ARCHIVING THE TRAUMA DIASPORA:
AFFECTIVE ARTIFACTS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ARTS CLASSROOM

BY

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DISSERTATION

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**ABSTRACT**

This investigation identifies and describes what I uniquely term the "diaspora of trauma" as it emerges in the higher education arts classroom. Through extended case study, and arts based autoethnography, I develop a framework for the analysis and archiving of creative artifacts as part of a diasporic trauma archive, and identify conceptual and practical tools for working in arts education settings in which traumatic narratives may emerge. Drawing upon cultural and clinical models of trauma, feminist pedagogical ethics, queer theory, and cultural archiving theory to advance the notion of a "trauma diaspora" that becomes known through an affective archive.

Through close contextualized reading of classroom observations this research contributes to the emerging interdisciplinary discourses around trauma cultures, art education, cultural artifacts and archives. I frame working creatively with a trauma diaspora in terms of a de-centered and non-hierarchical production of public archives comprised of culturally contextualized and politically informed personal narratives. I identify the trauma-sensitive artifact to be a way of making legible the "unspoken" or "unwritten" aspects of cultural trauma, such as those experienced via the body and interpersonal affect. Archive is here defined as a locally and historically dispersed, but cohesive body of work that speaks to and about cultural trauma.

This comprehensively informed interdisciplinary synthesis advances novel theoretical and practical approaches to the politics of trauma-sensitive pedagogy and looks specifically at trauma narrativity as public discourse. This work serves as evidence of both affective artifacts and an affective archive, as it is written with narrative and descriptive texts integrated into the larger body of academic analysis of the materials investigated.

## DEDICATION

*This work is a love-letter, and to be frank, it is dedicated to You.*

*And to all of my family both of origin and of inclination.*

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*Prologue*

*Gentle Reader,*

*I apologize in advance for repeating the story. I apologize now for retelling the tale. You see, the story repeats within me. Each iteration, the copy changes, farther out on the dendrite the DNA unfurls. I am fighting against entropy. The four fundamental forces, weak force, strong force, electromagnetism, and gravity. But what they fail to mention is the omission; the absence of memory.*

*Anomia*

*Aphasia*

*Dysphoria*

*Decisively returning to indecision. When my hand hesitates, my letters linger. So I return again to the stories already told.*

*Let me guide you through this text. This object in the form of a dissertation, gentle reader, serves as an affective artifact, an object of proximity, emotion, intervention, observation.*

*Live close to this.*

*Proximity is not always comfortable. Intimacy may also be awkward.*

*The writing of this text has been durational, with alternate timelines and marks of many beginnings.*

*The map is not the territory.*

## Background to the Study

Art education provides a forum for creating cultural meaning through the construction of cultural artifacts, art objects, and disseminating meaning via those cultural artifacts. In so doing, art education provides individuals with the agency and the tools to create objects and experiences of cultural and personal significance, as well as with tools with which to interpret and make sense of these objects and experiences.

On September 23, 2010, United States Attorney General, Eric Holder, launched the "Defending Childhood Initiative" to address what he identified as a "national crisis," namely, the exposure of America's children to violence as victims and witnesses (Defending Childhood Initative, 2010). The Initiative found that approximately sixty percent of children in the United States are exposed to violence every year, i.e., 46 million of a total of 76 million children. The report noted that exposure to violence and the resultant psychological trauma constitutes a public health crisis that will lead to tremendous national healthcare expense and contribute to issues of national safety and criminal justice (Defending Childhood Initative, 2010).

In recent years, there has been growing debate around the issue of trauma-sensitivity in higher education, but little structured investigation into the matter. Carter (2012) describes the increase in demands for standard policy trigger-warnings in all higher education syllabi, and the heated public discussion around this, and argues that there has been resistance from the academy to addressing trauma as a pedagogical issue. She argues strongly for the need to develop politically informed models of trauma in higher education pedagogy. This research contributes to this discourse by investigating affect and trauma in the higher education classroom as a matter of feminist pedagogy.

Trauma, and its ongoing cultural and personal effects, is elusive and broad ranging. It is disruptive of subjectivity/identity and of cultural stability in the immediate sense, as well as over time (Herman, 1997), making the topic of trauma difficult to study critically (Caruth, 1996). Trauma and its place in the creative arts and pedagogy have been theorized across a wide range of disciplines. Emerging research into "trauma informed pedagogy" in the K-12 classroom is concerned with behavioral problems arising from adverse childhood experiences. However, it does not address the consequences of trauma in adulthood or adult student populations, and it is primarily aimed at behavioral/therapeutic interventions rather than an arts-based model. Although clinical study and the treatment of trauma have significantly advanced since WWI, it is important to clearly state that when trauma symptoms/traces emerge in the education classroom we are not addressing those traces from a clinical standpoint. Indeed, the ethics of recalling or working with students' trauma are problematic (Carello & Butler, 2014). Although the individual nature of trauma in a clinical sense informs this investigation, I consider trauma from a cultural position (Alexander, 2004; Caruth, 1996; Cvetkovich, 2003) as evidenced by the emergence of affect and emotion as part of political and social relations (Ahmed, 2004; Cvetkovich, 2012) and made legible through its archived artifacts.

As a doctoral student teaching in the higher education arts classroom for over four years, I am acutely aware of the effects of trauma upon my students, the teaching space/process, and the expression of trauma emergent in student's work. I altered my teaching practices over time to allow greater space for personal affective and private narratives to emerge in my students' works. These alterations included introducing mindfulness practices and feminist pedagogical practices into the classroom. My background in intellectual history and information science helps shape my understanding of art objects as cultural artifacts that lend legibility to the narratives of

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trauma as part of a cultural diaspora. Also, my experience as a feminist and activist has led me to consider the classroom as a space of power negotiation and possibly of social change, by focusing on personal narratives that contribute to public discourse.

While teaching video narrative production in a higher education new media arts classroom I encountered a diversity of students' stories. At times, my students' narratives touched upon the unseen—that which could just barely emerge through representation, stories of previously untold traumas. I recognized the nature of these stories of trauma and violence, revealed through affect and emotion (including experiences of numbness or bodily dissociation), as the kinds of stories that emerged in my own arts practice.

In my studio practice, I struggle with questions of representation. How do I represent the stories I carry of others' suffering, those that I hold close, and how do I make sense of the way trauma is transmitted through generations, and has emerged in my own life? How do I resist the despair I feel when faced with intergenerational violence, illness, and poverty that marks me and continues to mark people I love? In teaching video narrative production, I realized that as I was teaching my students how to turn the camera onto others, and that there were ethical concerns with respect to these representations of others (Amend, Kay, & Reilly, 2012). No amount of critical understanding of the distancing of the lens entirely soothed my discomfort with representing horrors (and banalities) I witnessed in my own life and in the lives of those I loved. I straddled spaces, and still do.

Trauma leaves marks of shame and silence that limit whose stories are told and heard. I suspect that the telling of a trauma story is a privileged space, because to tell the tale, one expects an audience to be on the receiving end. To describe an experience as traumatic is to denote that it has come to an end; that it is just an experience, not the nature of one's existence. However, in

the case of traumatic return the trauma does not end, but rather it continues (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, & Sztompka, 2004; Caruth, 1996; Freud, 1920). For those with complex trauma backgrounds who have suffered a multiplicity of adverse childhood experiences, the trauma leaves marks that are not merely metaphorical, but instead lead to actual changes in the shape of the brain and in mental and emotional functioning (Herman, 1997). Hence, the trauma narrative is one that has no apparent beginning or end; it is not a traumatic experience, but rather a traumatized existence.

Trauma constitutes both the traumatic event itself and the subsequent consequences of that event. These events cause a metaphoric tear in the psyche of the individual, leaving a psychosocial wound that can repeatedly return (Caruth, 1996; Dutro, 2011; Freud, 1920). This study pushes beyond the existing theoretical dimension of trauma to understand the specific social, physical, and psychological experiences of trauma subjects, and offers needed evidence to design mechanisms to address trauma. I posit that trauma must be understood as one of multiple facets or dimensions of social identity that intersect with race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, ability, etc. to inform an individual's or community's opportunities, power and privileges as a dimension of social identity in systems of power and hierarchy. Understanding the lived experiences of trauma among individuals and communities is necessary to understanding the inequitable social structures that are maintained through violence and trauma.

In the context of education, the imperative to develop trauma-sensitive pedagogy is even more apparent given the large number of students who have experienced violence or trauma, and the widespread consequences of these experiences on student learning, behavior, health, and academic success. Considerable attention has been paid to how pedagogies that attend to the social and emotional aspects of young people's identities are constructed or revealed through the

expressive qualities of art. Utilizing a trauma informed pedagogical framework can help educators see and address trauma in their students and classrooms.

Art Education as a field has frequently focused on teaching art as a craft, that is, on teaching and evaluating artistic skills. To date, art education policies and theories have not dealt directly with questions of trauma, although art educators in K-16 education classrooms regularly encounter its consequences. These consequences can be observed in the lived experiences of students in the classroom, and are certainly present in the materials considered in the history of art and in those of visual culture. Because of the often personal nature of art making, and that cultural artifacts made or used in the art class integrate both personal experiences and political discourses, art educators may be in a position to directly observe and potentially mitigate the effects of violent and traumatic experiences that are revealed through a student's artistic production and imaginative creation (Albert, 2010; Smilan, 2009; Vesela Bilić, 2011).

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe what I uniquely term the "diaspora of trauma" as it emerges in the higher education narrative arts classroom, to develop a framework for the analysis and archiving of creative artifacts as part of a "diasporic trauma archive," and to investigate conceptual and practical tools for working in arts education settings in which traumatic narratives may emerge. Working creatively with trauma diaspora is framed in terms of a de-centered and non-hierarchical production of public archives of culturally contextualized and politically informed personal narratives. The trauma-sensitive artifact is thus understood to be a way of making legible the "unspoken" or "unwritten" aspects of cultural trauma, such as those experienced via the body and interpersonal affect (Dutro & Bien, 2014). Archive is understood to

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be a locally and historically dispersed, but cohesive body of work that speaks to and about cultural trauma.

Trauma affects a significant portion of the population worldwide, yet its effects are still poorly understood and include many embodied and dissociative symptoms that affect the sense of self of the traumatized person (Herman, 1997; Meares, 2000). In producing creative work in the arts classroom, it is likely that the deeply personal nature of the creative process may expose students or teachers to the risk of flashbacks to past traumatic events (Albert, 2010; Smilan, 2009; Vesela Bilić, 2011). At the same time, the creative process also may allow for inscription of an integrated and healthy narrative of self that is reflective of membership in a cultural diaspora (Brunzell, Waters, & Stokes, 2015; Cole, 2004; Richman, 2013). However, arts education teachers are not typically trained to understand or manage such emergent phenomena. At some point, it could be answered as to why they should. Presenting it as an opportunity to do so avoids mandating it. Also, how does this activate teacher trauma and what is the relationship between trauma and teachers themselves, familiar, unfamiliar, unprocessed, processed?

To address this need, this project seeks to build a contextualized and globally portable approach to understanding trauma and a flexible, evidence-based toolkit to deal with a student's post-traumatic symptoms that may emerge during arts pedagogy in the higher education classroom. Such a toolkit should be useful to both teacher and student as they navigate through a process of self-discovery and reinvention. The aim in developing this toolkit is to support teachers in better understanding the post-traumatic symptoms they may encounter in the classroom and to work mindfully with these emergent symptoms using narrative creation as a healing form.

Using qualitative methods of extended case study, interviews, and auto-ethnography, this project examines the teaching experiences and creative artifacts generated during a single semester of a higher education arts class. The purpose of the study is twofold. First, to investigate the nature of those pedagogical practices and how they may relate to trauma narratives and, second, to develop a critical framework for understanding and addressing the culturally-contextualized place of trauma narratives and artifacts within higher education classrooms.

