2012, p.10). Under this definition, emotional and cognitive experiences can be considered in understanding how the art teachers chose to respond to their students' verbal and behavioral queues. To elaborate, productive teacher-student relationships involve a teacher showing students they care for their learning and "can see their

perspective and communicate it back to them, giving them valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others” (Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 12). Within these relationships, empathy has been documented as an important skill to create positive learning environments (Good & Brophy, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1994), similar to good parenting (Wentzel, 2002; Baumrind, 1971). Overall empathy indicates unconditional positive regard (caring) and support for the learner (Noddings, 1988) because one is concerned for others and wish for them to improve their situation(s) (Decety & Howard, 2014).

The empathic actions of teachers are similar to parenting (Wentzel, 2002; Baumrind, 1971). Caring creates a sense of unconditional positive regard and support for the youth (Rogers, 1959; Noddings, 1988; Osterman, 2000), while empathy creates healthier relationships and supports overall well-being. Specifically, empathy is defined in two categories- cognitive and affective empathy (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Cognitive empathy is the ability to decode what another person is thinking or feeling without necessarily resonating with that feeling state (Decety & Jackson, 2006). For example, we can understand someone is sad, without experiencing a corresponding personal emotion of sadness because it is relatively obvious when we place ourselves in their shoes (Davis, 1980; Walter, 2012). Affective empathy is commonly witnessed in the teacher’s response of mirroring the student's emotional state (Eisenberg et al., 1994) and has the added benefit of supporting the individual with modification of their troubled behaviors (Rogers, 1959). This ability to emotionally resonate with another’s feelings while understanding that they are distinct from one’s own (Hoffman, 1982) is why

affective empathy may be most pertinent to this study about art teachers and their students.

Therefore, it is not surprising that empathy is being recognized as an important professional quality for teachers to possess. For example, in Australia empathy is a standard for graduating teachers requiring beginning teachers to “demonstrate empathy and positive regard for, and rapport with, students” (Victorian Institute of Teaching, 2009, p.1). In Ireland and Canada, teachers are required to show care “through empathy in practice” (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2012, p. 5; Ontario College of Teachers, 2006, p. 1). In these ways, an art teacher’s capacity to support learners may create a safe haven, so that teaching art and learning are positively correlated in the learner’s mind.

#### **4.3.3 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Increasingly, teaching regulatory agencies in many countries require teachers to model empathic behavior and demonstrate care, yet pedagogies are not endorsed nationwide in the United States despite their capacity to develop empathy or even cultural understanding. In the United States, ethnic studies and multicultural education serve to educate cultural history but also create a stance of compassion for what minoritized learners have had to endure such as segregation or language rights (Banks, 2017). Making matters worse for learners and everyone else in the United States, racial tensions and protests in the United States, which are often attributed to African-Americans being at two and a half times greater risk of being killed and incarcerated than their white counterparts, have increased in 2020 (NAACP). Last, but not least, Latina/o/x and LGBTIQ youth continue to face discrimination and immigrants are



amongst the vulnerable populations of youth (Lahman, 2017). However, if empathy is likened to caring, the notion of a culture of compassionate, relevant pedagogy that can involve art, is a logical response (Ladson-Billings 2016). Thus, culturally relevant pedagogy need not only be a matter of reading multicultural texts and acknowledging race - there are less obvious matters that can be explored through art-education.

In fact, because urban areas generally wield greater diversity and higher socioeconomic and socio-cultural tensions, culture and empathy explored vis-a-vis arts may be particularly useful. Studies in productive teacher-student relationships have cited that empathy is important to the creation of positive learning environments (Good & Brophy, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1994). Empathy can lead to better learning outcomes, and art can cultivate empathy. Noddings conceived of a “culture of caring” that gets cultivated in the classroom and imparted from teachers to students (Noddings, 2012). Caring as pedagogy can be envisioned by using art as the medium because it seems to account for improved teacher-student relationships and better academic outcomes.

#### **4.4 Theory**

The Heuristic Model of Child Self-regulation and Reactivity and School Outcomes (Liew et al. 2020) is used to interpret the results of the art teacher interviews because the model potentiates a socioemotional exploration of teacher-student relationships. Initial analysis revealed that most of the art teachers that participated in this study, and their art classes, supported students with emotional regulation and had positive academic outcomes. Specifically, the HM incorporates several factors relevant to this study: Academic Competence and Achievement, Self-regulation/emotionality and

Risk/Protective Moderators which explore teacher's reactions to traumatized learners as well their empathy (Table 3.1). The socioemotional aspects of arts education are interpreted in this way to outline how the relationship between teachers and students may impact emotionality and self-regulation. Adapted from the work of Eisenberg, Sadovsky and Spinrad (2005) the HM (Liew et al. 2020) seeks to demonstrate that "high-levels of reactivity and low levels of self-regulation in children are linked to more internalizing and externalizing behavior problems" (p. 44). In this study, the art teachers' observations of students' self-regulation and lower levels of reactivity to environmental stressors indicated by students, were key to understanding the meaningful impact(s) of art classes on the students.

Psychology shows the personal experiences a teacher has had in their lifetime, as a learner, parent or child, can influence how they respond to work conditions at their place of work. Likewise, according to Liew et al (2020) researchers have found that close teacher–student relationships show greater willingness and engagement, which optimize learning, as well as social and emotional conditions:

The importance of meeting children's social-emotional needs is well documented by research on parent–child relationships and attachment security between child and parent or caregiver (e.g. Calkins & Leerkes, 2011; Kochanska, Philibert & Barry, 2009; Thompson, 2008). Students who have difficulty following teachers' directions or exhibit disruptive problem behaviors in the classroom are likely to experience greater conflict and less closeness with their teacher (p. 48).

Teacher-student school-based relationships may support learners in terms of academic achievement, as well as social and emotional ways. To explain, Bowlby (1988) encapsulated this attachment theory as: "Any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to another conceived as better able to cope with the

world,” (Bowlby, p. 26). Thus, when school-based teacher-student relationships mimic comforting parental structures that may be missing at home, the learners’ personhood is affirmed, not only their academics, resulting in the overall positive learner responses. Rossier (2015) explains that emotional self-regulation is understood as personal process that “allows people to face adverse work and professional situations, helping them to master school-to-work and work-to-work transitions.” In this study, the Self-Regulation of art teachers, which is a factor on the HM, exemplifies positive empathetic teacher responses to learners (Table 4.1).

#### **4.5 Method**

Narrative inquiry allows burrowing into the relevant stories of the participants, researcher and the society (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). These stories can take different narrative forms and shapes, such as counter stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which are lived experiences that run counter to society’s large-scale stories and understandings. Then, there are also stories that are similar to that of others, parallel stories (Craig, 1999), as well as story constellations (Craig, 2007), which are clusters of stories that overlap and exist within other stories. Stories are important to narrative inquiry research because they provide the context for our social, cultural and emotional landscapes.

In addition to providing context, the teachers’ narratives of experience inform their personal practical knowledge, which may also be markers of teachers’ identity. In narrative inquiry, “stories to live by” describe these defining stories, which are re-storied and relived by the individual (Clandinin & Huber, 2006). Thus, identity can be explored vis-à-vis three-dimensional narrative space - Temporality, Sociality and Spatiality

(Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). For example, the dimension Spatiality, allows for this narrative inquiry study to metaphorically shift the locus of the inquiry so that teachers can recollect and share their own stories, as well as that of their students. This study explores the art teachers lived experiences, using narrative inquiry's tools of broadening and burrowing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) to explore the stories of six art teachers in five different urban high and middle schools in Houston, Texas, who participated in hour long, semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.5.1 Broadening & Burrowing**

What has been shared thus far about benefits of art classes is part of the broadening process of narrative inquiry. This allowed the benefits of art classes teachers had witnessed – emotional support and better academic outcomes - to be examined holistically. In the initial broadening process of this narrative inquiry, all of the art teachers shared success stories about students who struggled emotionally and academically as a result of poverty, foster care, displacement, or limited English language skills. In the next section, we delve deeper into the inquiry by burrowing into the teachers' narratives of experience within their school and personal lives vis-a-vis the stories they chose to share with us.

#### **4.6 Narratives of Experience**

Participants names have been anonymized, and information about race and gender was sought given the inquiry's explorations of culturally relevant pedagogy and musings about the gender balance amongst art teachers in this study (4 female, 2 male).

Yet, sexual orientation was not queried by the research team unless the participant chose to share this information.

#### **4.6.1 Edwin**

“I break up every fight,” said Edwin, in the 2019 interview the research team conducted with him. Therefore, Edwin felt if he had been working at Spring in 2013, when the violent stabbings took place, he would have been one of the few teachers to respond. In fact, over the last 10 years of his teaching experience across the Greater Houston area, Edwin was always asked to respond to any fight that broke out:

One day, they even announced it over the speakers: “All the male teachers up to the upstairs restroom.” So, there were three of us that went running up there. When we got there we saw about seven kids fighting. That’s not like two on three or, you know, they were all just fighting each other. It was sheer pandemonium.

The students across Houston area schools continue to socialize within ethnic boundaries due to racial tensions, according to Edwin. Furthermore, throughout the interviews, this research found that the 2013 stabbing fueled the already existent community conversations about gang violence and increased racial tensions in the Greater Houston area. Edwin confirmed our observation, “the kids still talk about it (2013 school stabbings). The kids still worry about things like that happening.” While the assailant in the 2013 stabbing, Alfaro, was convicted of manslaughter and given a hefty sentence of 20 years of prison, there was no great sigh of relief in the community.

Fortunately, Edwin believed that art classes helped his students cope with school violence and other stressors. Edwin elaborated:

By making it (art) relevant, the kids realize this is actually something needed. And I give them real simple examples all the time. I'm, like, trying to give someone directions, if you can draw a map, you know, that's basic, you know, geometric reasoning. That's going to help somebody find their way to your house, and you're using art in an actual situation in the real world (personal communication, 2019).

However, despite the benefits of art education, Edwin felt he had to justify his job. "All I know is that it (emotionally supporting students) is a good way, to justify our (art) program, which is, unfortunately, one of the things we have to do."

Edwin was the one who specified breaking up fights, but he and all of the other participants said they were encouraging students to understand art in relationship to real-world problems, such as homelessness, displacement and hard circumstances at home. This was the case with the youngest teacher in this narrative inquiry, Ang, an Asian-American male who identified as a member of the LGBTIQ community as a "gay" male.

#### **4.6.2 Ang**

Ang was a new art teacher with less than one year of experience at Rowman Middle School, working as an art intern mentee with Kersten, a teacher of four years who was also a participant in this study. Rowman Middle School has also had a long track record of school violence that has been attributed to gang violence, too (ABC 13 News). A teacher anonymously voiced their concerns on an internet forum, "I have seen students threaten the lives of others with either violence or worse. And NOTHING HAPPENS AT ALL!" (Great Schools Org)

Before he studied to become an art teacher, whenever Ang tried to take art classes, his father would stop him because he wanted Ang to focus on getting into medical school. "So, I would paint and create other works of art, in secret, on my own

time.” Sadly, Ang had never been able to create art in peace until he left his parent’s house.

Throughout the interview, Ang reinforced that he had entered the teaching profession, in large part, because he was well aware that art was a self-regulating, emotionally healing mechanism for him.

I’m aware of maybe two or three foster kids in class right now. One of them just got adopted and I’m so happy about that, though he wasn’t so interested in the arts, but another one might be leaving because he was not adopted. Now he is incredibly interested. There is never a day where I don’t see him with a sketch book in hand ever.

Ang continued to explain why he had such compassion for students with difficult personal lives. “I was abused as a child. I did not know of another outlet, so I turned towards very unhealthy things like with self-harm and anorexia.” It was then that Ang discovered that making art was his coping strategy. “I faced even more seriously life-threatening circumstances, even if they were self-inflicted. With anorexia and bulimia.” As Ang entered high school, also in the Greater Houston area, Ang said things became worse at home. Ang continued, “I had an extremely difficult family life as the child of Asian-American immigrants, when I was just growing up, just feeling very American, but things got worse at home when it became obvious that I was gay.”

Ang seemed to access some of his most painful memories of his troubled youth to motivate and inspire the students in his art classes that seemed to need it. “There is this student. He reminds me of myself, and well since I used art as therapy, I think it can help him too.”

Yet, Ang added that he was over-worked with high class room numbers and disappointed that he and other art teachers at the school usually bought their art supplies for their classes, using their own money.

I don't think I can keep this up, I love the kids, especially the ones who really need me, the foster kids, but maybe I should go back to become a social worker. I think that would be better for me. Then, I can just help out an after-school program. To shape the future of children/adolescents. Those students want to be there. That sounds lovely.

Like Ang, all 80 percent of the art teachers interviewed said they were overwhelmed and unable to teach art because they were challenged by the socioemotional, cultural and linguistic issues of their students. When the research team queried Ang and the other participants further about what disruptions, learner-problems and personal issues they were facing or had faced, two themes seemed to emerge - environmental and personal issues (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2 School Narratives of Experience: Environmental & Personal Themes**

Name	Environmental (Natural, Violence, Emotional issues faced by students)	Personal (issues art teachers faced on a pedagogic or personal level)
<b>Morgan</b> White Female	<i>Freemason Academic School</i> 17 years of teaching experience, taught at several other Houston school districts.  I was in Houston ISD at the time of Hurricane Harvey, and we had an influx of students who were further behind in curriculum....for about a year and a half before we could catch everyone up.	It was a very intense year, because I was at the Charter School, with a lot of high performing kids. I had to slow everything down, so it me really hit hard in terms of the syllabus and my teaching.



**Table 4.2 Continued**

<b>Edwin</b>	<b>Season High School</b>	
White male	<i>18 years of teaching experience. Taught at several other Houston school districts. Formerly in US Army.</i>	
	One day they called me over to a break up a fight, and two other guys came with me. When we got there we saw about seven kids fighting. That's not like two on three or, you know, they were all just fighting each other. It was sheer pandemonium.	I have kids. If somebody was fighting with my son on another campus, I would want somebody to be there to break it up. So, if I don't do the same things, I can't expect it.
<b>Kersten</b>	<b>Rowman Middle School</b>	
White female	<i>4 years of teaching experience. Former professional artist and also certified to teach English.</i>	
	Some of them got affected by the hurricane too...there would be a quiet moment, so we could refocus, and then something would happen and you would better.	There was connection I had to homeless students after the hurricane. I would say things like: "Hey, I know you're going through the exact same thing that I'm going through."
<b>Ang</b>	<b>Rowman Middle School</b>	
Asian-American gay male	<i>Less than 1 year of teaching experience. Novice teacher-intern mentee who was working with Kersten.</i>	
	Most of them are foster kids, so you know, they have had bad family lives, like me. I want to show them that this (art) is what you can do, and it could save your life. I did it by myself, it helped me cope with my life. One of my foster kids, he came went to class every day whereas he used to skip all the time.	There was constant family pressure, and that's why I did consider art for a long time, because they would say, "you need to be a doctor, a genetic engineer, a nurse, an accountant." My dad freaked out and broke things around the house when my brother told him I was becoming an art

**Table 4.2 Continued**

	<p>He participated in the assignments. Even right now, he's like, "look at this." And I told him: "Come with me. Talk to me, let's just make art together."</p> <p>Suddenly he began to take an interest!</p>	<p>teacher. It was awful, and I'm glad I wasn't there to witness that.</p>
<b>Piper</b>	<b>Merry Middle School</b>	
White female	<i>8 years of teaching experience. Taught at one other Houston school district.</i>	
	<p>A lot of times they need somebody just to listen to them. You know, mom works two jobs and dad isn't around, or, they live just with dad and they haven't seen their mom in years, or they're working two jobs, because they've got a little sister.</p>	<p>I cannot teach art like I was trained to do. It is hard, but I have had to let that go. The students need to much help with everything else. I know it is best for them, but I am working twice as hard trying to incorporate concepts and words that need in their other classes.</p>
<b>Lara</b>	<b>Sparrow Middle School</b>	
White female	<i>4 years of teaching experience.</i>	
	<p>I know I have the example of one student who had problems with attendance. And it turned out that this child was held back at home by mother, because they didn't have childcare for the youngest sibling.</p> <p>The mom said mom looking after the child, was more important than her schooling.</p>	<p>Since I was a child, I wanted to be an art teacher. My mom is a teacher, and my father is a photographer. So I tell my students that being the child of an artist and a teacher, is what turned me into an art teacher.</p>

The teacher- narrated stories that seemed most relevant were grouped into two categories, the environmental and personal issues, but it is also evident that the art teachers provide their students support related to personal and family problems. For instance, Kersten recollected a former student who as a result of displacement faced even deeper personal problems:

One of them, who was here whenever I transferred over, ended up having a drug issue after all of it. So, his family basically forced him to sober up, because he was working too, and they needed the money. He left school, and I often wonder what happened to him.

Because stories from the past are alive and being relived in the present through one's actions, relationships, language and communication, they feed into the continuities of one's life and existence in different dimensions (Clandinin & Huber, 2006). In the cases of both Edwin and Ang, their empathy for their students stemmed from their own family lives. Both art teachers spoke to the definition of empathy in this study by Zahavi & Overgaard (2012), "to access the life of the mind of others in their bodily and behavioral expressions (and) to psychologically project oneself into...their thinking or feeling" (p.10). For instance, Edwin thought about his own family when he spoke about breaking up fights. "I have kids. If somebody was fighting with my son on another campus, I would want somebody to be there to break it up. So, if I don't do the same things, I can't expect it."

#### **4.7 Heuristic Model of Child Self-Regulation and Reactivity and School Outcomes**

The most relevant aspects described by the art teachers, have been summarized according to the most suitably aligned HM category, in order to interpret, demonstrate and give some educationally-related definitions to the teacher's narrated stories. In this study, most of the art teachers shared their own life stories that occurred in their personal or professional lives as they explained their 'calling' to address the needs of their students in ways that went beyond art education, which are explained in the next section using the HM as an interpretive tool.

**Table 4.3 The Heuristic Model of Child Self-Regulation and School Outcomes**

Teacher self-identified	Risk/Protective, Moderators	Self-regulation/emotionality (Empathy)	School Engagement	Academic Competence and Achievement (Learning other content areas i.e. English Language)
<i>Morgan</i>	Expressed a sense of relief because she was in a college prep school and was finally able to focus on art instruction.	She had been a teacher in order hurricanes and knew what to do.	Had adequate funding for the first time in her career	Language learning
<i>Edwin</i>	Relied on conflict resolution skills as a former Marine.	Related to his family experiences as a father	Forced to buy supplies.	Language Learning
<i>Kersten</i>	Replied on student intern to support her large classroom sizes	Related to student displacement during hurricanes	Had to buy her own supplies.	Language Learning
<i>Ang</i>	Opted going into an after school program instead of teaching in public schools.	I probably won't continue teaching in a public school system, <i>but I do want to continue working with children and education.</i>	Had to buy supplies	Life skills
<i>Piper</i>	Tried to integrate arts into the entire curriculum	Felt learners needed to learn skills in tandem with other content areas, to succeed academically.	Had to buy supplies	Cognitive benefits
<i>Lara</i>	Integrating arts into curr.	Felt a calling to teach art	Buy supplies	Cognitive Benefits

### **4.7.1 Self-Regulation**

In this study, the Self-Regulation issues that are outlined are gleaned from the narratives of the teacher about themselves as well as what the teachers described about the self-regulation of their students. In addition, the expressed compassion and other signals to feeling empathy for the students, are linked to the teachers' stories to live by. In other words, the stories that the teachers live by, or are have also experienced, will be while looked at in relationship to the teachers' expressions of empathy towards their students. Overall, the art teachers were able to understand themselves as well as their students better, as a result of sharing these emotions and ways of self-regulating.