This investigation is a case study that uses responsive naturalistic research and builds upon my prior action research into mindfulness practices in the arts education classroom (M. Jones, 2014), with the aim of examining how pedagogical practices interact with trauma narratives. The resultant critical framework draws upon cultural models of trauma, the body, and archiving as a way of politically situating trauma narrativity to provide practical avenues for how to work with these emergent phenomena.

Trauma already surfaces within arts education classroom settings, but arts education teachers are typically ill-equipped to manage the behavioral manifestations of trauma, may not hold a relevant cultural understanding of trauma, and may be unable to integrate emergent trauma phenomenon productively into the pedagogical practice. While clinical understandings of trauma are useful in clinical settings, I argue that a cultural model of trauma is more appropriate in educational settings (though clinical models also have their place in education).

In a cultural model, trauma is understood as diasporic; we do not know of each other's individual or cultural traumas directly, and because trauma interferes with language and memory, records of its occurrence may be fragmented and incomplete (Herman, 1997). It is often very difficult for trauma survivors to recognize and communicate their trauma because it is typically

treated in the West in a clinical, and therefore necessarily private, manner. However, members of

trauma cultures may be known to each other through affect and emotion, behavioral changes, and

through cultural artifacts that offer insight into personal trauma narratives. Members of particular

cultures of communities, including those as imagined (Anderson, 1991), may also know of each

other's shared social oppressions which also contribute to individual and collective trauma. The

production of these cultural artifacts may be consequential to the maker of the artifact in terms of

its testimony, and may be consequential to the observers of the artifact as offering witness

(Caruth, 1996; Dutro, 2011). The organization of these artifacts into a meaningful collection may

serve as construction of an archive (Cvetkovich, 2003), which may serve to distribute the trauma

narrative. This should result in a better understanding of the cultural background of the

artist/author and may lead to the possibility of social change.

For the purpose of this study, I incorporate the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual—V

definition of trauma to establish the phenomenon together with cultural theories of trauma as

"unclaimed experience" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Caruth, 1996). In my case

study, I examine both symptomatic and asymptomatic non-clinical populations. In considering

the nature of trauma in the classroom, I frame the presence of the traumatic return through affect

theory as a "discontinuity of the subject's conscious experience with non-intentionality of

emotion and affect" (Clough, 2010, p. 207). Trauma is defined in the APA's (2013) DSM V as:

> Direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or
>
> serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event
>
> that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person;
>
> or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or
>
> injury experienced by a family member or other close associate (p. 265).

Symptoms of post-traumatic distress include:

- Re-experiencing the event — Spontaneous memories of the traumatic event, recurrent dreams related to it, flashbacks or other intense or prolonged psychological distress.

- Heightened arousal — Aggressive, reckless or self-destructive behavior, sleep disturbances, hyper-vigilance or related problems.

- Avoidance — Distressing memories, thoughts, feelings or external reminders of the event. Negative thoughts and mood or feelings (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Post-traumatic experience is most commonly understood in clinical terms. Indeed, I establish the above definition of trauma and post-traumatic experience using the DSM; arguably the most authoritative clinical manual in existence, performing a symptomatology and treatment focused on the biological and behavioral pathology of the individual. However, as previously mentioned, I propose to integrate clinical and cultural-political models of trauma with the following two aims: first, to investigate trauma as a part of the lived experience of all peoples at different times with more or fewer traumas occurring to particular populations at different times, and with different culturally and historically defined characteristics affecting these traumas; second, to provide a greater degree of understanding and empowerment for individuals in working with their own trauma and that of others.

While there is emerging scholarship on understanding clinical experiences of trauma and on cultural trauma analysis, there is a dearth of research regarding the practical relationship between critical trauma theories and locating it where people experience it. We live out our private narratives in public spaces. Thus, this research project on an original and understudied area is relevant for educators, students, individuals and our broader society.

## Primary Research Questions

This dissertation addresses three primary research questions:

- In what observable ways does trauma emerge within the higher education arts classroom?

- How might a model of "trauma artifact as archive" serve to facilitate improved and more culturally-informed higher education arts pedagogical practice?

- How do material practices serve to redress trauma?

In addressing these three primary research questions, several supporting sub-questions will be answered, such as: how can a contextualized, politicized understanding of trauma, in combination with critical contemplative pedagogy, be made useful in the higher education arts classroom? How can I conceptualize a diaspora of trauma through artifacts and archives?

## Significance of the Study

By considering the nature of trauma and distress from multiple disciplinary perspectives and synthesizing these into a cohesive but flexible framework, this project makes a unique contribution to the cultural trauma field, foregrounding intersections between artists, art objects, art teachers, and the classroom environment. The interdisciplinary nature of this project spans the field of art education, specifically higher education and new-media arts education, to the emerging fields of trauma scholarship, archival theory, disability studies, gender studies, diaspora theory and critical contemplative pedagogy.

Since trauma scholarship is an emerging field, the concepts of "trauma informed pedagogy" or a "trauma sensitive pedagogy" are only just now being developed in K-12 schools in the United States. As stated above, there is limited research concerning trauma in art education theory, and most existing research is focused on clinical models of trauma and the use of art as therapy (Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaudry, & Samples, 1998; Brunzell et al., 2015; V. J. Edwards,

Anda, Felitti, & Dube, 2004). Publications resulting from this research will make a unique contribution to the field of art education, media arts, and feminist pedagogy by expanding recognition of how trauma emerges in art practices and in the arts classroom, and what it means to create cultural artifacts from the position of a trauma culture.

## Parameters of the Study

To address the research questions of this thesis, I conduct an extended case study and arts based auto-ethnography of trauma narratives in a higher education new-media arts classroom, drawing on my own arts objects and practice to examine how trauma narratives as a personal and social experience emerge in art practices, the arts classroom, and arts objects (Burawoy, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Stake, 1995). By creating an interdisciplinary investigation, I look at contemporary and critical trauma theory, as well as clinical concepts of trauma to frame the ideas in a narrative video arts classroom, narrative video art objects, and narrative video arts practices, using descriptive procedures offered in qualitative research.

This research offers a close, contextualized reading of classroom observations that contributes to the emerging interdisciplinary discourses around trauma cultures, art education, cultural artifacts and archives. Although I investigate the psychoanalytic concept of trauma, this is not a clinical study. I employ psychoanalytic terms as they apply to cultural studies. I do not seek to contribute to the field of clinical psychology, or to suggest best clinical practices. This is not a positivist scientific investigation, which looks for causal relationships between trauma, its outcomes, or its healing. Instead, I build on the history of scholarship that includes feminist standpoint epistemology (Harding, 2006), feminist pedagogical concepts (hooks, 1994; Noddings & Shore, 1984), and queer theory (Ahmed, 2014; Cvetkovich, 2003; R. Muñoz, Mrazek, & Haggerty, 1996) to investigate the conditions of marginalized populations as evidenced by the

cultural artifacts created in a higher education new media arts classroom, and to consider the social and political consequences of archiving these artifacts. The ideas of affect in the archives are just beginning to emerge as an important aspect of archival studies (Buerkle, 2008; Caswell, 2014; Cvetkovich, 2003; Gilliland & McKemmish, 2014). Although this research uses the concepts provided by queer and feminist theory, it is not limited to issues of gender or sexual identity in its scope.

This research is also informed by the scholarship of diasporic studies, archival studies, and trauma studies. However, in using the concept of diaspora, I do not build directly upon diaspora studies, although my work may reference some of the same concepts and offer some contribution to the conceptualization of a diasporic culture. I am using the concept of archives as it is used in broader cultural discourse studies, as informed by a recent investigation into the way meaning is constructed through informal documentation. In my use of affect and emotion, I employ the framing as provided by those of queer feminist scholarship.

## Study Design

In this study, I develop a critical framework using interdisciplinary methods. I conduct an extended case study that incorporates research techniques from auto-ethnography. The extended case study method embraces ethnographic tools and techniques for investigation and simultaneously allows for the researcher to take a critical theoretical position from the outset of the research by contextualizing the study. Ethnography considers the experiences of individuals within cultural relationships. In this research, I consider myself as a member of a trauma diaspora, and as a participant in the higher education arts classroom. Thus, I am one of the cases investigated in my research; in the presentation of trauma narratives through my arts practice as personal intervention and as an archival practice when publicly received as political discourse.

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Besides myself, I look at my students' work as part of a creative cultural public archive and conduct a qualitative and quantitative survey of past students' experiences. The purpose of these components of the project are to observe and document the process of treating personal trauma narratives as part of a creative cultural public archive, and to examine the usefulness of basic mindfulness interventions in facilitating the creation of trauma archives. I discuss the complexity of how trauma emerges in art practices and in the arts classroom, and frame the practice of creating space for affect, emotion, and trauma narratives as acts of the feminist ethics of care in pedagogical practice (Delacruz, 2009; hooks, 1994; Noddings & Shore, 1984).

To examine the role of critical and contemplative pedagogical practices in mediating traumatic expression in the arts education classroom I build upon my prior research (Jones, 2014). In this previous work, I conducted a case study that examined the coursework, teaching methods, student work and student reflections across a four-year period during which I taught narrative video production in a higher education arts classroom. Mindfulness practice has been robustly demonstrated in clinical and educational settings to improve attention and focus, and of particular relevance here, to attenuate some of the embodied symptoms associated with trauma (Hölzel et al., 2011). My 2014 study examined the usefulness of mindfulness practices in facilitating students' creative works. To understand how the mindfulness practices may have influenced their work in the classroom, and to examine whether these practices offered support to the emergence of trauma narratives, I review my student's writings and art works as well as conduct post hoc interviews as part of this thesis case study.

Further, I examine a delimited sample of my own art practices from an intersectional feminist auto-ethnographic position, produced concurrently with the teaching of the course and writing of this research. By looking at my own cultural and artistic production as it relates to

trauma, I hope to develop a rich description of traumatic redress through narrative arts practices in higher education.

## Dissertation Outline

Chapter One: Introduction describes the purpose and nature of the study and defines the key terms and concepts I employ in creating a conceptual framework for understanding a trauma diaspora and affective artifacts.

Chapter Two: Literature Review delineates relevant literature across disciplines from those of cultural and critical trauma studies, art education, contemplative pedagogy, and feminist/queer critical theory, to create a theoretical framework of trauma diaspora.

Chapter Three: Methodology discusses the methodologies I employ in conducting the research, including arts based auto-ethnography, action research, and extended case study utilizing narrative research methods.

Chapter Four: The Case of Pedagogy used extended case study as framework for the interviews and analysis conducted of student experiences, pedagogical practices and the narrative and video works created by students in a new media arts course and theorizes the possibilities for new pedagogical practices among arts educators.

Chapter Five: The Case of My Art Practice presents arts-based auto-ethnographic methods used as a framework for description and analysis of the author's narrative and video works created concurrently with the duration of conducting and writing of this study.

Chapter Six: Intermission

Chapter Seven: Conclusion summarizes the findings of this study and proposes possible new lines of inquiry for arts education, critical trauma studies, and feminist pedagogy.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of trauma is distributed across disciplines. I seek to identify how the term trauma is used specifically in art education, as well as to be familiar with the terms used more broadly across other disciplines including clinical and cultural trauma studies. In this chapter, I examine clinical and cultural understandings of trauma and situate these concepts in relation to the current literature in art education regarding trauma. I also review literature supporting my framework of a trauma diaspora that can be known through cultural artifacts produced in the higher education arts classroom, and I establish the significance of constructing an archive of trauma diaspora. This interdisciplinary research project is informed by clinical and social science models of trauma, the field of art therapy, and public archiving studies, but ultimately resides best in a feminist or queer cultural studies context. The framework I construct considers the higher education arts classroom as part of public space, and the production of arts work as part of constructing public culture. Thus, trauma narratives that individuals may experience as personal become part of public discourse. The translation of the personal to political is a long-held mode of feminist activism and inquiry, and this research positions the current investigation along that lineage.