Morgan said it was living through Hurricane Katrina in 2005 which helped her cope with the stress of being an art teacher as well as empathize with the learners. "I was in Houston ISD at the time, and we had a lot of students who were further behind in curriculum. It was hard on me, but also on the students. We changed everything, from assignments to the exams." Morgan explained that pedagogically, she felt better equipped to change lessons and alter assignments in her art classes that were impacted by Hurricane Harvey. She also expressed feelings of compassion for the struggling learners of Hurricane Katrina, when she first experienced the aftermath of a hurricane on students. "They felt really bad, but they just couldn't catch up." Even though she had not taught after a hurricane before, until Hurricane Harvey, Kersten expressed having the same awful feelings of being displaced from her home because of the flooding caused by Harvey, similar to some of her displaced students.

Ang and Kersten opted to be interviewed at the same time and they sometimes commented on each other's' statements. Ang, who, as mentioned earlier, had unstable family life during his years of Middle and High School years, expanded upon his former statements. "There is one student who reminds me so much of myself. I really think I got through to him. Now he comes to me outside of class time to show me his progress." Throughout the interview, Ang reinforced that he had entered the teaching profession, in large part, because art was a self-regulating, emotionally healing mechanism for him. "It saved my life, and I think it can help others, like the all the foster kids I have. Most of them changed their attitudes and started coming to art classes instead of skipping them, like the do others."

Likewise, Kersten shared some of her own potentially self-regulating understandings, as well as displayed great levels of empathy.

These kids are my babies. I don't ever plan on having children. I tell them, "You guys are my babies." That's why I spend so much money. That's why I'm here so much, because all I care about is them being okay.

In reliving their life experiences could very well have supported their teacher identity, as well as developed the teachers' abilities to empathize with, and maybe to identify the most vulnerable students in their classes. These results seem to support attachment theories and other research into the importance of interpersonal school-based relationships and their relationship to teacher empathy (Barr, 2011). As the teachers relived and re-storied their own lived experiences, which were both inside and out of the classroom, they appeared to be enforcing their own emotions and self-regulation, empathy and the rationale for that empathy.

#### 4.7.2 School Engagement

Funding and administration support seemed to be primary factors that the teachers cited as being part and parcel to their success as art teachers. Ang the novice teacher expected more support from the school he worked at prior to entering the profession as an intern. Ang was very disheartened by the overall lack of support from the school for the art teachers:

The big thing is just a lack of support with everything. I mean besides her support (Kersten). So, I will probably have to leave, I hate to admit it, because it feels weak, but I know mentally, it has been weighing me down on the job a lot.

Moreover, only two out of the six art teachers said they had adequate school-provided funds for supplies, and in both cases, it was the only instance in their entire careers as art teachers. Morgan, who was the most experienced with 23 years of in the profession, said she had never experienced funding support for art supplies until her current position teaching at a college preparatory academy. “This is probably the largest budget I’ve had in all the districts I’ve worked in.” Morgan was relieved that she had proper funding, but said she had grown accustomed to using her own money to buy the needed art supplies. Likewise, Edwin, who was the second most experienced teacher in this study, with 10 years of teaching under his belt, explained sufficient funding was a rarity. Edwin added he had to carefully plan finances alongside the lessons for the academic year, so he could save and stretch the money to get his classes adequately supplied.

Unfortunately, the other art teachers were not as lucky. The remaining art teachers said they spent their own money to buy art supplies for their classes. For example, at the time, Kersten said she averaged “about \$200 a month” in out of pocket expenses. Piper

said “I do not really keep track of how much money I spend on school art supplies. I think it would just upset me.” Ang also said that he has to spend his own money on the needs of the students. “We will run out of supplies, but let’s say we don’t have the funding or it takes them forever to get what we need. Well, we can’t wait to have class, so we have to go and buy things by ourselves.

#### **4.7.3 Risk/Protective**

All of the teachers in this inquiry specified the ways in which they protected themselves and mitigating stressors, most of which were informed by their former professional or life experiences (Table 3.1). For example, perhaps Edwin knew how to budget and manage the money he had been allocated for art supplies, so it would last him the entire academic year. Most likely, Morgan was also able to rise above the challenges of funding or pedagogic changes caused by influx of students, as well as natural disasters because Morgan had already been through similar things. Teacher resilience and adaptability may contribute to the responses of these seasoned teachers over that of others.

Furthermore, Edwin was well-versed in conflict management and crisis control. In the case of Edwin, who was in the Army, afforded Edwin unique conflict resolution skills that he relied upon, so he could “break up every fight.” A thorough investigation into teacher resilience as it relates to violence and trauma is outside the scope of this paper, but they are noteworthy. Similarly, Ang seemed to recognize and have the unique ability to manage the most vulnerable students in his midst. Ang was motivated to be a teacher mainly because of the social contributions he felt he could make to society, since



art was his “coping strategy.”

#### **4.7.4 Academic Achievement**

Piper, who identified as a White American female, had been an art teacher for 8 years in the Houston area, said she had many students from different parts of the world in her classrooms over the years. “We had kids mostly from South America, but they were running the gamut. I mean, there was Nicaragua, Paraguay,” which was oftentimes very challenging given the language differences. “One year we had four immigrants, refugees from Africa who spoke Swahili. So that was a difficult year trying to get four Swahili speaking kids to do art.”

Fortunately, Piper was able to alter lessons and her teaching style to support the English as a Second Language, ESL, learning-students in her art classes. “When I have a problem with ESL kids, I usually do what I call a ‘draw along.’” However, Piper said adjusting lesson plans and adding different content areas, such as English language skills, took a lot of her time. “It makes it impossible to just teach them art history and how to be visual artists by emulating artists, like I learned to do.” Despite the fact that Piper found herself not teaching “what I went to school to teach,” she was overcoming this disappointing reality of not teaching art for the sake of art. “You just have to get in there one on one with them and help them succeed with whatever they are struggling with in school.” Piper was advocating in the following school year for an arts-integrated curriculum at her school since she found herself doing it anyway.

Lara, an art teacher of four years, also saw the benefits of learning other content areas through the arts. “Art is useful, because they can express themselves in a non-verbal way.”

When it comes to teaching other subjects like literature or history, you know, because you can integrate art in history. But, when it comes to art integration, I believe that it should be, like, two side street going, not just art teachers integrating math, because we end up teaching everything but art.

Lara added learners to understand concepts visually because learners are processing non-verbal information differently through art.

In Morgan’s case, she said she has always enjoyed integrating all “types of things together if at all possible, but especially whenever I deal with my ELL learners.” Morgan, like most of the other teachers noted that English Language Learners, benefitted from art classes:

So, I’ll do something on the paper and then I’ll ask them to imitate. Then, they have to say what I say. So, as I’m drawing it, they’re drawing it too, and saying it as well. And that kind of helps reinforce it a little bit, because it’s connecting with the visual. It’s connecting with the verbal. It’s connected with the kinesthetic. So, I think that helps a lot.

Edwin explained that rather than teaching art, he felt as though he was supporting students’ overall success in school, especially for the ESL students. Edwin described how he had been trying to help one ELL student graduate who was turning 21, and would be forced out of High School soon.

(Student’s name) he comes in with a dirty shirt constantly. That makes me so angry. How and why is this happening? I know he has issues at home, and he’s working a job to help his family. So, it’s really hard for me to make a big difference, but usually, if I can kind of focus on those students with troubles at home, and just keep them in school, I tend to get more kids showing up than not.

Likewise, Kersten, who was also qualified to teach English, noted both the linguistic benefits other teachers mentioned, as well as the overall meta-cognitive skills expansion amongst her students. She expanded on the notion of arts integrated learning, “art connects visual ideas with verbal meanings as well as incorporating kinesthetic learning.” Kersten expanded on this strategy:

I show them how a lot of the renaissance painting. Then point out that there’s really two paintings in each of them. There’s the underpainting, which is all black and white in contrast, and then there’s the translucent painting on top. And that’s how they get such vibrant colors and such a depth.

Kersten said that she tries to develop lesson plans “helps reinforce other skills by connecting the meanings of words and concepts with the visual.” Overall, the art teachers had commendable strategies for teaching different kinds of learners across all of the schools that warrant more attention by educators, policy makers and curriculum developers.

## **4.8 Further Study**

### **4.8.1 Identity**

This study was interpreting using the Heuristic Model of Child Self-Regulation and Reactivity and School Outcomes as an interpretative device. In doing so, the HM categories of Risks and Protective factors as well as Self-regulation in particular, raised questions related to social construction and identity, which may influence and impact each teacher differently. For example, identity markers such as race and gender, as they relate to teachers and perceptions of teaching may impact the behaviors teachers as well as their students, as well as their relations to one another. Moreover, this study concluded art education may develop empathy in the teacher, which in turn supports

school-based teacher-student relationships, but a deeper investigation into empathy and its relationship to identity and social justice activism is also indicated. For example, how and why did Ang's experiences with marginalization, as a self-identified gay Asian-American, who also was abused by his father for being "openly gay," charge him to seek out other troubled and marginalized youth and help them through art?

#### **4.8.2 Teacher Retention**

Furthermore, the divergent lived experiences, and yet similar reactions, in terms of empathy, of the novice teacher Ang, a gay Asian-American male with 6 months of teaching experience, and his mentor, Kersten, who identified as a heterosexual white female and had 6 years of teaching experience, raise more questions. In addition, Ang was motivated to teach because he realized he could contribute to the social equity of students, yet he was also the least likely to remain a teacher, meaning an investigation into art policy and art teacher retention is warranted.

### **4.9 Implications**

#### **4.9.1 Teacher Education**

Art-based education, art therapy techniques and tools, and training in empathy, would benefit pre-service teacher education programs, according to the summative analysis of this study. The stories in this study indicate that art classes may allow for the cultivation of empathic relationships with teachers. Despite many challenges, most participants empathized with their learners, and enjoyed better teacher-student school relationships vis-à-vis the medium of art. This affirms existent research assertions that productive teacher-student relationships cultivate empathy and create positive learning

environments (Good & Brophy, 2000, Sergiovanni,1994). Moreover, in addition to narrating their stories about teaching, the participants recollected personal experiences. Many of these personal stories, which stemmed from their youth (Table 2.1) rationalized the many ways in which they supported students.

#### **4.9.2 Empathy**

After conducting this study, we are left with more questions about empathy and its relationship to art education, such as whether the participants already had well developed levels of empathy before becoming art teachers. Since ‘empathy’ has been described as “the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions” (Krznaric, 2014, p. 10), might empathy also develop when teaching art? The art teachers affirmed existent scholarship in which teachers with similar experiences are granted “a certain quality of attentiveness and emotion...” (Eisner & Powell, p. 133 as cited in Clandinin & Huber, 2006). Thus, the deployment of empathy in teacher education classes in the UK and Australia, which is said to support teachers and learners, arises as a needed plan of action in implemented in the United States.

#### **4.9.3 Arts Integrated Curricula**

According to their teachers, the overall self-awareness of the learner heightens and they have better school outcomes and performances when engaged in art as education, yet the pedagogic onus was on the art teachers. For instance, Lara said, “My fear that when it comes to official, school wide art integration is that the art teachers will have one more thing to do. It should be a two-way street.” Despite the challenges, most

participants said they found ways to teach and support ESL students, learners who had immigrated to the United States, or students who faced traumas through art. Laura went over some methods, “We are integrating knowledge naturally. When we talk about color and the color wheel, we start with Newton and the Laws of Optics.” This study indicates that administrative, educational and policy-related praxis and recommendations should be made by art teachers, and greater consideration should be given to their conclusions about an arts-integrated curriculum. Further study into teachers’ empathy levels compared with years of teaching experience may support their tried-and-true arts-based methods, and encourage districts to those methods in K-12 education, as well pre-service teacher education programs across all content areas.

#### **4.9.4 Research**

Oftentimes in this study, the initial call to teaching art, and other emotional impact(s) were relived as the teachers connected aspects of their own identity, to that of their students. Affirming research that art cultivates emotions (Eisner, 1992), and arts-based educational research can create multi-dimensional experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that have the power to emotional impact an individual, and spur action or praxis (Bagley, 2012). This ability to travel into the world view of another is an example of three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The dimensions can be thought of as the specific circumstances of the space, time and social context of a lived experience, which create an altered aesthetic and artistic space. This space translates into a timeless, non-linear emotive experience, despite the appearance of these the initial experiences as being entirely different and unrelatable.

Fortunately, the broadening and burrowing methods of narrative inquiry used in this study, found many benefits to art education classes, such as better language skills, integrated curriculum and deeper cognitive understandings.

#### **4.9.5 Art Therapy**

Very little is known about teacher empathy and how it can be cultivated as a professional tool. This study discovered the art teachers engaged in “art as therapy, for some of these kids” according to Kersten. Empowering art therapy in educational settings may help the K-12 educational system as we continue to face complex global circumstances such as wars, immigration, and natural disasters (Appleton, 2001), such as the hurricanes and floods experienced in Gulf Coast states. Learners that have been forced into immigration and other such disruptive circumstances to their schooling found reprieve and consolation in creating art, which allowed them to be have better academic achievement all around. Art therapy integration into curriculum for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners, including pre-service teachers who are facing challenges of globalization, climate changes, pandemics and more, seems more vital than ever.

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

The increasing numbers of learners from conflict zones, displaced students from natural disasters and accelerated gun violence in schools, placed great strains upon teachers in this study. Overall, the use of the HM allowed for this inquiry to identify, and evidence several aspects of self-regulation. As we burrowed into these narratives, empathy was clearly evidenced by the statements of Edwin and Ang, who said they experienced similar experiences in their own families and responded to specific instances (i.e.

intervening in fights, working with foster kids) because of their own lived experiences. Furthermore, we learned about the art teachers' challenges to teaching, as well as the benefits of art classes for their students. While this study was with art teachers, the same challenges of foster students, conflicts, disasters and disruptions to schooling exist across all content areas in the United State, and presumably across the globe. Given that Houston is emblematic of what is happening around the United States in social, economic, racial and demographic ways, this study may be a window into what is happening across the nation.



## 5 CONCLUSION

### 5.1 The Master's House

Upon completing these three studies, I believe that art education has not stayed under federal funding, and its development has been largely subsidized from private sectors and non-profit related stakeholders. This is emblematic of the larger inequities in the United States with marginalized people. The contrast between the funding of art magnet schools (Noblit & Mendez., 2008) and schools that have little or no art-education at all (Chong, 2015) demonstrates the variation in resources and priorities each strand of schooling faces. Perhaps the lack of funding under both arts and cultural studies explains why the literature and research tends to remain at the advocacy or theoretical level. Furthermore, state-level variations may be related to the adequate yearly progress requirement and the emphasis on standardized testing in core subjects that was widespread since the No Child Left behind Act, NCLB, in 2002 (Bowen & Kisida, 2019). Yet, studies that explore that intersections of marginalized cultures and people(s), decoloniality and pedagogy, especially in arts, must move beyond this, admitted huge obstacle, which I have tried to do in this dissertation.

In this sense, looking at multiple literacies, specifically cultural, emotional, and new literacies such as transcultural literacy (Kostogriz & Tsolidis, 2008) and trans literacies (Stornaiuolo, Smith & Phillips, 2016) is to call educators to the collective work of social justice. However, looking both historically and into the present moment,

through the course of this dissertation work, I found that literacy has been and continues to be understood primarily as White property used to maintain the identity and the conception of America as a White nation under the guise of progress and justice for all. In these ways, literacy emerges as the Master's tool. Traditional understanding and application of literacy may be summed up in the sentiment that poetess Audre Lorde (2018) expressed about ownership, "You cannot dismantle the Master's house with the Master's tools."

The irony is, that all three studies in in this dissertation, but especially Act One, *Parallel Monsters* and Act Two, *Poetry is Not a Luxury*, on very important benefit was demonstrated. Specifically, documentary style performance arts-based education can allow marginalized learners to express themselves and take ownership of their learning through the creative outlet of writing, acting and examining the world around them. However, throughout the course of this dissertation, I unearthed an important overarching theme involving sociocultural, political, environmental and educational issues and grand sociocultural narratives.

There is also an important historic context(s) that seem to be part and parcel to what may be considered literacy, and how it is taught, in the United States today, which ran through the three studies in this dissertation. Likewise, Giroux (1997) also considers it "mystifying" that theory, facts, and inquiry fall prey to conservative political orientations (p. 11), as well as outlining how Hurricane Katrina impacted racialized groups in Houston, Texas in different ways than their counterparts (Giroux, 2006). Specifically, a clash between the benefits of modernity and globalization was gleaned

throughout the course and geopolitical context(s) of this dissertation work, in both urban and rural parts of Texas. A similar sentiment was expressed much more eloquently by Native American activist Russell Means, who opened his most famous speech —“For America to Live Europe Must Die”— with the following protest:

The only possible opening for a statement of this kind is that I detest writing. The process itself epitomizes the European concept of “legitimate” thinking; what is written has an importance denied the spoken. It is one of the white<sup>2</sup> world’s ways of destroying the cultures of non-European peoples, the imposing of abstraction over the spoken relationship of a people.

After I explain the limitations that I believe my research may have had, I will follow by outlining some overarching findings in the section Geopolitical Structures Impacting Education. Then, I unravel the remaining themes that were identified across all three studies in this dissertation.

## **5.2 Limitations**

Overall, a lot of information was gathered, in fact, much more than needed for a dissertation. However, a limitation to this dissertation is that that beyond the stories that the teachers shared, time was not spent exploring the relationship that exists, if any, between a teacher’s lived experiences and how they approached teaching. Understanding each teacher’s experiences and stances on capitalism, colonization, citizenship, culture, marginalization and the other issues explored in this dissertation, would have been interesting. In fact, Hanvey (1976) explains that *perspective consciousness* means going beyond the surface of one’s opinion to better understand the intersecting influences that

makeup one's view of the world—a key component of global mindedness. Upon finishing this dissertation, I feel an opportunity may have been missed to do because a large part of my personal drive to unravel the benefits of arts education, has been about understanding perspectives and consciousness that create interethnic alliances and allyship.

### **5.3 Geopolitical Structures Impacting Education**

In this dissertation, I have tried to unravel how knowledge is gleaned and what informs literacy by looking at the benefits of arts-based educative experiences and art education classes. This narrative inquiry has been conducted under the backdrop of the sociocultural issues the United States, and consideration given to how those issues may translate into educational praxis, funding and equity. In many ways, it would seem that immigration and modernity may have led to emancipation for the Anglo-Europeans, who occupied North America, but may be a continuation of oppression for more recent immigrants.

The paradox of modernity versus colonialism is that even though Anglo-American settlers were once immigrants, their ancestors seem to be opposed to immigration to the United States today. A question arises - are there structures in our society that serve to continually re-colonize North America, despite globalization and immigration? The 2016 presidential elections in the United States may provide some answers. The Ipsos Public Affairs looked at the relative effect of eight different ideological measures of support such as, Fear of Others and the American Dream during the Trump administration (Young, 2017). In a logistic regression (n=1006) Ipsos

concluded that many people voted for Trump because of their sentiments about nationalism and nativism in the United States. “Those who support Trump are much more to hold strong nativist and anti-immigrant beliefs...most importantly nativism is the most impactful driver of support for Trump,” (Young, 2017, p.5). Evidentially, the predominantly white ruling culture likely voted for President Trump in 2016 because they perceived a threat to their social standing by the immigrants and foreigners entering the nation.

The Ipsos findings about the 2016 U.S. Presidential election were corroborated by Huber (2016), who studied the election using critical constitutionalism, an area under legal scholarship, to find that nationalism and nativism were involved in decision making. Furthermore, Huber (2016) attributes social and economic stratification to race, asserting that it has been strategically used in the United States to sustain hierarchies “that place whites above and nonwhites below, according to their perceived alignment to whiteness,” (p. 217). In these ways, we can see how media, governance, education and other structures enforce hegemonic norms in the United States. Unfortunately, those norms seem to divide and exclude people who have migrated to the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as well as harm cognitive and educational development of all learners.