As a concrete example of this type of framework and analysis, I review in this chapter one emblematic use of trauma narratives, *the Icarus Project,* as political presentation and archival intervention in the call for intergenerational trauma narratives. I investigate their call at the end of this literature review specifically to elucidate the particular statements I make about trauma as both personal and public, and the possible utility of imagining the idea of creating public archives of trauma diaspora. In this way, the chapter constructs and justifies an

interdisciplinary framework based upon key ideas and representative texts and theories from the current literature in the field.

To identify the relevant literature, I employed several search strategies. I conducted independent keyword searches for "trauma" in ten art education peer reviewed journals, covering a time period from 1971 through 2014. The art education journals included *Art Education, Canadian Review of Art Education, The Journal of Art and Design Education, International Journal of Education through Art, Journal of Social Theory in Art Education, Studies in Art Education, Visual Arts Research, Teaching Artist Journal, Journal of Arts and Communities,* and *Visual Inquiry.* These searches yielded only 11 articles, all of which were published between 1994 through 2014. Of these articles, many did not theorize trauma or employ the concept and made only a passing reference or contained it in a quote, while a few articles covered such areas as drawing and trauma, remembering trauma, and trauma amongst immigrant students in the public schools. This absence of scholarly literature prior to 1994 suggests that the concept of trauma has only been conceptualized as such in the past two decades in art education.

Having familiarized myself with how ideas of trauma were conceptualized in these articles, I expanded my search by using terms that may be relevant, such as "violence," "at-risk youth," "underserved youth," etc. The expanded search offered me a broader understanding of how the ideas underlying "trauma" have been addressed in the art education field, even if the term "trauma" itself was not used. Relatedly, considering the diversity and scope of potential "adverse childhood experiences" as listed in the ACES studies (Felitti et al., 1998), future work may more expansively seek to incorporate such key words as abuse, poverty, racism, sexism, ableism, or trauma consequences such as behavioral problems into an overarching framework. The present literature search, however, allowed me to develop a better understanding of how

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trauma has been subsumed or constituted in art education terms, including "underserved," "at-risk," "underprivileged," and "urban youth." Specific issues also include "LGBTQ youth," "refugee and immigrant youth," and "incarcerated youth." Any of these terms could overlap with the adverse childhood experiences that can be part of developing childhood trauma.

I also searched more generally across disciplines using Google Scholar, EbscoHost, and JSTOR, and reviewed dissertations on the topic using ProQuest dissertation searches. Using these search engines and databases, I selected the most frequently cited articles and books and identified additional key ideas and terms with which to further expand my literature search using the cited references and articles. I cross-searched the references by the number of citations, key terms, or key theorists on the subjects. These searches included the ideas from the developing fields of trauma studies, both clinical and cultural. I expanded my search across different disciplines based on key concepts I encountered, including "critical witness and testimony," "childhood resilience," and "trauma narratives."

There are several limitations in the literature review that should be noted. The review was conducted in English and is thus limited to data presented in that language. Consequently, literature from non-western or non-English speaking researchers or nations is not represented. This literature review cannot therefore be generalized—nor is it intended to be—as a global perspective on the fields of trauma in art education.

Although this study is methodologically and theoretically interdisciplinary in its scope, the fields of clinical psychology, clinical trauma studies, cultural trauma studies, diaspora studies, archival theory, and media studies are treated as sub-disciplines within the broader focus of conceptualizing trauma in art education. Each of these fields has their own disciplines, uses terms and concepts differently, and possesses their own disciplinary intellectual lineage and

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discourses. My review of the literature in these disciplines serves to frame my research as it relates to the field of art education.

## Framing Trauma

Trauma studies, both clinical and cultural, developed simultaneously over the past several decades. Cultural trauma studies[1] emerged out of holocaust studies. The clinical naming of PTSD as a consequence of trauma first appeared in 1980 in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III), published by the American Psychiatric Association. Since trauma is an unavoidable part of human existence, and the subject matter of art, an inquiry into its theoretical absence from art education research is warranted.

For this study, I consider clinical definitions of trauma as being those which look at the individual subject of a medical or clinical description of emergent symptoms of traumatic return, such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Intersecting studies of personal pathologized trauma (e.g., PTSD) are theorized by the current exploration of the consequences following traumatic childhood experiences, also described as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). Since contemporary ACE research includes the investigation of the sociological circumstances of childhood trauma, the research lends itself to translation to the field of critical trauma studies.

There are two primary and interrelated discourses around trauma. The first important contribution to the study of trauma is its clinical/psychological/medical framing as formulated in therapeutic models, which theorizes a medicalization of trauma and engages therapy as practice. This theory looks at the individual subject of trauma and the consequences of that trauma to the individual. The second discourse, critical trauma theory, is situated within contemporary cultural

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[1] Sometimes considered critical trauma studies, or trauma and memory studies as academic inquiry.

studies and is focused on trauma and memory (Alexander, 2004; Felman, 1992). Critical trauma theory looks at social relations and social artifacts, and recognizing and understanding these factors is essential to the work in a classroom. Critical trauma theory also identifies those forces and processes that are involved in producing and maintaining the effects of trauma, and these factors speak to the position of art education within the institution of schools and society.

Critical trauma studies represent an interdisciplinary field of cultural discourses that emerged out of World War II, concomitantly with the emergence of clinical trauma diagnosis. Clinical diagnosis of trauma comes after the First World War, and starts with diagnoses such as "male hysteria" and "shell shock" (Lerner, 2003). Both clinical and critical trauma studies largely build upon Freud's conception of the traumatic neurosis as a returning wound in response to an injury or threat of death that leaves the survivor unable to synthesize the traumatic experience (Freud, 1920).

Critical trauma studies are a diverse field of discourse that conceptualizes the consequences of trauma as social discourse. Within critical trauma studies, the ideas of a culture of trauma or trauma cultures emerges. Building upon the ideas of unsynthesized trauma experiences that are best understood by revealing the trauma narrative, critical trauma studies emphasizes the concepts of critical testimony and witness (Caruth, 1996; Felman, 1992). The idea of testimony is that of narrating the traumatic event so that the subject of the traumatic rupture can synthesize the experience. This trauma narrative is received within a social context; that of the witness who receives the narrative. These concepts cross both clinical and critical conceptualizations of trauma. By conceptualizing trauma as both experienced by an individual within a social context, and then as redressed within a social context, we observe a relationship between the personal and public.

I argue that the complexity of trauma and its attendant consequences is best understood by conducting research at the intersection of multiple theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. The two discourses, clinical trauma definitions and cultural trauma theory, provide a framework for considering the interplay between trauma and artistic practice in art education settings. Each dialogue presents a unique position/perspective that, when combined, can provide art education with a grounded and contextualized approach to practice. The clinical formulation focuses on individuals and speaks directly to the experiences of students and how these experiences may emerge in a classroom. Critical trauma theory examines micro and macro-level factors relating to trauma.

*Trauma as a Medical Problem*

Two national, federally-funded studies conducted in the public health field establish trauma as a medicalized public health issue. Their findings serve as the foundation for numerous subsequent trauma studies. I cite these studies because they have primary influence on public policy concerning trauma, including how educators and researchers engage with trauma narratives. The first study is the large-scale epidemiological study on adverse childhood experiences conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in collaboration with the insurance conglomerate, Kaiser Permanente. From 1995 to 1997, the CDC and Kaiser Permanente insurance engaged in an extensive longitudinal and epidemiological study of childhood trauma, namely *the Adverse Childhood Experience Study* (ACE) (Felitti et al., 1998), which looked at the long-term consequences of childhood trauma.

Trauma, in the context of medicalization, is narrated as a physical and often recurring "wound" that may occur as a result of adverse childhood experiences or from direct and indirect exposure to violence. The use of language like "wound" situates trauma as something that can be

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treated and potentially healed. However, exactly how trauma arises from these adverse experiences is unclear. In their research, the CDC explicitly identified the "scientific gaps" in our knowledge of what happens between so-called adverse childhood experiences and the social, emotional and cognitive impairments that result from these experiences. One model of how adverse childhood experiences can create lifetime consequences suggests that trauma may be directly responsible for compromising longevity and health through the adoption of health-risk behaviors, i.e., behaviors that can lead to the development of disease, disability, and/or social problems ultimately leading to early death (Dong et al., 2004; V. J. Edwards et al., 2004; Felitti et al., 1998). There is missing information regarding how early life experiences affect an individual's development and become the recurring set of experiences we refer to as "trauma." We also lack understanding around how the individual may recreate compromised circumstances in adulthood. Thus, qualitative investigations, which might emerge in the form of video narratives and generate rich descriptions and new knowledge about the lifetime consequences of adverse childhood experiences, are necessary in order to continue to develop a more robust understanding of how to address and prevent future traumas as well as how to heal and rectify continuing traumas.

*Trauma as a Systemic Problem*

Students affected by adverse life experiences and trauma can be seen as having material conditions that prevent them from fully accessing and benefitting from the experiences of art education. These adverse childhood experiences exist within social, political, and economic conditions. These conditions that are fundamental to conceptualizing trauma have not been fully taken up within medicalized and psychological frameworks of trauma. However, they are better explored in the *Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to*

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*Violence* (Defending Childhood Initative, 2010). Here, adverse childhood experiences are described as psychosocial risk factors (Marie-Mitchell & O'Connor, 2013) explicitly linked to systemic conditions that give rise to trauma. These are critical to understanding the more nuanced, unique experiences of individuals. The National Survey of Children's Health lists nine possible adverse childhood experiences:

- Socioeconomic hardship

- Divorce or separation of parents

- Death of a parent

- Incarceration of parents

- Witnessing domestic violence

- Being a victim of neighborhood violence

- Cohabitating with a mentally ill or suicidal family member or individual

- Cohabitating with a family member or individual with an alcohol or drug problem

- Treated or judged unfairly due to race or ethnicity

Here, adverse childhood experiences involve direct experiences of violence and physical illness. Although the authors of the study do not link these individual sites of trauma to larger social problems of inequality, the discourses of critical trauma theory and systemic trauma theory fill this gap. The National Taskforce list includes individual experiences that speak to larger social problems that may be encountered in the art education classroom, including poverty, addiction, and racism. To these factors, we can add the kinds of structural violence that may lead to repeated traumatic experiences.

The structural nature of violence and trauma means that its incidence is disproportionately larger for oppressed populations, who are also less likely to have resources or

recourse for addressing trauma. For example, women are more likely to become ill as a result of childhood trauma (Dong et al., 2004). This suggests that the structural relationships of inequity give rise to stressors with similar consequences to those of direct traumatic experiences or violence. This is of particular importance to this dissertation, since school sites can be essential for reaching such populations in meaningful and effective ways. Circumstances that allow a child to be exposed to multiple traumatic incidences are likely those that prevent the child from having the resources for a significant engagement with the arts, which may help address the trauma. Current educational practices do not focus on providing an opportunity for the redress of trauma, and focus instead on treating the outcomes of trauma through classroom management.

Due to the significant consequences of trauma, it is imperative to consider addressing trauma systemically as part of our mission as educators (Goldsmith, Martin, & Smith, 2014). Hicks (2013) also underscores that there are disparities in access to the benefits of an arts education due to such factors as income, ability, age, race, ethnicity, political status, sexual preference, incarceration, and immigration status. Underservedness is defined as "material conditions that prevent certain groups from fully accessing and benefiting from the resources and opportunities for effective education, including high quality art experiences" (Kraehe & Acuff, 2013, p. 1).

Trauma as understood from the frameworks cited above is described in more detail in the following chapters.