Similarly, the propagation of one standard language in the United States, which was first outlined in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 (Phillipson, 2009) may be attributed to nationalism and sociopolitical issues. Yet, almost two hundred years later, we must wonder why it is still in place when the nation has an increasingly Spanish-speaking population. The United States has also initiated two free trade agreements between

borders that seem to contradict an English only policy. Namely the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA(1994-2018) and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, USMCA, (2018-present), both of which encourage free trade and laborers in the agricultural sectors (Kenton, 2021). Otero (2011) explains this paradox. “Its peculiar character, it must be emphasized, was neoliberal: the attempt to give free rein to private investments in the market, while keeping the bearers of labor power—workers—rooted in their national states” (p. 387). To demonstrate, laborers from Mexico and other nations remain on the lower receiving end of the North American companies they work for, while those who have already been on the higher receiving end continue to have more access to the capitalist market system. Arguably, NAFTA served to displace people such as farm-workers and their families (Relinger, 2010). To elaborate, the agreement that was set up to benefit its stakeholders, NAFTA, seems to have had a largely negative impact and granted fewer economic opportunities for those who, under NAFTA agreements, came the United States to labor for companies or for education.

In this way, we can see that acquiring more agreements, as well as human and social capital, by the United States’ standards of free trade and travel between the nations, did not benefit people from Mexico, who come to the United States to work or study. Given that all of the actors in Act One, *Monsterland*, are from Mexico, Mexican-American, DACA recipients or undocumented people from Mesoamerica, these international policies cannot be overlooked in the summation of this dissertation. This finding seems to affirm that of Epstein (2005) who explains that the democratization of schooling serves to maintain the dominance of Western-centric culture, or habitus,

globally. In order to dive into the remaining themes, this overall backdrop of geopolitical information and wonderings I experienced throughout the years of work with the research studies in this dissertation need articulation.

Specifically, studies about the sociocultural and historical issues, both inside and outside the classroom, which impact learning need to be addressed within the field of education if we are to educate towards greater citizenship, peace, as well as knowledge and cognition. In addition, what is this seemingly colonial in origin, meandering relationship that seems to exist between language use in education? Put another way, why is language or culture still being extrapolated from marginalized learners, when settler colonialism has (seemingly) ended under the umbrella of the United States.

While each study in this dissertation interlinked these issues and related theories that emerged in terms of the benefits and outcomes of the educative experiences, there were some overarching themes that emerged - Art Education, Cultural Studies, Literacy. In the rest of the Conclusion, I will outline the remaining relevant themes that were identified across the three studies in this dissertation. I will discuss their implications and make recommendations about future studies.

#### **5.4 Art Education**

In order to understand the benefits of arts-based education and art-education from both learners and teachers, I look to three different studies to glean insights in this narrative inquiry. Therefore, drawing from the relationship between language, discourse and identity (Giroux, 1997), I seek to deconstruct performance arts-based narrative inquiry and I discuss the emergent benefits I have experienced as a researcher. I have

chosen to look at social phenomenon through the lens of the arts because in all of these studies, the art that was generated were responses to conflicts the learners had faced that benefited them in ways their traditional schooling did not.

One thread that emerged in the two studies *Parallel Monsters* and *Poetry* is not a luxury was control over the learners' use of creative writing as well as language. In Act One, actors were not permitted to perform in Spanish or perform in any other plays at the university they attended because they students were not, or did not sound like, native English speakers. In Act Two, learners were not able to express themselves on their own terms, using creative urban vernacular, if they wanted to, in their schooling. Schools and institutions, such as the university that Franklin worked at, wanted learners who could not assimilate to be erased.

Despite these challenges, in both studies, both programs supported and encouraged linguistic and cultural relevance to the learners despite being seemingly simple performance arts-based educative experiences to the untrained eye. In fact, audience members such as Connie and I were also able to benefit as we enhanced our own literacies by merely having watched *Monsterland* performances. This indicates that order to better understand diverse learnings and create the much needed pedagogy as well as policies for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, more research needs to be conducted to identify the ways in which qualitative performance arts can aid multiple literacies. In terms of teacher education, for instance, what would be the benefits if preservice teachers, of all content areas, are taught to use innovative pedagogies such as arts-education.



In terms of arts-education, this dissertation evidenced that autobiographical poetry and documentary theater can inform several forms of tangible and seemingly intangible forms of literacy, such as emotional, cultural and political, which was particularly evident in the second and third studies. In terms of art education in K-12 classrooms, in Act Three, *Art for Art's Sake*, according to the art teachers interviewed, the art education classes they taught in middle and high schools produced better overall academic outcomes. In addition to academic outcomes, when the interviews were put under the framing of the HM (Liew et al. 2020) it can be said that as the art classes produced learners with better self-regulation and emotional balance as well. However, the art teachers all expressed seeing the benefits of art classes on their students in ways that went over and beyond academic benefits or culminating artistic capabilities. Art was a form of therapy for many of the most vulnerable students, such as those under foster care, which several of the art teachers interviewed described as having. In fact, art can be a means of psychotherapy, can support recovery and reintroduce learners to schooling because it can transport learners in an imaginary realm that allows for free 'speech' and expression to emerge (Lee, 2013). This important finding of the third study in this dissertation, Act Three, indicates that all teachers would benefit by participation in art therapy instruction during pre-service teacher education, or as professional development sessions.

There were also a few benefits that emerged in Act Three which were not beneficial for the teachers, which revealed the bittersweetness of teaching art. The same finding indicated that art teachers have additional strains placed upon them, as they are

often the ones that learners are able to establish better teacher-student school based relationships with, according to my finding when using the HM framework by Liew et al. (2020). Upon interviewing the art teachers, most of them confirmed that they were already under the strain of budget cuts and a lack of art supplies, as well as overcrowding and distressed students. One novice teacher, Ang, described a push and pull relationship with teaching art because while he was drawn to teaching art, he could not keep up with the emotional and financial drains placed upon him in the first six months of interning with a seasoned art teacher, Kersten. Another teacher, Edwin, spent a lot of time responding to school violence. In fact, at one school he worked at, the administration clearly expected that he do so when they would call him by name over the school intercom to respond. The irony is that teaching art education classes benefits the learners more than it benefits the teachers.

### **5.5 Arts-based Educational Research**

As an educational researcher, the most exhilarating aspect of my chosen research method, narrative inquiry, in this dissertation process has been that narrative inquiry allows for sociocultural issues and stories to be told or emerge organically vis-à-vis-the arts and aesthetic experiences such as narrative three-dimensional space. Likewise, Norris (2018) explains that inequitable experiences can be expressed through performance arts and experienced by the participants, researcher and audience (Norris, 2018). In fact, today, educational research calls for diverse critical analytical approaches in order to support 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners who are exposed to immigration and transnational global flow.

While outlining the exact pedagogic or research processes of the three studies in this dissertation were not the foci, all three of the studies, but especially in Act One and Act Two, clearly entailed a long-term literacy project and process. In both instances, the learners had to read and research materials, personally digest and reflect on that research in order to contextualize it to their own lives and world around them. Then, learners had to write their understandings of that research in the form of poetry or script-writing, and then then they presented the research. In these processes shed light as to how reading, emotional, cultural, writing, visual, performed, and potentially transcultural forms of literacy are interconnected. In fact, performance art itself may be a form of qualitative research and can serve as a means of identity exploration and understanding (Norris, 2018; Rhodes, 1998). In fact, these processes may be easily translated into project-based assessments in academic settings. Furthermore, these practices may be altered by curriculum makers and test makers in order to make them suitable for any standardized test requirements.

## **5.6 Literacy**

Similar to the emotional emancipation that art teachers said many of their students experienced in their art classes, the two performance arts-based educative studies presented in this dissertation captured emotive experiences of the participants and sometimes audience members. Through creative writing, the learners in these two studies, captured the moments or periods in their personal histories within their respective cultural, social, environmental and political contexts. Their innermost feelings

came into conversation with the rest of the world through their individualized, but educationally reproduceable, processes of research, reading, writing and performances.

Likewise, in many ways, bildungsroman is similar to the processes that the learners went through in *Monsterland* as a documentary theater, which involves script-writing, as well as the creative writing and poetry slam performances in Act Two. To explain, personal coming of age is a form of meaningful writing, *bildungsroman* (Morgenstern, 1819 as cited in Swales, 2015). This is a literary genre that is informed by self-reflection and lived experiences in which writers can build, or *bildung*, in German, and come to develop themselves (Kim & Zimmerman, 2017). Bildungsroman, documentary theater and autobiographical poetry writing and poetry slams all require that learners to consider their multiplicities in terms of lived experiences that have helped learners build their knowledge.

In fact, bildungsroman is specifically meant to be reflective, personal writing that seeks to show one's learnings and transformation through their own lived experiences, which develop into socially impactful knowledge(s) (Boes, 2012). Yet, unlike documentary theater and poetry slam performance art, I did not unearth any bildungsroman associated pedagogy that asks for one's learnings to be presented or otherwise given to audiences outside of the writer's readership. In many ways, documentary theater and poetry slam performances, which can be traced to storytelling practices of several indigenous cultures (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2007), take autobiographical writing much further than bildung. Performance arts based educative practices present

the learners' insights into articulated performances for audiences, which in fact, increases the audiences' literacies, too.

Without emotional literacy, cultural literacy, or the ability to interpret culture in its many manifestations by applying skills and knowledge, while able to assess one's attitudes towards them (Caball et al. 2013), may not be fully developed because bias awareness has not been actualized. There should be a vast educational movement to raise the literacy consciousness of teachers towards the ability to integrate the inherent knowledge into content-based courses. Emotional and cultural literacy can be addressed while developing digital literacy. These literacies are being overlooked in the US educational system even though there is evidence that they can be taught and that in fact they aid other forms of literacy. In fact, early childhood development and its relationship to education can be explored alongside culture because socio-emotional and sociocultural skills are interdependent on the brain's neuro-plasticity in tandem with low stress levels (Kuhl, 2011). Furthermore, Sigman et al. (2014) explain that educational brain concepts should be part of the teacher's professional program.

To conclude this section on arts, after witnessing its benefits, in terms of multiple literacies and other learnings, to the performance-arts participants involved in my research studies, I conclude that the literacy process entailed therein is much more nuanced and elaborate than just writing a piece of autobiographical writing such as bildungsroman. Despite this observation, bildungsroman is much more venerated and associated with the more common frames of literacy, and well as being revered as a formal genre of literature (Kim & Zimmerman, 2017, Boes, 2012). In fact, even though

they went over and beyond being students at the university as well as participating after their studies in Monsterland, they still faced explicit resistance from the university in which the learners began the performance about performing Monsterland at their university or even their hometown (Franklin, personal communication, 2018).

### **5.7 Cultural Studies & Pedagogy**

In these ways, Anglo-European cultural thought and behavior have worked to define “legitimate” reading and writing as that which represents the superiority of the rational mind over the emotional body. Prendergrast and Prendergrast (2003) make a similar argument, but extend it to encompass the entire ideology of literacy, explaining that reading and writing practices protect the privilege of some and deny it to others. Prendergast’s argument demonstrates how dominant power can be exercised epistemologically – how, what, and the voice or ways in which people can legitimately express it. Therefore, African-American, Latino/a and other multilingual and multiethnic people are inherently disadvantaged in traditional schooling in the United States. However, by including their stories and linguistic practices, especially those of self-realization, marginalized voices are no longer in the liminal spaces of existence. Yet, multi-literacies are rarely looked at in traditional academic settings as means to open up the ways in which we can learn and view how students speak and learn.

Teaching learners who are culturally different entails translating information on culture and learning styles into applied tools for instruction. To elaborate, Gollnick (1980) summarizes the five major goals of multicultural education as promoting "strength and value of cultural diversity... Human rights and respect for cultural

diversity... Alternative life choices for people... Social justice and equal opportunity for all people . . . and Equity distribution of power among members of all ethnic groups" (as cited in Sleeter & Grant, 1987 p. 9). However, the results of this dissertation would lead me to conclude that these goals of multicultural education, as conceived by Gollnick, are not being adequately parlayed in teacher education programs. As evidenced by the manner in which language, identity, and power directly target people of color in Monsterland as well as the poets in WITS, which caused all of them delays in their educational experiences. A harsher notion is to question what has come of those learners who were not drawn to these after-school, voluntary educative experiences. We can assume that their minoritization may have expanded, which caused further alienation or perhaps assimilation, causing their true voice and identities to be damaged, lost or erased.

Despite these factors, forms of cultural education are becoming an accepted and articulated concept among teacher educators and teachers, in part because of the increased attendance of students of color. Multicultural education has never been targeted for federal funding and, like arts education, its development has been subsidized from other related areas such as Ethnic Studies, bilingual education, and Teacher Corps (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Similar to art education, perhaps lack of funding into cultural studies and courses such as ethnic studies and multicultural education, explains why the literature tends to remain at the advocacy level. We will not know the effects of arts based education on marginalized learners in greater detail, such as what forms it takes,

how and why it is beneficial unless we examine why funding barriers are encountered and shed light upon them to our educational communities.

### **5.8 The Tip of the Iceberg**

There needs to be much more research conducted into the benefits of arts-based and art education classes. As I have explained throughout each one of the themes, several other related areas that need studying have emerged as a result of this dissertation, including decolonializing education, the relationship between art and marginalized youth, and unravelling the interplay between multiple literacies and multicultural learners. Furthermore, from the onset of this research, as a researcher who is not from the same ethnic background as anyone else in either of the three research studies, I became incrementally more connected to the participants and driven to become a scholar as an ally for marginalized groups such as that of the participants. As such, as I previously stated as a limitation, the extent to which a teacher's cultural, historical, political, and educational background influenced their decision making when teaching, could be more fully investigated. For instance, future research that brings educators from around the world together through a virtual discussion forum, could ask participants to reflect on how their life experiences shape their global mindedness, and, ideally, identify any biases they possess. This research may be able to unmask how these characteristics consciously and unconsciously influence what they choose to include and leave out of the curriculum.

Research methods that use the arts as a medium to mask any uncomfortable revelations, or use online discussion forums to pursue these lines of inquiry could



provide a sense of safety so that participants are able to ask the difficult questions. Experiences that Cabrena and I had, for example, were very hard to do because we each had to ask ourselves and assess how, when and if we were grieving over the deaths of our fathers. As a teacher training pedagogy, perhaps involving teachers in roleplay, spoken word poetry, bildungsroman or perhaps the visual arts, would provide the necessary shield to be able to pursue topics that can help a teacher's understandings of the complexities of cultures, histories, and places. In doing so, educators and researchers alike may be able to transfer a greater self-awareness and thinking and work on cross-cultural learning, interethnic alliances and allyship, into their classroom.

## **5.9 Epilogue**

This dissertation found that culturally responsive and relevant, as well as linguistically affirming and relevant pedagogies, as explored through the arts may enhance literacy in unexpected areas. When learners from other countries such as those in Act One, or less dominant cultures such as Asian-American, African-American and LGBTIQ learners in Act Two and Act Three studies, can access their cultural funds of knowledge, they seem to be better informed as well as enhanced by those experiences. Allowing for multiethnic and multilingual communities to participate in their learning processes allows their identity and personhood to thrive. In fact, according to a Houston-based study by Bowen and Kisidia (2019), the overall effects of arts-education seem to have impacted drop-out rates and improved achievement scores in other content areas in math and science across elementary in the Greater Houston area.

The arts in education can allow for latent, underutilized experiences and literacies to emerge unless they are underfunded or overregulated. Paradoxically, arts stimulus funds under the Obama administration and the creation of the National Arts Policy Committee were obliterated by the Trump administration in 2016 when it dismantled these arts objectives (Americans for the Arts). These disturbing contradictions and questions about the continued educational problems in the United States with learning, literacy, and culture evidences the need for more research on art education. There appears to be no other reason for them to be excluded from traditional school settings, as they were in both instances, other than hidden agendas such as prejudices, bias, and the aftermath of colonialism. For these reasons and more, decolonial theories have responded to these facts and others as they seek to dismantle colonial systems of stratification, privilege, bias and knowledge acquisition. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) explains that a scholar who seeks to unravel coloniality in education can focus on “teasing out epistemological issues, politics of knowledge generation, as well as questions of who generates which knowledge, and for what purpose” (p.11). In this dissertation, and throughout the three research studies, I have tried to tease out epistemological issues and look at more affirming ontologies and axiologies, such as multiple literacies and the arts.

Unfortunately, pedagogy or other resistance literature may also be marred by its own culturally-lacking or misinformed theoretical limitations and language controls, amongst other things (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook 1997; Canagarajah 2007). What is problematic is that much of my research and scholarship I have encountered seems to

indicate that education, research and ways of knowing are being governed and controlled by outside stakeholders such as a globally dominant power. To elaborate, according to Mignolo and Walsh (2018), the modern world we live in has been constructed out of coloniality, making it hard to discern which way to proceed. Be it through presidential voting polls, science or cultural theorists, it seems the U.S educational system is geared at maintaining the nation's capitalist, globally dominant structure rather than striving for meta-cognition by considering the multiplicities of learning.

## REFERENCES

- Adrados, F. R. (1975). *Festival, comedy and tragedy: the Greek origins of theatre*. Brill Archive.
- Allen, R. L. (1999). The socio-spatial making and marking of 'us:' Toward a critical postmodern spatial theory of difference and community. *Social Identities*, 5(3), 249-277.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2009). *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. Duke University Press.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2015). *Light in the dark/Luz en lo oscuro: Rewriting identity, spirituality, reality*. Duke University Press.
- Appleton, V. (2001). Avenues of hope: Art therapy and the resolution of trauma. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 18(1), 6-13.
- Americans for the Arts. (2013, January 1). *We have to consider that every administration has a different stance on the arts*. Retrieved December 21, 2020, from [www.americansforthearts.org](http://www.americansforthearts.org)
- Asadi, L., Casting the Researcher as Actor. (2020) *Truth and Knowledge in Curriculum Making*, 10.
- Autry, L. L., & Walker, M. E. (2011). Artistic representation: Promoting student creativity and self-reflection. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 6(1), 42-55.
- Bagley, C., & Castro-Salazar, R. (2012). Critical arts-based research in education: Performing undocumented historias. *British Educational Research Journal*, 38(2), 239-260.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1994). *The Bakhtin reader: Selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov*. Hodder Arnold.
- Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts-based research*. Sage.
- Barr, J. (2011). The relationship between teachers' empathy and perceptions of school culture. *Educational*

- Barsalou, L. W., Santos, A., Simmons, W. K., & Wilson, C. D. (2008). Language and simulation in conceptual processing. *Symbols, embodiment, and meaning*, 245-283.
- Beeman, W. O. (1993). The anthropology of theater and spectacle. *Annual review of Anthropology*, 22(1), 369-393.
- Bell, D. (1992). The space traders. *Faces at the bottom of the well*, 158-94.
- Benderly, B. L. (2012, January). What Scientist Shortage?: The Johnny-can't-do-science myth damages US research. *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved from [https://archives.cjr.org/reports/what\\_scientist\\_shortage.php](https://archives.cjr.org/reports/what_scientist_shortage.php)
- Beyer, K. (2014). Comparing Native Hawaiian education with Native American and African American education during the nineteenth century. *American Educational History Journal*, 41(½), 59.
- Bhabha, H. K. (2004). *The Location of Culture*. Psychology Press.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2009). Negotiating shuttling between transnational experiences a de/colonizing approach to performance ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(6), 1061-1083.
- Birkhead, Mike (1994). *Tiger Crisis*. Mike Birkhead Film & Television Productions.
- Blanton, C. K. (2007). *The strange career of bilingual education in Texas, 1836-1981* (Vol. 2). Texas A&M University Press.
- Boal, A. (2000). *Theater of the Oppressed*. Pluto press.
- Boes, T. (2012). *Formative fictions: Nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the bildungsroman*. Cornell University Press.
- Bogue, R. (2009). Preface. In Masny, D. & Cole, D. R. (Eds.), *Multiple literacies theory: A Deleuzian perspective* (pp. vii-viii). Sense Publishers.
- Border Patrol (2014). Arrests Monthly. Retrieved from: <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/cbparrest/>
- Bowen, D. H., & Kisida, B. (2019). Investigating causal effects of arts education experiences: Experimental evidence from Houston's Arts Access Initiative. *Houston Education Research Consortium Research Report for the Houston Independent School District*, 7(4), 1-28.