**Empirical Studies around Trauma in Art Education**

The experience of trauma is certainly one that art educators encounter, even if it is not conceptualized as trauma. Schools may not consider the issue of addressing trauma as being within their domain, and instead consider it within the domain of other types of care, such as

clinical or therapeutic intervention. Thus, art education policies and theories tend not to deal directly with theoretical or clinical questions of trauma. However, art educators in K-16 classrooms regularly find themselves encountering the consequences of trauma or violence (Hazel, Hammen, Brennan, & Najman, 2008; Porche, Fortuna, Lin, & Alegria, 2011). The presence of violence and trauma in the material of art, in visual culture, and in the culture of the classroom, suggests that art education theory would be well served by including discussions and theories of trauma. As such, this dissertation is timely in thinking through the pedagogical interventions that can be generated and implemented in the classroom.

With an emerging understanding of the significance of trauma for students, some schools have started to develop trauma-focused training for faculty and staff, and trauma-informed curriculum for students. DePrince and Newman (2011), writing in a context of higher education, noted that surprisingly few programs exist to implement trauma-focused training for teachers. For example, a teacher-training curriculum that includes an articulation of trauma narratives has been developed for K-12 teachers entering the profession who will be responsible for teaching homeless children (Heise & MacGillivray, 2011; S. Jones, 2012). In classroom settings, Fox (2015) discussed the trauma-sensitive classroom and Brunzell et al. (2015) acknowledged trauma-affected students, taking an explicitly psychiatric/diagnostic approach to understanding those students.

Within the past five years, although work has been done at the curricular and pedagogical level to implement trauma-informed approaches, these interventions have centered primarily on educators becoming more mindful of the existence of traumatized students, children and adults, within educational settings both inside and outside of classrooms (Ford & Blaustein, 2013; Mordoch & Gaywish, 2013). However, just as diversity or sensitivity training in and of itself

cannot guarantee the redress of the social inequalities (Case, 2013), benefits from a more trauma-sensitive educational setting will not guarantee the redress of those traumas—in schools generally or in the art education classroom specifically. While making no claims that my study will unveil the solution for redress, it may contribute to the body of knowledge regarding trauma and its personal and social impacts, as well as how it may be addressed in the domain of art education.

Whether violence is framed as a problem of classroom management (Walker, 1995; Weinstein, 2003), as needing address in (usually extra-curricular) antecedents of classroom violence (Aber et al., 1998; Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010; Goldstein & Conoley, 1997), especially around school shootings (DeBernardo & McGee, 1999; Muschert, 2007), or indirectly through efforts to enlist students in creating peaceable classrooms (D. E. Levin, 1994), much of the research involves the maintenance of a workable environment within which education can occur. This suggests that a trauma informed pedagogy could be highly beneficial for all.

*The Traumas of Racialization and Gendering in Education*

Researchers have questioned whether art education itself is violent and/or traumatic (Desai, 2000; Tavin, 2014). Not only does the teaching of US slavery or Native American genocide often essentialize, stereotype, and diminish the nature of the holocausts experienced by African and indigenous peoples, it may convey implicitly racist messages to Black, American Indian and Latino students that they internalize (Desai, 2000), thus reproducing the conditions of an original historical trauma, if not the trauma itself.

There are specific conditions of gender-based violence that interfere with learning and education as well. These particular traumas have been explicated in the United Nation's study on gender-based violence (UNESCO, 2015b). Although the UN study takes a global position and

many other studies take a national position, the points they make are relevant to the higher education arts classroom in that higher education populations come from diverse and international backgrounds. The traumas the students experience in their local primary education may shape their experiences in the higher education classroom.

More recently, researchers explicitly cited the hatred at work in (generally) anti-LGBT school settings (Bochenek & Brown, 2001), which is both a matter of gender and sexuality. These two aspects of identity are often collapsed and misunderstood and under-engaged in classrooms, which highlights a deeper need for this study. Hand and Sanchez (2000) noted the destructive effects of harassment within sexist gender order of US school settings.

The recapitulation of a traumatic culture in the school culture may include secondary traumatization; one may be traumatized simply by witnessing traumatic circumstances, even without experiencing them directly (Kilcommons & Morrison, 2005; Rosenthal, 2000). Not only do the experiences of these adverse childhood circumstances have long-term health implications for people as they grow into adulthood (V. J. Edwards et al., 2004), but as recurring sources of mentally disturbing experiences, they make the setting of the school itself potentially traumatic by definition—as the wound that recurs—and also set the stage to arrest development, both personally and academically (Fenichel, 2006; Horney, 1991; Horney & Horney, 2013). In this light, I agree with Carello and Butler (2014) who argue that, "…in addition to integrating information about and discussion of trauma where appropriate, educators should aim to *reduce* rather than *increase* the risk of re-traumatization and secondary traumatization for students exposed to this material" (p. 155, emphasis in original). They highlight an ethical imperative to approach trauma in the classroom and also to redress it (Smilan, 2009). Smilan's work offers explicit descriptions of how art education may offer traumatic redress through the development

of resiliency in artistic engagement. She posits arguments for how the traumatic redress occurs for the individual and as part of the social collective. "Expressive therapy involving the arts can help children to visually and verbally articulate feelings regarding traumatic events. The arts bond human beings through the universal, symbolic communication of common experiences" (Smilan, 2009, p. 6). She also notes that artistic engagement in the classroom is a way that children can exert mastery, reformulation, and cognitive processing of traumatic events—that meaning is made through both individual engagement and collective understanding, that the arts practice and the arts classroom are essential in helping develop childhood resiliency. This is important to this study since I am investigating the possible emergence of trauma narratives through a feminist pedagogy in a higher education arts classroom.

Although this research is not about therapy, and it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the whole of art therapy literature or consider this research as art therapy, it is helpful to know what ideas are covered in art therapy since this field formulates ideas of how therapeutic redress of trauma occurs through art practices. I reviewed art therapy literature to examine how it might inform or respond to art education literature as it relates to trauma.

Examining the literature in art therapy may inform and delimit our understanding about how the making of art can help address the experience of trauma, if not the social injustices or violence that lead to trauma. Art therapy literature that is focused on the individual and their traumatic harm may not address questions that are approached in art education. The intersection of these two bodies of literature may provide a more robust interpretive framework for considering the complex relationship between art making and art viewing in regards to trauma. Although beyond the scope of this literature review to consider all that is covered in the field of

art therapy, as an initial framing, it helps to contrast the use of art, broadly understood, as researchers understand and implement it in the domains of art therapy and art education.

A major focus in art therapy aims to address mental disturbances, i.e., cognitive activity "that substantially interferes with one's life activities and ability to function" (Wang, Demler, & Kessler, 2002, p. 92), so that those disturbances might vanish, ameliorate, or become manageable. Art education aims to *foster* cognitive activity either/both in creative expression itself (Feldman, 1983; Lanier, 1975) and as an appreciation for creative expression by other peoples and cultures worldwide (Delacruz, 2009; Eisner, 1994). Despite this difference of emphasis, both art therapy and art education purport to offer changes to the cognitive functioning of individuals that allow them, in general, to progress (Horney & Horney, 2013).

*Developmental Issues and Trauma*

There is considerable literature in the field of art education on the issues of a child's artistic development and progression, which often builds on the contributions of Piaget in understanding the developmental phases in childhood. That body of research considers how children's artistic skill can be understood developmentally. It focuses on how a child grows through developmental stages, per Piaget, or how the child's art can be understood developmentally (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987; Wilson & Wilson, 1982). The stage theories of development position children's mark-making at different stages of development in not only their artistic abilities, but in their cognitive and social development (Lewis, 1982). We know that trauma is disruptive to cognitive development and language acquisition, and it may also interfere with the development of visual communication. Thus, it is imperative that art education develops a trauma informed framework to understand and intervene in trauma. If trauma influences the development of graphic and visual communication, and the circumstances that allow for trauma

also prevent access to art education, then traumatized or impoverished children may be limited in developing visual communication. If we, in part, process the traumas through visual and artistic production, per Smilan (2009), then this developmental impediment may be best addressed by artistic intervention, even in adulthood.

## Feminist Theory and Research

Research that employs feminist methodologies may use any of the methods or tools available to qualitative researchers. Feminist research is framed in terms of feminist discourses, including positioning the subjectivity of a researcher in the research. This includes the idea of decentering dominant narratives and discourses so that people who are marginalized are given voice; thus, researchers position themselves in such manner as to bring the voices of others to light. Feminist theory often addresses hierarchical positions, including those of patriarchy. Beckman (2014) makes a distinction between methodology and method, noting that methodology consists of the underlying principles and ideas that shape the methods, which are the particular procedures used. Beckman offers ideas of how this shaping might come about, together with specifics as to what a feminist methodology might include, such as addressing imbalances of power, including voices of those often unheard, by paying attention to intersectionality and diversity (Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1994), utilizing a reflexive process during both pedagogy and research, and an ethics of care in the research process. In particular, an ethics of care takes into consideration the reason for performing the research, possible harm done during the research, potential benefits from disseminating the research, the possibility of social change towards social justice through a process of research that includes feminist positions and the voices of the participants as collaborators, ensuring power dynamics are checked, and ensuring that the research supports the participants.

*Pedagogical Interventions: Contemplative Practices as Engaged Feminist Pedagogy*

In this extended case study, I consider my pedagogical practices as engaged feminist pedagogy. I utilize the term contemplative practices, as it is a more expansive scope of reflective embodied practices than the term mindfulness, which suggests present moment awareness. Contemplative practices are a broad set of reflective practices, which may include mindfulness meditation, but may also include the other practices:

> A variety of techniques and practices were employed in several locations over the duration of the course, including (mental) body scans, silent meditations, and walking meditations; mindfulness techniques already tested in educational settings... Other sensorial exercises, including aesthetic engagement, focus exercises on the senses via experiencing and experimenting with guided movements, as well as in sensorial responses to art objects and practices [were used] (M. Jones, 2014, p. 51).

I view contemplative pedagogical practices as being in dialogue with other types of engaged pedagogical practices. Delacruz (2009) considers that the art education classroom may "lead to more caring societies, by giving prominence and time to conversations that matter" (p. 14). Included in her proposal for how that might happen is the development of a model of teaching that allows for multiple ways of knowing, which includes "allowing students an opportunity to explore those multiple ways to dwell in their own 'unbusy-ness' and silent contemplation over feelings and thoughts still in the process of taking form" (ibid, p. 12). She considers these practices as being essential to developing a civic pedagogy for participation in the cultural commons. In writing this, Delacruz was not specifically referring to mindfulness or contemplative practices, but she was informed by the long history of participatory and critical pedagogy. Delacruz builds upon the concept of inquiry-based learning—informed historically by

scholars such as John Dewey, a preeminent theorist of progressive education whose works define learning through lived experience; Paulo Freire (1970), whose canonical text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* addresses education as liberatory practice, positions education as a necessarily political activity; as such, liberatory education works towards cultivating a critical consciousness towards social justice. There are specific contributions of feminist pedagogues, which include the works of Nel Noddings who establishes the idea of a feminist ethics of care that suggests the classroom experience is one of mutual investment, as well as bell hooks, who in *Teaching to transgress* (1994) speaks to the idea of engaged pedagogy towards liberation.

I consider my pedagogical practices to be informed by and contributing to these ideas of education for participatory engagement towards the end of social and political change. But does critical teaching actually offer that? I modified my teaching to try to address such questions. I saw the need for offering space for personal narratives, for making room for emotion and affect in the classroom, for reflective practices as a possible intersection for such possibility and hope. The language of critique is important, but it is centered on the other. I believe that in order to come to critical thinking, we need to also make room for affect and hope. This would allow for the development of the transformative intellectual as described by Giroux: "Transformative intellectuals can advance both the language of critique and the language of possibility and hope" (Giroux, 2010, p. 105). This is where feminist pedagogy and feminist theories of affect and emotion may contribute to critical pedagogical theories.

*Mindfulness and Trauma*

"Mindfulness may be understood as acting in a self-aware manner, in which the person takes account of, and receives, cues from the process of acting as it occurs" (Hanh, 1987, p. 7). Embodiment literature often invokes a philosophical position by acknowledging that all human

experience arises from the social-cultural-psycho-biological matrix of human identity (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Varela, Rosch, & Thompson, 1991). Mindfulness practices as they are known in Western scholarship and clinical practice today arose out of ancient Eastern religious traditions of inquiry. Two main techniques are studied: open monitoring and focused attention mindfulness (Davidson & Lutz, 2008). Open monitoring practices involve non-reactive monitoring of the moment-to-moment content of experience, whereas focused attention practice entails voluntary and sustained attention on a chosen object (Travis & Shear, 2010). Studies on mindfulness practices have discussed changes in the brain's plasticity, improvements in educational outcomes, and their effectiveness in stress reduction and in the management of depression and other mental health issues (Hölzel et al., 2011; M. Jones, 2014). This literature is relevant to understanding the pedagogical practices explored in this study.

**Public Witness to Trauma: The Icarus Project as Activist and Archival Example**

One of the ways that this study explores trauma interventions in art education is through the archiving of personal narrative in public spaces. An example of this practice is *The Icarus Project,* which is an activist organization focused on issues of mental health and their call for documenting Intergenerational Trauma Narratives. In the past year, they issued a call for intergenerational trauma narratives on their website, soliciting contributions from the public regarding their own trauma histories and others. My experience with the Icarus Project has largely been with the material evidence of their organization, including their "'zines" and publications, their aesthetic and linguistic choices, and the context in which I encountered and understand their work. The Icarus Project publications serve as a model for understanding public archiving of trauma narratives, including those that involve building community support around mental health issues (e.g., how to come off medications). The content of the material includes

language choices, aesthetic decisions, material practices, and distribution choices. Use of the terms "community building" and "social justice" in their public archive alert readers to the political position of the organization. Aesthetic decisions they make (e.g., using hand-sketched prints), the material practices of printing "'zines," instead of "pamphlets" or "chapbooks," as well as the use of the worker-run and -owned printing press, "AK publishing press," all provide certain clues about how to interpret this organization's position. I recognize this organization from anarchist and activist communities, and I have an understanding of these communities from direct participation, as well as through reading and researching the history of political movements. I orient their call for "trauma stories" in relation to the history of political engagement through Marxist-feminist consciousness raising practices, and the contemporary practices of "making the personal political" that grew out of that tradition. I further discuss the history of feminist consciousness raising when I discuss the particular call for "intergenerational trauma narratives." Before addressing how this specific call may serve as a model for understanding the practices that the students in my study are engaged in, which is also a public trauma archiving practice on the Internet, I describe the Icarus Project in a little more detail.

One can better understand the Icarus Project by what they assert about their organization on their website:

> The Icarus Project is a support network and media project by and for people who experience the world in ways that are often diagnosed as mental illness. We advance social justice by fostering mutual aid practices that reconnect healing and collective liberation. We transform ourselves through transforming the world around us (Capistrano, 2015).

From this text, even if one did not already derive their position from contextual, experiential, or aesthetic information, I would come to understand their position from a simple discourse or semiotic analysis of the text. From the text it is clear that they offer a critical cultural perspective on mental health diagnosis.

The archive formulates the idea of mental illness from the position of agency and not pathology by stating, "we experience the world in ways that are often diagnosed as mental illness." With this formulation, which offers agency, subjectivity, and collectivity to the "experience of mental illness," they offer a position that foregrounds the lived experiences of the members against a background of "being diagnosed with mental illnesses," which historically removed the agency and subjectivity of the individual. A mental illness diagnosis historically and currently can lead to the loss of agency, not only metaphorically in speaking about someone as "mentally ill" or speaking about them as an individual with a mental illness, but they may lose their rights of autonomy, be institutionalized, in some cases be tortured through forced medical practices or cultural violence, or killed either directly or through experimentation.

The long history of violence and subjugation of individuals diagnosed as mentally ill has been the subject of much investigation including Foucault's (2004) *History of Madness*. I need not say more, except to note that the choice of language as well as organizing logic around the ideas of mental illness has political implications and a historical precedent. This political position is asserted directly by Icarus when they say they focus on social justice. Again, the focus on the political, institutional, or social construction of mental illness and the consequences to the individual is a direct challenge to the medical conceptual model of mental illness that isolates and pathologizes the individual. How the concept is framed is consequential, as the pathologizing of the individual with a mental illness diagnosis may lead the individual to

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isolation either by direct force, institutionalization, or more mundanely by the indirect coercion of silence and shame. By explicitly asserting that they engage in social justice they reveal their position that mental illness exists within social, cultural, political and material structures.

Further, the project states, "we transform ourselves through transforming the world around us" (Capistrano, 2015, online throughout) They suggest that the material practices of participating in the organization (e.g., making media and publications) will lead to social change. Again, the idea appears that the transformation of the individual comes from participating in a collectivized engagement with the world through shared identity, which is in contrast with the idea that mental illness should be addressed as separate through medical processes, from the history of institutions to the current experience of hyper medicalization. Although they are not explicit about how this will happen, looking at the particular call for "transgenerational trauma narratives" in their mission statement offers more clues about how to frame a public trauma archive. I read this call as one for personal narratives to be presented in a public forum, which will have political consequences.

Earlier, I stated that knowing the history of Marxist feminist consciousness-raising is important for understanding the context of the organization and their call. The act of making public and of politicizing the personal narratives of oppression to create social change and personal liberation draws from the Marxist-feminist strategy of consciousness-raising. This strategy emerged from the radical feminist movement of the 1970s, and its specific history has been recorded in the text "Consciousness Raising: A Radical Weapon":

> The only 'methods' of consciousness-raising are essentially principles. They are
> the basic radical political principles of going to the original sources, both

historic and personal, going to the people — women themselves, and going to

experience for theory and strategy (Sarachild, 1978, p. 202).

Consciousness-raising was a process by which groups of women organized for mutual aid and

social change, and to solicit and share stories of their gendered oppression to raise consciousness.

The "consciousness" they sought to raise was their own and others'. They sought to make

descriptions of their particular lived experiences and to see these descriptions not as isolated

events, but as part of a larger system of relations that they would come to better understand by

the collection of personal narratives. This would subsequently change their consciousness from a

false consciousness—within which they were unable to see their personal struggles as part of a

larger political experience—to that of a shared one in which they understood their personal

experiences were part of a shared political oppression. By understanding their commonalities in

the details of their oppression, they could find ways to collectivize and to resist them. These

efforts were informed by the Marxist idea of "false consciousness" in which ideology obscures

the forces used for control of the proletariat by the ruling class. The falseness of this

consciousness is not that the circumstances understood by the proletariat are incorrect, but rather

that they are incomplete.

The idea that the proletariat may not know their own oppression, because they cannot see

the forces acting against them due to ideological obscuring, was one adapted from class relations

to gender relations by the 1970s feminists (hooks, 1994). These feminists took as a point of

departure what would be considered apolitical, trite, or insignificant, things that were even

criticized as such by those outside of the organizations: the "feelings" of the women who

participated. Of consciousness-raising Sarachild (1978) stated, "The idea was to take our own

feelings and experiences more seriously than any theories which did not satisfactorily clarify

them, and to devise new theories which did reflect the actual experience and feelings and necessities of women" (p. 148). This text has very specific material consequences: to take the feelings as more important than the theories, and to recognize or give agency and voice to the women about their experience which then stages the ground for devising the next actions. Here again: "The only 'methods' of consciousness-raising are essentially principles. They are the basic radical political principles of going to the original sources, both historic and personal, going to the people — women themselves, and going to experience for theory and strategy" (ibid, p. 202).

This process of consciousness-raising spread from the feminist activists of the 1970s to the LGBT activists of the 1980s who organized around the AIDS crisis. The evidence of these ideas is reflected in the slogans "the personal is political" from the feminist movement and "silence is violence" from the AIDS activist movement. These slogans—as well as the direct outcomes of consciousness-raising, including public policy changes—suggest that there is usefulness in the sharing of personal experiences towards a common understanding of oppression.

The history of making material and public lived private experiences also has a direct lineage with critical cultural theory from the Frankfurt School, which expands Marxist ideas of material production as base and superstructure to that of cultural production and expands into the ideas of cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1973). This then helps us adapt to further critical theory of false consciousness, which includes those discussed in current heated debates of internalized sexism, racism, and homophobia. The Marxist methodology of looking to the historical sources, identifying an economic interest, and then looking for the self-reinforcing structures of society to better see power and its movements was developed as a way to organize against the differences

constructed by capitalism. Whether so-called identity politics has led to further divisions in social relations, or rather increased our understanding and ability to overcome divisions, is one under debate within activist and academic circles. Although I do not have an answer to the question, I believe that wanting to understand the material and lived conditions of individuals, with their specific forms of oppression, with a view to facilitating collective action, is an important lens through which to interpret the results of this study.

As a strategy for social change as it relates to mental illness or trauma, I take the Marxist-feminist materialist position, which is that ideas and experiences have real correlates in the material world. As Marx said in *The German Ideology: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859): "The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises" (Marx & Engels, 1932, p. 47). They are able to see what the material premises are that create these "phantoms in their brain" and then take actions to change their conditions, which leads to a change in their experience. Freud (1920) and Marx both take the position that the phantoms, or feelings, are responses the material conditions of the organism. For Marx it is a direct response to the material conditions of the organism, while for Freud it is the sublimation of biological desires.

The feminist position that an experience may be known through shared description may seem contrary to current political or theoretical positions, that there is not a particular experience of being a woman. This position needs to be understood in its historical and philosophical context, for to write as a Marxist feminist is to be a materialist. These feminists were writing during a period in which the idea of woman was both being established and dismantled simultaneously. Women were organizing to look for shared experiences, to collectivize a

response to their political conditions, while the constructions of theory were dismantling the concept of woman noting that the idea of woman was too broad to be a single thing. Hence, while women were describing their experiences "as women," the ideas of post structuralism and psychoanalytic feminism were dismantling the concept of women.

For myself, I allow these ideas to co-exist: that of a shared experience of oppression through external forces that shape and define identity, and also the idea that an essentialist understanding of "woman" is limited and may not exist because gender is constructed. However, by describing how the experience of gender is constructed, we can better delineate the forces that benefit from its construction and those that are subjugated by its maintenance. I take a practical materialist position, while holding space for poststructuralist ideas of multiple interpretations of the text. The poststructuralist responds to Marxism by saying that ideas are not connected to material circumstances, while postmodernism states that we are incredulous towards metanarratives like Marxism or feminism. However, political activist organizing and critical cultural theory continue to collect the narratives of lived experiences and represent them as part of a coherent whole for resistance.

This is how I read the call by the Icarus Project for intergenerational trauma narratives, through the history of consciousness-raising informed by Marxist scientific socialism as way of framing the world. Marxist formulations of dialectical materialism and the later critical cultural interpretations arrived at through feminist consciousness raising play a part in offering first a methodology of investigation, then a way to understand the information collected, and lastly a framework for further action.

In the call for stories of intergenerational transmission of trauma, the underlying idea is that people diagnosed with mental illness have a particular knowable set of experiences that is

part of systems of oppression and that the boundaries of that oppression and how to act against it are best discovered by first describing the experience, understanding the political context of the experience, making changes to the political context, and then seeing how the individual changes. The opportunity for voices from the margins to speak their experiences can be read through the postmodern position of decentering the dominant narrative. It is also the case that there are multiple interpretations of an experience, or a text, and that is where deconstruction and Derrida (1985) may be relevant: to say that the text exists without the material. Yet, the text is still consequential. It exists in some form of inscription, transmission, and interpretation.

Their call for collecting intergenerational trauma narratives is a strategy for collecting and sharing information to create solidarity and visibility. Through that solidarity and newfound awareness participants can arrive at a collective understanding of a response to the systems of oppression that have not previously been visible due to inadequate descriptions or explanations resulting from false consciousness established through the relationship between the base and the super-structure, as rooted in issues of ideology and identity. They directly assert that through changing the social system they will themselves change. This is a directly feminist methodology of liberatory practice that works through making oppression visible, knowable, and organizable and then looking for resistance. It may also have an effect on the teller, which is part of the discourse around trauma; that through the acts of "testimony" and "witnessing" the teller, tale, and listener all may change.