- Brinton, D. G. (1894/2008). *Nagualism A Study in Native American Folk-lore and History*. The Project Gutenberg EBook of Nagualism. Retrieved from: [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/26426/26426-h/26426-h.htm#Footnote\\_4-1\\_1](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/26426/26426-h/26426-h.htm#Footnote_4-1_1)
- Brown, L. (2001) *Fables of modernity : literature and culture in the English eighteenth century*. Ithaca N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Bruner, J. (2004). Life as narrative. *social research* Vol 71: No 3: Fall 2004 p 691-710
- Bruner, J. (1993). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. 1986. *Cambridge: Harvard UP*.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Cabrera, Nolan L., Jeffrey F. Milem, Ozan Jaquette, and Ronald W. Marx. (2014) "Missing the (student achievement) forest for all the (political) trees: Empiricism and the Mexican American studies controversy in Tucson." *American Educational Research Journal* 51, no. 6: 1084-1118.
- Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). Youth participatory action research. *Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*, 1-12.
- Campano, G., & Ghiso, M. P. (2011). Immigrant students as cosmopolitan intellectuals. *Handbook of research on children's and young adult literature*, 164-176.
- Cassel, C. A., & Lo, C. C. (1997). Theories of political literacy. *Political Behavior*, 19(4), 317 -335.
- Césaire, A. (2001). *Discourse on colonialism*. NYU Press.
- Chiaramonte, P., & Mills, A. J. (1998). Organizational Analysis Goes to the Movies: Integrating Humanities into the Management Curriculum. *Journal of Management Systems*, 10(3), 17–30.
- Chong, C. Y. J. (2015). Why art psychotherapy? Through the lens of interpersonal neurobiology: The distinctive role of art psychotherapy intervention for clients with early relational trauma. *International Journal of Art Therapy*, 20(3), 118-126.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Clandinin, D. J., Rosiak, J. (2006). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry border spaces and tensions. In Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.) *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Sage Publications.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2016). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Routledge.
- Clinton, G., & Hokanson, B. (2012). Creativity in the training and practice of instructional designers: the Design/Creativity Loops model. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 60(1), 111-130.
- Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D.J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D.J. (1994). Telling teaching stories. *Teacher education quarterly*, 145-158.
- Conquergood, W. (2002). Performance studies interventions and radical research. *The Drama Review* 46, 2 (T174), Summer 2002. *New York University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
- Coleman, M. C. (1993). *American Indian children at school, 1850-1930*. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi.
- Cottom, T. M. (2018). *Thick: and other essays*. The New Press.
- Craig, C. J. (1999). Parallel stories: A way of contextualizing teacher knowledge. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15(4), 397-411.
- Craig, C. J. (2020). Generous Scholarship: A counternarrative for the region and the academy. In *cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional collaboration in teacher education* (pp. 351-365). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Craig, C. J. (2000). Stories of schools/teacher stories: A two-part invention on the walls theme. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 30(1), 11-41.
- Dardar, A. (2019). Decolonizing Interpretive Research: A critical bicultural methodology for social change. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* Vol 14, No 2, 2015, pp. 63-77 Special Edition: ANZCIES Conference Proceedings 2014 <http://iejcomparative.org>
- Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Smith, L. T. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*. Sage.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Denzin, N. (2018). Performing Ethnography: Staging Resistance. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 1–10. 2018. Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. (2017). Critical Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry* 2017, Vol. 23(1) 8–16.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier Books (1958). *Experience and nature*. New York: Dover.
- Dunn, T. (2009). The militarization of the US border, 1978-1992 Low intensity conflict doctrine comes home. CMAS Border and migration series, Gilberto Cardenas (eds).
- Duran, E., Duran, B., Heart, M. Y. H. B., & Horse-Davis, S. Y. (1998). Healing the American Indian soul wound. In *International handbook of multigenerational legacies of trauma* (pp. 341-354). Springer US.
- Dwyer, M. C. Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools. (2011). Washington, D.C: *President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities*.
- Enriquez, G., Johnson, E., Kontovourki, S., & Mallozzi, C. A. (Eds.). (2015). *Literacies, learning, and the body: Putting theory and research into pedagogical practice*. Routledge.
- Epstein, E. H. (2005). Education as a fault line in assessing democratisation: Ignoring the globalising influence of schools. In *International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research* (pp. 613-630). Netherlands: Springer.
- Erasmus, Zimitri, Rearranging the furniture of history: Non-racialism as anticolonial praxis. *Critical Philosophy of Race, Col 5, No 2, p. 187-222*. *Project Muse* [muse.jhu.edu/article/665092](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/665092).
- Fanon, F. (1968). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press.
- Eubanks, P. (2002). Students Who Don't Speak English How Art Specialists Adapt Curriculum for ESOL Students. *Art Education*, 55(2), 40-45.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London, England: Continuum.



- Gabor, A. (2019, October 4). How to Succeed in Business? Major in Liberal Arts. *Bloomberg Opinion*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-10-04/tech-should-look-beyond-stem-and-covet-liberal-arts-grads>
- Gándara, P., Rumberger, R. *Teachers College Record* Volume 111, Number 3, March 2009, pp. 750–782, Teachers College, Columbia University
- García, Ochoa, G., McDonald, S., & Monk, N. (2016). Embedding cultural literacy in higher education: A new approach. *Intercultural Education*, 27(6), 546-559. doi:10.1080/14675986.2016.1241551
- Gibson, R. (2010). The ‘Art’ of creative teaching: Implications for higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15(5), 607-613.
- Gladstone, R., Sugiyama, S. (2018) *Trump’s Travel Ban: How It Works and Who Is Affected*. Retrieved from, : <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/01/world/americas/travel-ban-trump-how-it-works.html>
- Gómez Carlier, N., & Salom, A. (2012). When art therapy migrates: The acculturation challenge of sojourner art therapists. *Art therapy*, 29(1), 4-10.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. Jossey-Bass.
- Greene, M. (2011). Releasing the imagination. *NJ*, 34(1), 61-70.
- Gregory, E., Hardiman, M., Yarmolinskaya, J., Rinne, L., & Limb, C. (2013). Building creative thinking in the classroom: From research to practice. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 62, 43-50.
- Hammond, Z. (2017). *Culturally responsive teaching & the brain*. Corwin, Sage.
- Hardiman M.M. (2019) The Arts, Creativity, and Learning: From Research to Practice. In: Contreras-Vidal J., Robleto D., Cruz-Garza J., Azorín J., Nam C. (eds) *Mobile Brain-Body Imaging and the Neuroscience of Art, Innovation and Creativity*. Springer Series on Bio- and Neurosystems, vol 10. Springer, Cham
- Hargrove, R. (2012). Fostering creativity in the design studio: A framework towards effective pedagogical practices. *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, 10(1), 7-31.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Paul H Brookes Publishing.

- Holiday, A., Hyde, M., & Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural communication*.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to transgress education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- Huber, L. P. (2012). Testimonio as LatCrit methodology in education. In *handbook of qualitative research in education*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Jackson, P. W. (1995). On the place of narrative in teaching. In H. McEwan & K. Egan (Eds.), *Narrative in teaching, learning, and research*. Teacher's College Press.
- Kalmanowitz, D. (2016). Inhabited studio: Art therapy and mindfulness, resilience, adversity and refugees. *International Journal of Art Therapy, 21*(2), 75-84.
- Kao, G., & Thompson, J. S. (2003). Racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment. *Annual review of sociology, 29*(1), 417-442.
- Kelley, J. G., Lesaux, N. K., Kieffer, M. J., & Faller, S. E. (2010). Effective academic vocabulary instruction in the urban middle school. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(1), 5-14.
- Kim, J., Zimmerman, A. (2017) Bildung, bildungsroman, and the cultivation of teacher dispositions, *The Teacher Educator, 52*(3), 235-249, DOI: 10.1080/08878730.2017.1315624
- Klineberg, S. L. (2020). *Prophetic City: Houston on the cusp of a changing America*. Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster.
- Kramsch, C. (1995). The cultural component of language teaching. *Language, culture and curriculum, 8*(2), 83-92.
- Kramarski, B., & Mizrachi, N. (2006). Online discussion and self-regulated learning: Effects of instructional methods on mathematical literacy. *The Journal of Educational Research, 99*(4), 218-231.
- Kramsch, C., & Widdowson, H. G. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491.
- Lahman, M. K. (2017). *Ethics in social science research: Becoming culturally responsive*. SAGE Publications.

- Lather, P. (2018). Within and beyond neoliberalism: Doing qualitative research in the afterward. *Dissident Knowledge in Higher Education*, 102-120.
- Lee, N. P. (2013). Engaging the pink elephant in the room: Investigating race and racism through art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 54(2), 141-157.
- Lee, V., & Burkam, D. (2002, April). Inequality at the starting gate: Social background and achievement at kindergarten entry. In *annual meeting of the American Educational Research Organization, New Orleans, LA*.
- Lenz, A. S., Holman, R., & Dominguez, D. (2010). Encouraging Connections: Integrating Expressive Art and Drama Into Therapeutic Social Skills Training With Adolescents. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 5(2), 142–157. doi: 10.1080/15401383.2010.485086
- Leu, D. J. (2001). Internet project: Preparing students for new literacies in a global village. *The Reading Teacher*, 54, 568-572.
- Levinas, E. (1999). *Alterity and transcendence*. Columbia University Press.
- Levinas, E. (1991). *Otherwise than being or beyond essence*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Springer
- Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A., & Futing Liao, T. (2004). *The SAGE encyclopedia of social science research methods* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781412950589
- Liew, J., Erbeli, F., Nyanamba, J. M., & Li, D. (2020). Pathways to Reading Competence: Emotional Self-regulation, Literacy Contexts, and Embodied Learning Processes. *Reading Psychology*, 1-27.
- Lin, B., Liew, J., & Perez, M. (2019). Measurement of self-regulation in early childhood: Relations between laboratory and performance-based measures of effortful control and executive functioning. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 47, 1-8.
- Liptak, A. (2019). Supreme Court Appears Ready to Let Trump End DACA Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/12/us/supreme-court-dreamers.html>
- Madden, M. E., Baxter, M., Beauchamp, H., Bouchard, K., Habermas, D., Huff, M., ... & Plague, G. (2013). Rethinking STEM education: An interdisciplinary STEAM curriculum. *Procedia Computer Science*, 20, 541-546.
- Marcus, G. E., & Fischer, M. M. (2014). *Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the human sciences*. University of Chicago Press.