The call directly relates to my current research. The complications that exist in considering the personal, public, and political implications of making material through writing and video are part of the struggle I had in articulating what I mean about the 'the redress of trauma.' I am asking a theoretical question; consequently, the site of investigation is mobile to

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me. I want to know what happens when we tell the story, what the story is once it is outside of the body and made material, and what happens to the listener who interacts with the story.

If we take a materialist or structuralist position that there is a known, shared experience, the text correlates to the experiences being described in the text. From there, we can imagine organizing in response to the text and the described experiences. If we take the poststructuralist position that the text does not correlate to the material world—or even the postmodernist position that the material world is not knowable through text because it is variable and changing—then the collecting of these texts is constructed by the social pressures and expectations. Even through the sharing of 'trauma tales' we could be recapitulating the hegemonic false consciousness. In providing the space for stories of trauma to emerge, there is an underlying idea that people who have experienced trauma have a particular knowable set of experiences that is part of systems of oppression. Furthermore, the boundaries of that oppression and how to act against them are best discovered (again) by first describing the experience, understanding the political context of the experience, making changes to the political context, and then seeing how the individual changes.

The opportunity for marginalized voices to speak their experiences can be read through the postmodern position of decentering the dominant narrative. In addition, the multiple interpretations of an experience, or a text, tell us that the text exists in multiple forms: inscription, transmission, and interpretation (Derrida, 1985).

Constructing an archive of affective narratives may serve to make visible systems of oppression that may not otherwise be visible, by making oppression visible, knowable, organizable, and then resistible. I use the framing of 'redress of trauma' not to consider these as clinical actions of healing, nor as directly political actions, but to describe the experiences of story-telling, what the story becomes outside of the body by telling, and any changes in listeners

(including the teller). In the organizing of these trauma tales in a public venue on The Icarus

Project website, they are organizing a series of public documents, curating cultural artifacts as

evidence of public knowledge, and creating an informal archive of these narratives.

*Archives as Intervention*

What is collected, how it is collected, and by whom it is collected is not neutral (Ketelaar,

2002; Schwartz, 2006). This process is in fact the construction of reality, not just the recording of

it. Through this process, we can renegotiate power to include a multitude of voices in our

community, including communities constructed in the higher education arts classroom. What is

absent from the archives may be as significant as what is present (Caswell, 2014).

In his article "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection,"

Ketelaar (2002) notes that "Records are, indeed, both 'enablers of democratic empowerment' and

'instruments of oppression and domination'" (p. 224). Ketelaar points out that who controls the

documents and whose archives are exposed or hidden is a power relationship. Therefore, we

want to create a structure in which the participants in the archiving process have control and

transparency towards each other. If the archives are the sites of power negotiations, then

archivists are the negotiators. Ketelaar asks, "Archives are complete and comprehensive, secure

and reliable, but to release their power, they need an archivist. Is such mediation the power of the

archivist? What other powers may the archivist have?" (p. 223). Thus, the creation and curation

of an archive has political consequence.

Critical race and digital media scholar, Safiya Noble writes about not only the problems

of racial representation but how that representation is curated and thus distributed through

technology, specifically search engines such as Google (Noble, 2018). The racially biased

archive of the internet does more than reflect structural racism, but also serves to reproduce

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inequity. "The prevalence of derogatory images of Black women in the media is meaningfully tied to the real-world circumstances that demean the value of Black women's lives, and these images serve as justification for systemic exclusion and oppression" (Noble, 2016, p. online).

Within the field of archival studies, artifacts change their meaning by their relationship to one another. In constructing an archive of cultural artifacts of a diasporic culture of trauma, we can think of this as building upon archival theory or even collections development, but not different from the historical trajectory of archiving practices. Considering how to establish collections differently changes the way we understand their relationships. In her book, *Trading the Genome*, Bronwyn Parry (2004) provides a brief history of collection development, including the following:

> The enlightenment project of studying and understanding nature was underwritten
> by a conviction that nature in being known may be mastered managed and used in
> the service of human life. Within this epistemological framework the utility of a
> collection was of the essence (p. 19).

In her elucidation of the development of collections, she emphasizes the importance of space in not only how the objects are housed and where, but how they are assembled in relation to each other. We are in a time in which the significance and dominance of physical space is changing; however, the manner in which objects are organized in relation to each other continues to construct their meaning. The construction of these cultural artifacts which are digitally born and archived on the students' personal websites, in the classroom website, and then distributed online on YouTube builds upon and expands the idea of the archival and collection space. The legibility of each narrative is changed by its relationship to other narratives. By positioning our narratives next to one in another, we will construct our collective meaning and create a living archive. In

her paper "Having New Eyes: Spaces of Archives, Landscapes of Power," Joan Schwartz (2006) discusses the issues regarding power and the archives:

> Through archives, the past is controlled. Certain stories are privileged and others marginalized…This represents enormous power over memory and identity, over the fundamental ways in which society seeks evidence of what its core values are and have been, where it has come from, and where it is going (p. 3)

The idea of redesigning collections to facilitate engagement is discussed in Schnapp's piece entitled "Animating the Archives" (2008). He raises the point it is often the case that archives are not considered items that have been curated but the entire past narrative. He talks about the ways in which archives are considered dead and is looking for ways to animate the archives, to make living archives, so to speak. To do this is to facilitate public engagement and investment in the collections in a community. To change the way that collections are assembled and engaged with, by altering our understanding of physical space and cyberspace, is to cause an entire shift in archives. "Embedded within the constellation of possibilities just evoked is a sort of Copernican revolution with respect to the roles performed by libraries and museums in the modern era" (p. 48) Schnapps claims. While this seems an ambitious goal, it is not out of the realm of possibility. This kind of Copernican revolution is one in which the center is shifted. According to the science anthropologist Bruno Latour (1987), "For a Copernican revolution to take place it does not matter what means are used provided this goal is achieved: a shift in what counts as centre and what counts as periphery" (p. 226). This shift may occur by centering the discourses of a trauma diaspora. Certainly the shifting is occurring within the consideration of how archives of informal, community, and public cultures have had influence.

In considering the higher education new media narratives arts classroom as the location of public discourse, I contend that students' art works, writings, photographs, and videos are cultural artifacts. They are the material evidence and documentation of their experiences as authors and artists and are produced from their specific positions. These artifacts, when placed in relation to one another, develop a different kind of legibility. This legibility may be of a larger narrative that is known when the artifacts are seen near one another. The way meaning is made in art production occurs with the making of the art object, the abstraction of experience or emotion into the object, then in the interpretation of the object by the audience. In the case of this classroom, these art objects are first collected and curated into individual archives that the students have constructed as WordPress sites, and as collections located on the Internet on video hosting websites such as Vimeo and YouTube. These projects reveal emotion and affect that may suggest a shared experience, a collective understanding of narratives that are otherwise hard to tell or hear. (J. E. Muñoz, 1996) notes an archive of ephemera, that it may be constructed by those that do not have access to the systems of organization leading to legibility and legitimacy that occurs for a dominant culture.

*Affective Archives*

The utilization of archival concepts in the humanities may be influenced by Derrida's (1996) *Archive fever: A Freudian Impression*. In this essay, Derrida relates Freud's idea of the death drive to archival practices. The fever that Derrida speaks of is to "have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement" (p. 91). The adaptation of these concepts has both offered rich recourse for new imaginations in considering the archive and some conceptual slippage. In my work, I intend to speak of archives

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as both literal and manifest, utilizing the conceptualizations expanded by scholars such as

Cvetkovich (2003) speaking of archives of feelings, J. E. Muñoz (1996) who speaks about

ephemera of archives, and archival studies scholars such as Caswell (2014) who considers the

silences in the public record as political consequences of trauma.

In her book, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexualities and Lesbian Public Cultures*,

Ann Cvetkovich (2003) constructs the idea of an archive of feelings, in which cultural artifacts

distributed in informal and community collections and artistic presentations give evidence and

discourse to the relationship between trauma and lesbian identity. She utilizes and further

develops the concept of an affective archive. She seeks to "forge methodologies for the

documentation and examination of the structures of affect that constitute cultural experience and

serve as the foundation for public cultures" (p. 11). The affective archive is one in which cultural

texts are significant. "An affective archive, therefore, demands a recognition of cultural texts as

repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts

themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception" (p. 7). Cvetkovich

(2003) is looking particularly at the nature of trauma as disruptive to identity, and she examines

non-traditional archives for evidence of 'trauma cultures,' "public cultures that form in and

around trauma" (p. 10). She notes that trauma "challenges common understandings of what

constitutes an archive. Because trauma can be unspeakable and unrepresentable and because it is

marked by forgetting and dissociation, it often seems to leave behind no records at all" (p. 7).

This absence of memory or record could be seen as a kind of silence in the records. This

makes identification with a narrative or construction of a coherent narrative problematic. This

issue is considered in the work of Michelle Caswell. She investigates concepts of collective

memory and collective absences or silences through archival practices. In her book, *Archiving*

*the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia,* Caswell (2014) utilizes mug shots of individuals who had been imprisoned, tortured, and killed in the notorious Killing Fields of Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge reign in the 1970s. In investigating these objects as archival evidence, she considers the way the photographs serve to elicit narratives that would elucidate some of the silences that leave gaps in both the narratives of traumatic events and the records of them. The utility of the records is in creating a more complete understanding of the experience. In considering new media narratives as part of an affective archive, each object offers a new legibility to the other, by placing individual cultural artifacts in relation to each other, a more complete understanding of the complex relationship between personal narrative and public culture.

In arts practices, the construction of experiences through other forms of documentation may address this silence. Students' art works, writings, photographs, and videos are cultural artifacts. They are the material evidence and documentation of their experiences as authors and artists, and are produced from their specific positions. These artifacts, when placed in relation to one another, engender a richness of representation; one that offers a deeper narrative than that of each artifact on its own. Meaning is made in art production through the making of the art object, the abstraction of experience or emotion embedded within the object, and in the interpretation of the object by the audience.

Whereas Cvetkovich (2003) investigates the idea of trauma cultures from the position of sexuality, I consider the idea that a trauma culture may be diasporic; that the specific nature of a cultural or community identity may be one that is known from its narratives and objects placed in relation to each other. In this case, the bounded space of the new media narrative arts classroom is the first location of the public; there, the identification of shared culture may be seen through

these affective objects curated together as affective archives. The students' art objects are collected and curated first in individual archives, and then as collections distributed on the internet on video hosting websites such as Vimeo and WordPress.

## Diaspora of Trauma

There is conceptual overlap between trauma studies and diaspora studies as they both deal with issues of subjectivity, cultural memory, and collective narrative, as well as issues of silence and omission. The developing field of diaspora studies informed by critical postcolonial studies may also offer insights. A diaspora in a literal sense is a population that has been dispersed from their homeland, from a national or geographical location. The word diaspora comes from the Greek word διασπορά, which means dispersion or scattering. The concept of diaspora as members of a dispersed culture is important in this study, not in the traditional sense of nationality or ethnicity, but instead in the sense of group identification and shared "culture" based in shared characteristics. Because I build on the idea of a "culture of trauma" (Alexander, 2004) or a "trauma culture" (Cvetkovich, 2003; Kaplan, 2008) that can be known through its cultural artifacts, I must identify the members of this culture.

For the purposes of this study, I identify a diaspora as members of a culture that are dispersed across physical and temporal locations. After World War II, both trauma studies and diaspora studies (B. H. Edwards, 2004) begin to appear in cultural discourse. If members of a trauma culture are diasporic, then the collection of archives may allow for identification with the narratives, and with each other. "… [T]he very project of reconstitution of diaspora identity is a project of creating underlying unity…" (Kotrosits, 2015, p. 66). This underlying unity may emerge through coming to understand each other's specific experiences differently, and coming to name trauma as not merely personal, but as evidence of a socially constructed situation.

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**Discussion**

In this literature review, I constructed an interdisciplinary framework for establishing the need for this case study and the gaps in the literature. This framework is constructed as follows: trauma is consequential to individuals and cultures, and trauma is frequently caused by structural violence and social oppression. In considering the consequences of trauma, it is important to understand both the clinical and cultural theories of trauma. Through this research, I hope to have shown that, although the individual experience of trauma is disruptive to the self, the construction and distribution of trauma narratives may help to heal the trauma survivor by illuminating their membership in a cultural diaspora of trauma. I note that the culture is diasporic in that members of the culture may not know each other's traumas directly, and we are distributed across populations and physical locations.

Trauma interferes with both language and memory, both personally and culturally. Members of the trauma culture may be known to each other through affect and emotion. Evidence of our own trauma may manifest in behavioral changes, as is shown in the clinical manifestations of trauma. We may also know of each other through cultural artifacts, which allow us a better understanding of our own traumatic experiences and others'. These cultural artifacts may be produced in arts education classrooms, in an intersection of the private narrative and the public sphere. The production of these cultural artifacts may be consequential to the maker of the artifact in terms of its testimony, and may be consequential to the observers of the artifact as offering witness. Once the artist has moved away from the art object/artifact, the artifact remains and witness continues. The organization of these artifacts into a meaningful collection may serve as an archive that can distribute the trauma narrative and ultimately produce a better understanding of the culture from which the artist/author came. The emergence of these

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narratives and understanding of the affective presentation of the individuals in the arts classroom

may occur with or without intention as art-making.

# CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding and description of the nature of trauma and affect in the higher education arts classroom and the potential for pedagogical interventions through public archiving of trauma narratives. My investigation utilizes extended case study methodology, including both auto-ethnographic methods and narrative inquiry analysis. Extended case study embraces ethnographic tools and techniques for investigation, and simultaneously allows for the researcher to take a critical theoretical position from the outset of the research. My use of arts-based auto-ethnography helps specify and account for the manner in which I am positioned within the research as a member of a trauma culture, beyond just being an embedded participant in the case study. Ethnography considers the experiences of individuals within cultural relationships. In this research, I consider myself as a member of a trauma diaspora and a student in the higher education arts classroom. Thus, I am one of the cases investigated in my research; the presentation of trauma narratives through my arts practice as personal intervention and as an archival practice when publicly received as political discourse. I review my students' work as part of a creative cultural public archive and conduct a qualitative and quantitative survey of past students' responses. The purpose of these research methods is to observe and document the process of treating personal trauma narratives as part of a creative cultural public archive, and to examine the usefulness of basic mindfulness interventions in facilitating the creation of trauma archives.

## Extended Case Study Methodology

For this study, I employ Michael Burawoy's (2009) formulation of the extended case study as my methodological framework. I examine an extended case that reviews my student's

works alongside my own to construct the concept of a diaspora of trauma, a culture known from its affective experience, evidenced through artifacts of cultural production and understood through its archived narratives. I look at student experiences and my own experiences as an instructor in a higher education narrative arts class to examine the manner in which trauma narratives emerge, and to consider which of the practices I bring to the classroom affect the emergence of these narratives. I seek to understand the student's experiences and my pedagogical practices that shaped the emergence of these narratives. Building upon my previous case study of action research in my teaching, I investigate my pedagogical practices as informed by a feminist ethics of care and the use of contemplative practices in the classroom as a way to hold space for the emergence of affect, emotion and trauma narratives in new media practices.

Extended case study builds upon the case study methodology. According to Chadderton and Torrance (2011), case study is as much an approach to research as it is a methodology to be deployed in a research project. A case study looks at a specific "case" or incidence of a particular kind of event or phenomenon and asks, "What is going on here?" (p. 53). The researcher then contextualizes the phenomenon being observed against the "social reality" of the case in question (53). When using case study, the researcher must pay close attention to the significance of the case in question, i.e., why this particular case is worth investigating, and whether or not it is generalizable. This allows the researcher to understand how the information gained from investigating the particular case may be useful in understanding other phenomena, or the same phenomena in a different context. Through careful triangulation of the observations within the case the information learned can be examined for validity. Since the researcher seeks to interpret the observed phenomenon in the case, the position of the researcher needs to be well understood. Issues of access to the case in question must also be addressed. This includes questions of

interpretation from within the observed case if the researcher is an insider relative to the researched phenomenon, or from outside observation if the researcher identifies as an outsider relative to the observed phenomenon.

The extended case methodology uses ethnographic tools and techniques for investigation, and simultaneously allows for the researcher to take a critical theoretical position from the beginning of the research. In extended case methods, the larger political and social contexts of the specific case being studied are "extended" into the interpretation of the case. "It 'extends' them by synthesizing participant observation evidence with theories of large social or cultural forces" (Lichterman, 2002, p. 120). Burawoy (2009) notes that in the formulation of the extended case study, it is the use of reflexive practices that positions the researcher within the world they are theorizing. The extended case method "… deploys participant observation to locate everyday life in its extralocal and historical context" (p. 1). In my research, I use ideas of the extra-local influences, those of systemic and cultural oppression manifest as cultural and personal trauma and thus affecting the lived experiences of those in the higher education arts classroom. As the researcher, I am positioning myself as a feminist scholar and member of a culture of trauma diaspora. Extended case study is useful to my work since I have constructed a theoretical position of trauma as diasporic and as a consequence of social oppression; I seek to determine if diasporic trauma can be seen as emerging in the higher education arts classroom through making a study of my student's work and my own.

As Burawoy (2009) notes, "the extended case method applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the 'micro' to the 'macro', and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on pre-existing theory" (p. 5). Since I am constructing an idea of a culture of trauma that is known

through its artifacts, this work is informed by ethnographic studies of cultures. Burawoy notes that ethnography, as a methodological investigation, is often framed as a kind of immersion in the culture with the ideas emerging from the observation. Burawoy provides precedence for "extending out" in an ethnographically informed case study. Burawoy created this method in order to integrate "two coexisting models of science" (p. 6), by synthesizing the methodological practices of ethnography or "writing about the world from the standpoint of participant observation" (p. 6) and positivist science, which he says, is the construction of "falsifiable and generalizable explanations of empirical phenomena" (p. 6).

Constructing the cultural setting of the higher education classroom means that, as the researcher, I am positioning it in a particular way: as an intersectional feminist scholar framing my students work in historical and contemporary conditions of social relations. Burawoy states that the extended case method "… is able to dig beneath the political binaries of colonizer and colonized, white and black, metropolis and periphery, capital and labor to discover multiple processes, interests and identities" (p. 6). Since I am looking for evidence of the emergence of personal and cultural trauma, this method afforded me insight into these intersecting social experiences as present in the personal trauma narratives. The limitations of this method, as Burawoy notes, is that it is not outside of these experiences and so it "comes up against the very forces it displays" (p. 7). In his own use of the case study, he notes that the researcher is not separate from the research and that there is an "indissoluble connection between interviewer and respondent" (p. 7).

The researcher engages in reflexive practice, which serves to mediate between the needs of critical distance in positivist scientific investigation and the need for intimate immersion in ethnography. This reflexive practice allows the researcher to position the knowledge gained in

the local study of the case against global knowledge of the larger historical and extra-local circumstances that the specific case may exist in. In using this methodology, I look at the specifics of the case of higher education arts students and their personal narratives against the construction of a theoretical position of a cultural trauma diaspora.

*Autoethnography*

To better observe how trauma narratives emerge and transform both personal and public stories, I include my own work in the case study. Qualitative researchers may use auto-ethnography to frame their lived experiences in terms of the social and cultural significance (Chang, 2008). In this case, I look to see how my work around trauma emerged, what happened when I made it, and what happened when I showed it to others. I look at the content of my work by reviewing and analyzing works during the same tenure of time I was teaching. As I investigate the way in which our personal narratives become public discourse in the higher education arts classroom, reflecting on works produced in my studio practice offers an additional perspective on this position.

*Narrative Inquiry*

In examining the data in the case study, I utilized narrative inquiry for the analysis and writing of the research and findings (Creswell, 2003). In analyzing the data, I utilized this form of narrative inquiry for its descriptive elements, which focus on the narrative components of the data, foregrounding the voices of the participants in the study (Creswell, 2003).

Since I am utilizing extended case study, the events that I am reflecting on have already occurred. For participant observation, I drew upon the written reflections, teaching notes, and observations I kept during my teaching practices. The use of narrative methods according to

Chase (2008) allows for "retrospective meaning making," which is important since I am assembling a narrative of what happened, and how I understood it, using the voices and writings of myself and my students to make sense of the data. Narrative inquiry in extended case study allows for intersections of social relations and the particulars of the case.

## Rationale for Case, Participants and Source Selection

As previously stated, my research is driven by my experiences in teaching new media narrative arts in the higher educational arts classroom and is informed by my history of scholarship and activism concerning social justice, as well as the construction and curation of cultural artifacts including art objects. In selecting how to proceed with particular students and cases, I reviewed student's works from four years of teaching experience, which bounded the shared experiences I identified to a single semester for investigation. That semester, I taught a total of fifteen students: eleven male and four female. From these students, I selected a subset of three students for in-depth interviews and analysis of their materials. In the following chapter, I elaborate on the specifics of the individuals chosen.

## Data Collection

Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews and analysis of student survey responses, journals, observation notes, and artifacts made for the class, including videos, images, and other documents as data sets for analysis.

*Journals*

I reviewed student journals that they made in the class. These journals also exist online as WordPress journals. These journals include their post-mindfulness practice writings, their free writings, and their reflections on their work in development.

*Observation Notes*

Since my work reflects back on events that have happened in the past, I did not engage in present-time observations. However, I reviewed the documents kept while teaching during the case semester, which included detailed teaching notes. I also analyzed student's writings for observations they made on the experience in the class.

*Artifacts*

I also analyzed the video works students created for the class. Here, I looked to understand the narratives used in their videos, which included themes of emotion, affect, and trauma.

*Interviews*

I conducted in-depth interviews with three students from the case study classroom. Students were convenience sampled, consistent with qualitative case study methods (Stake, 1995), for their representativeness around the central phenomenon of this study, i.e., the redress of diasporic trauma through art-making as a material practice. Boddy (2016) similarly affirms that a small convenience sample in qualitative research can yield valid results. Moreover, interviews can serve as a source of data collection that provides perspectives otherwise unavailable from document review and surveys (Seidman, 2013).

In constructing a description of traumatic redress through material practices, I also reflected on my own new media arts projects in the higher education arts classroom as they relate to trauma narratives. I selected a limited sample of texts and works produced both in and out of studio classes. I reviewed the arts objects, the notes I kept while creating and presenting the works, and notes I took during my studio critiques. In reviewing each of these, I sought to contribute material towards a descriptive understanding of new media narrative construction as it relates to affect and trauma. I looked for evidence of affect in circulation—specifically emotion—and sought to connect this to a narrative of trauma that is socially, culturally, or personally constructed. The utility of investigating my own arts practice is to orient and position myself as a member of the community that I am seeking to define and describe in this research (Chang, 2008).

## Data Analysis

Interview data was recorded and transcribed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005); documents, artifacts and observations were investigated and coded both for emerging themes in individual narratives and reflexively across my pedagogical practices (Berger, 2015; Watson, 1987). I conducted an initial review of available data in both the interviews and artifacts, identifying specific themes, relating evidence of affect (and specifically emotion) to concepts of socially and culturally experienced trauma, or personal trauma narratives (Saldaña, 2016).