- Masny, D. (2012, February). Multiple literacies theory: Discourse, sensation, resonance and becoming. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 33(1), 113-128.
- Masny, D., & Cole, D. R. (2009). *Multiple literacies theory: A Deleuzian perspective*. Sense Publishers.
- Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press.
- Ministry of Education. (2003). *Effective literacy practice in years 1–4*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Morgan, R., Penfield, K. New NAFSA data, international students contribute about 39 billion to the US economy. <https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/new-nafsa-data-international-students-contribute-39-billion-us-economy>
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, part of the U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/>
- National Council of Teachers of English. (2013). *The NCTE definition of 21st century literacies*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- National Research Council. (1996). *National science education standards: Observe, interact, change, learn*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018). *Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonization*. Routledge.
- Neimeyer, R. A., & Sands, D. C. (2011). Meaning reconstruction in bereavement: From principles to practice. In R. A. Neimeyer, H. Winokuer, D. Harris & G. Thornton (Eds.), *Grief and bereavement in contemporary society: Bridging research and practice*. Routledge.
- Nelson, H. L., & Lindemann, H. (2001). *Damaged identities, narrative repair*. Cornell University Press.
- New London Group. 1996. A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60–92.
- Noblit, G. W., & Mendez, J. C. (2008). Legacies of Brown versus Board: An introduction to the special issue. *The Urban Review*, 40(1), 1-4.

Olson, M. R., & Craig, C. J. (2009). Small” stories and meganarratives: Accountability in balance. *Teachers College Record*, 111(2), 547-572.

Parsad, B., and Spiegelman, M. (2012). Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999–2000 and 2009–10 (NCES 2012–014). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

Phillipson, R. (1992). Linguistic imperialism. *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, 1-7.

Pow, J., & Fu, J. in the web 2.0 environment: An exploration of implementing strategy. *Journal of Information Technology*, 11, 287-299.

Puar, J. K. (2007). Introduction: Homonationalism and biopolitics. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, 1-36.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), 215-232.

Rabkin, N., & Hedberg, E. C. (2011). Arts Education in America: What the Declines Mean for Arts Participation. Based on the 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. Research Report# 52. *National Endowment for the Arts*.

Reynolds, M., Nabors, L., & Quinlan, A. (2000). The effectiveness of art therapy: Does it work? *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, 17(3), 207-213.

Richardson, L. (1999). Feathers in our cap. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(6), 660-668.

Records of the Memorial and Tribute to Gloria Anzaldúa, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, the University of Texas at Austin.

Reineke, R. (2016). In Rubio-Goldsmith, R., Fernández, C., Finch, J. K., & Masterson-Algar, A. (Eds.). (2016) pp. 132-149. *Migrant Deaths in the Arizona Desert: La vida no vale nada*. University of Arizona Press.

Riley, T., & Hawe, P. (2005). Researching practice: The methodological case for narrative inquiry. *Health Education Research*, 20(2), 226-36.

Risiger, K. (2007). *Language and Culture Pedagogy : From a National to a Transnational Paradigm*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Robinson, R. (2007). Place-in-Space/Space-in-Place: Theories of the Border. In *Narratives of the European Border* (pp. 16-39). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Rodenhauser, P., Strickland, M. A., & Gambala, C. T. (2004). Arts-Related Activities Across U.S. Medical Schools: A Follow-Up Study. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, 16(3), 233–239. doi: 10.1207/s15328015t1m1603\_2
- Rutenberg M. Casting the spirit: a handmade legacy. *Art Ther.* 2008;25(3):108-114.
- Said, E. W. (1995). *Orientalism: western conceptions of the Orient*. 1978. Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. Routledge.
- Santa Ana, O. 'Like an animal I was treated': anti-immigrant metaphor in US public discourse. *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1999), pp. 191-224
- Sarther, D. P. (2006). *An exploratory study of the experiences of Mexican American women attending community college*. Northern Illinois University.
- Sartre, J., & MacCombie, J. (1964). Black Orpheus. *The Massachusetts Review*, 6(1), 13-52.
- Schouten, K. A., de Niet, G. J., Knipscheer, J. W., Kleber, R. J., & Hutschemaekers, G. J. (2015). The effectiveness of art therapy in the treatment of traumatized adults: a systematic review on art therapy and trauma. *Trauma, violence, & abuse*, 16(2), 220-228.
- Silverman, K. N., & Piedmont, J. the big picture: A visual for today. *Knowledge Quest*, 44(5), 32.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic genocide in education--or worldwide diversity and human rights?*. Routledge.
- Solórzano, D.G., Pérez-Huber, L., & Huber-Verjan, L. (2020). Theorizing racial microaffirmations as a response to racial microaggressions: Counterstories across three generations of Critical Race Scholars. *Seattle Journal for Social Justice*, 18(2), 10.
- Stone, S., & Han, M. (2005). Perceived school environments, perceived discrimination, and school performance among children of Mexican immigrants. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 27(1), 51-66.
- Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. M. (2009). *Children of immigration*. Harvard University Press.

Suárez, M. I., Asadi, L., Scaramuzzo, P., & Slattery, P. (2017). Using Photovoice as Arts-Based Instruction for Grieving: LGBTIQ+ Students and the Pulse Nightclub Shooting.

Swales, M. (2015). *The German bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*. Princeton University Press.

Taurel, P. (2013) Are You Really Too Old for DACA? Retrieved from: <http://immigrationimpact.com/2013/10/24/are-you-really-too-old-for-daca/#sthash.nzppX8w1.dpuf>

Valencia, R. R. (2004). *Chicano school failure and success: Past, present, and future*. Routledge.

Valenzuela, A. (2019). The struggle to decolonize official knowledge in Texas' state curriculum: Side-stepping the colonial matrix of power. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 52(2-3), 197-215.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: Issues of caring in education of US-Mexican youth*. State University of New York Press.

Van der Kolk, B. A. (1994). The body keeps the score: Memory and the evolving psychobiology of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 1, 253–265.

Van der Kolk, B.A., & McFarlane, A. C. (Eds.). (1996). *Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society*. Guilford Press.

Walker, Hamza. 2000. "Kara Walker: Cut It Out." *N K A Journal of Contemporary African Art* 11/12 (Fall/Winter): 108-13.

Watts, H. M. G., & Richardson, P. W. (2007). Motivational factors influencing teaching as a career choice: Development and validation of the FIT-Choice scale. *The Journal of Experimental education*, 75(3), 167–202.

Wilcox, J. (2015, February 23). Should schools spend more money on fine arts? Retrieved April 15, 2020 from: [www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/business/should-schools-spend-more-money-on-fine-arts/article\\_e44c2f2c-28ec-55d7-b6a1-acff6443587f.html](http://www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/business/should-schools-spend-more-money-on-fine-arts/article_e44c2f2c-28ec-55d7-b6a1-acff6443587f.html)

Wiley, E., Contreras, A. Gómez Pérez, K. Peña, J., Vera, S. , Alvarado, M. (2015). Excerpt from *Crawling with Monsters*, Participants' Essays, and an Introduction. *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*, 42 (2015): 107-134

Wong, T. K. (2016). New Study of DACA Beneficiaries Shows Positive Economic and Educational Outcomes. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2016/10/18/146290/new-study-of-daca-beneficiaries-shows-positive-economic-and-educational-outcomes/>



## APPENDIX A

**Loba Indomable** 🐾🌻🌸🌿🍂 @loba\_indomable · Oct 16, 2019  
#Reynosafollow

Muchas de las cuentas que reportaban SDR fueron cerradas a raíz del asesinato de #Miut3, entre ellas la cuenta de @garzaura142 de donde recibió amenazas, pero la cuenta de @mirreybipolar que amenazó a un tuitero en esas fechas continúa activa.

**Laura Garza** @garzaura142 · 8 de oct.  
Ya andamos cercas de v felina

**Laura Garza** @garzaura142 · 8 de oct.  
Ahí no vamos a divertir ver como explica

**Laura Garza** @garzaura142 · 8 de oct.  
Déjate de manadas felin dinero muerta de hambr

**@mirreybipolar** · 17 oct  
En respuesta a @canallasf @canallasforever @Miut3 a wey... Sigues tu puto....

**COMPA ISAURA** @chiq...  
@mirreybipolar @canallasf estas reportado con la polic por amenazas de muerte ni escondas!

**Loba Indomable** 🐾🌻🌸🌿🍂 @loba\_indoma... · Oct 16, 2019  
Ha 5 años del secuestro y homicidio de la tuitera #Miut3, la gente de #Reynosafollow no la olvida, por su gran labor altruista, porque siempre estuvo ahí para apoyar cuando más la necesitarón.  
#JusticiaParaMiut3  
15/10/2014-15/10/2019...

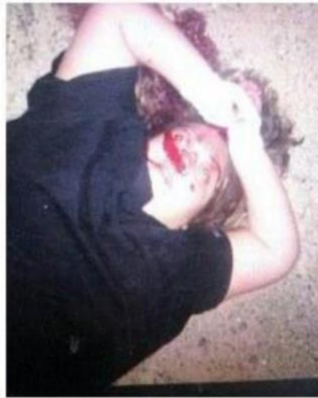
APPENDIX B



**Felina** @Miut3

5h

#REYNOSAFOLLOW CIERREN SUS CUENTA NO ARRIESGUEN A SUS FAMILIAS COMO LO HICE YO, LES PIDO PERDON.



↻ 25

★ 18