Using progressive focusing (Stake, 2000), I probed deeper into emergent themes and/or categories as they appeared and iteratively inflected and reflected these back as a framework for examining my central phenomenon, the redress of trauma through material practices. Coding and reflexivity continued until patterning of the data (Favaro, Gill, & Harvey, 2017) suggested a

stopping point in the analysis and a need to begin the writing-up portion of the analysis (Favaro et al., 2017).

## Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns of addressing trauma in a higher educational setting have been difficult to navigate. To collect data for an earlier case study I conducted and published in 2014, I submitted a research application to the Institutional Review Board at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which was granted. To comply with IRB regulations, I completed the required Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Human Subjects Research Education Module, as well as the optional section on Internet Based Research, on November 14, 2015.

This case study includes writings that students produced and distributed on the Internet. Their writings are publicly published on individual WordPress sites, and their videos are publicly published on both YouTube and Vimeo. The Internet Based Research Module addressed the use of these publicly archived materials.

Individuals in the case study were invited to be voluntary participants and were made aware of the potential benefits and risks related to participation. Prior to participating in the study, they also were provided a copy of the IRB-approved consent forms, which were then collected with their signatures. Participants were provided with a copy of the consent form to keep for their own records. As a part of this, the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the participants was assured and protected. Participants were advised that they were not obligated to participate and could withdraw at any time with no adverse effects.

While soliciting the participation of students who had completed the course, I emphasized that there was no possibility of any adverse effect on student grades and no financial gains or rewards to affect participant responses or change motivation for participation. Potential

benefits of the research that apply to fields of art education, psychology, and trauma studies were

noted, along with potential redress of trauma benefits participants may (or had) experienced.

Moreover, all interview data and artifacts were preserved securely, with identifying

information anonymized to protect individual identities. In particular, interview recordings and

transcriptions were kept securely and inaccessible by the research. Care was taken through the

entire process to not compromise the privacy or identity of any participant (Favaro et al., 2017).

# CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE OF PEDAGOGY

*I would tell my students: your work has its own desires. What I mean to say is that we have intentions when we begin, maybe it is to complete the criteria of the assignment, maybe it is to get a good grade, maybe it is to pass the class. Maybe it is to learn a skill. It could be a combination of intentions. The work itself may be an attempt to communicate an idea, represent an experience. It may be a love letter. A protest. A supplication. An adornment. We may have intentions for the work we seek to produce, but the work has its own desires.*

*Once we begin, we, both author and artifact, co-constitute one another. The work seeks to communicate its intent, as we seek to communicate ours. As artists and authors we are obligated to the work. So I am obligated to complete this dissertation research not only for those who have invested in me, not only in gratitude to the loyalty and generosity shown me, not only to complete a degree, to change class status, to invest in my future, not only to investigate the ideas and represent them to others. But also I am obligated to this work, to care for it and complete it as it creates me. Thus my body, and the body of the work, circulate affect and are affected.*

*This work is an act of translation, of seeking to know the unnamable.*

*This letter is an affective artifact, and part of an ephemeral archive. The letter is a composition, a cultural or social artifact of individual production. This artifact is an ephemeral object, impermanent to our records, but existing now in perpetuity in the archive of the internet.*

*But that is not what I intended to tell you in this exchange—again, the work is affective, shaping my thinking, as I write it. Circulating force and power as I seek words to communicate. Affect aliens and transient belonging. Affect aliens and affective community.*

**About Writing with Video**

Writing with Video (WWV) was a narrative and video arts class offered in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Illinois. I participated in the course as a graduate student while completing my Master's Degree in Library and Information Science. My experiences in this course contributed to my change of field to Art Education. I hoped Art Education would serve as a possible location for interpreting, constructing, and communicating meaning and as a place of social justice intervention.

The general curriculum of WWV was shared by all instructors of record and was developed and facilitated by the course director. The course was offered by the department, was developed by Professor Joseph Squier, then graduate student Maria Lovett, and later modified in large part by graduate student Kimber Andrews. The curriculum was modified and adapted by individual instructors of record through the process of teaching and revising the materials. Some of these modifications were shared, and some were independently developed.

The general curriculum of the course included three production cycles of filmmaking, as well as the creation and maintenance of an individual website to serve as a portfolio for the materials produced for the course. By the end of the semester, students each had made a minimum of three short narrative films and completed the research and documentation of these films through a process of pre- and post-production research and writings. The videos were presented in class for peer feedback through the drafting process and for critiques of final drafts. Between each production cycle, students were assigned various related readings or videos and to write pre- and post-production journals.

I modified the WWV curriculum by including contemplative pedagogical practices, which I called 'coming present' at the start of each class, and integrating Amherst Artists and

Writers Method (AAWM) (Schneider, 2003) techniques for addressing the texts produced as 'free-writes' following the conclusion of the class process of 'coming present.' The materials produced during the free-writes were addressed using the guidelines provided by the AAWM for both the production and reception of creative writings.

As I modified my pedagogical practices, using teacher-initiated, action research investigation, I sought ways to facilitate a more empathetic, intersubjective engagement from the students who participated.

*Duration*: I taught WWV for five years, during the academic years from 2011 to 2016. During that time, I taught one section each semester; the class met for two hours and four minutes twice a week. The class size averaged approximately twenty students per semester.

*Variation*: During my time teaching at the University, I also adapted the course and taught it in other locations: The Summer Academic Achievement Program (SAAP) for incoming undergraduate students versions of the concepts were taught as a poetry class in a local public jail, modified as a course focused on arts as activism as "The Gaze" at the School for Designing a Society in Urbana, Illinois, and a version of the materials taught as citizen journalism at Stratton Elementary School in Champaign, Illinois. Interviews in this research, however, are limited to a single semester of the undergraduate course, and a subset of students from that class.

**Pedagogical Practice**

I would begin each class with what I called 'coming present,' which included various contemplative practices, followed by a writing prompt. From these prompts, we would then write for a specified period of time. The specifics of the prompt would vary for each class, as well as the period of time spent writing, but the process of coming present occurred during each class.

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Informed by my training with the Amherst Writers and Artists Method for creative writing, we would then take turns reading and responding to the texts produced in each class. The texts would be read just as they were written, without embellishment or explanation, although omissions were allowed. Not all works must be read, although any writings produced during the practice were welcome to be read by any student who chose to read. We would respond to the works, noting what was strong, what was striking, or what stayed with us upon hearing them. When responding to the writings, we treat the text as if it is fiction, offering a kind of critical distance between author and art object. I would facilitate the discussion. The process particularly involved and encouraged learning how to respond to these texts, to trust to read the new work out loud, and to pay close attention to the work produced by their classmates.

In the practice, I sought to share the risk of vulnerability with my students by also engaging in the somatic practices and reflective writings during the timed process. I would then read aloud exactly what I had written on the page, not embellishing or explaining, but occasionally omitting.

By participating in both the meditative practices and the shared writing and reading, I sought to eliminate the role of the instructor as an outside observer, and instead participate in the shared risk of artistic and creative vulnerability. In doing so, I sought to undermine the hierarchical teacher/student relationship and to help facilitate the development of a community of practice within the classroom. These free-writes were then collected and curated onto each student's individual websites. Although the writing was to be read as it was written, once the work had been received by the audience of the classroom, the authors were encouraged to edit, modify, and alter these pieces prior to posting on their individual websites in the public space of the Internet.

These works, I argue, are affective artifacts that transform under the process of being read aloud and then transform again when curated to a location where it could be found and read by others. That is, the work moved through a process as it was formed, performed, edited, curated, and published.

I have written and published about this 'coming present' process as an investigation of contemplative pedagogical practices (M. Jones, 2014). In seeking to understand my research, I have used these writings—many of which are still extant on my students' websites, still present as part of an affective archive—and my own writings. For the interviews, each interviewee spoke extensively about their experiences with the process of 'coming present' for the prompts used, the writing produced, and the performative experience of reading these writings in the classroom, while also responding to their colleagues and my writings.

## Student Interviews: Contexts & Content

Following the completion of my preliminary exam, I began the process of IRB approval, which took a number of months through revisions. I used purposeful sampling in selecting my interviewees, choosing three students from a particular semester approximately a year prior to conducting the interviews. To protect their confidentiality, each interviewee will be referred to by a pseudonym: Jeff, Gloria, and Bill.

Each of the students was Caucasian, in their early twenties; two were male and one female. Although the interviewees had some characteristics in common, each of them was a young adult in their early twenties, Caucasian American, and had relocated to the Urbana-Champaign area for college from a hometown in Illinois. They each had different academic backgrounds in the sciences or social sciences. At the time the interviews were conducted, two of

the students had already matriculated. Each of these students were interested in being interviewed and wanted to speak about their experiences with their work.

I selected these students because of their relationship to each other, the material and to me. During the course of the class, these three students had become creatively and personally intimate with each other. They formed a friendship based on sharing work and ideas with one another, and as a group they stayed close to me after the course had ended. The closeness of the relationship to each other, to me, and their familiarity with the nature of my research motivated my selection of these particular students.

In extended case study, the researcher extends theory into the site of study, which Burawoy describes as an extension of "the observer into the lives of participants under study." Because of this extension, I specifically selected students with whom I had ongoing interactions. Although I taught for several years, and during that time numerous students stayed in contact with me, these students in particular established a relationship with each other and with me in a manner that allowed for the formation of this research as a kind of shared investigation with them, consistent with extended case study.

I conducted the interviews at the beginning of the fall semester of 2016; two were conducted using FaceTime, and one was conducted in person in my home office. I received consent to audio record the interviews, and did so using an audio recorder on my personal computer. Once recorded, I saved the audio files and transcribed the interviews for review. Prior to the interviews, I distributed the IRB-approved consent form and materials and asked for their signatures. Only one of the interviewees returned the form signed prior to the time of the interview. Because I did not have a signature from the other two students prior to the interview time, we reviewed the form on the date of the interview, and they gave verbal consent to have the

interview recorded before we began. In all cases, prior to the interviews, I assured each participant of their confidentiality and reiterated that they were free to stop at any time or withdraw from the study completely.

Each interview was approximately an hour in duration. The participants received a list of sample questions to review prior to the arranged meeting and were familiar with the subject matter of the research and the nature of the investigation. Also, all three participants were generally familiar with the subject of the research, not only because I taught the WWV course as a kind of participatory action research with these students as co-researchers into the specifics of contemplative practices in the higher education arts classroom, but also from our continued informal conversations over the course of the year prior to the actual interviews.

The interviews were conducted between each participant and myself without a list of planned questions and instead as a conversation on a number of themes relevant to the study. Following the review of the IRB approved materials, I briefly introduced the specifics of the topic of study and invited each interviewee to direct the interview conversation by telling me stories of their experience in the class and what they thought might be relevant, important, and memorable. During the interviews, I asked each participant to offer responses to a number of themes: what they remembered of the contemplative practices and how they perceived the practices as it related to their creative work or the classroom experience, what they remember of their own work and writing for the course, and what works (videos or writings) of others were memorable. Out of our shared classroom experiences, I also sought clarification from them around the specifics of my own investigation: trauma narratives. A text describing this was available on the IRB form and was further clarified through the interview.

Following each interview, I asked each participant if there was anything else they wanted to tell me, invited them to contact me again if they wanted to contribute more, and asked if they would be willing to be contacted again for a potential follow up. Each of them was amenable to a follow-up interview, if needed, and each expressed interest in hearing what was drawn from the interview conducted.

Once all three interviews were completed, I audited the recorded material and transcribed the interviews. The transcription process took place over several months. Once completed, I read through each interview and looked for themes and wrote notes about the ideas that emerged in the conversations. I used these notes to establish themes to identify in the content of the interviews. The themes I identified and paired included: Contemplative practices/pedagogical practices, public witness/art practices, trauma/disability, affect/emotion, and diaspora/community.

I named these themes for how they related to content that emerged in the interviews, the types of questions I asked, and the specifics of the theoretical underpinnings of this study. I then reviewed the interviews again with the thematic findings as guides, performing a closer read of the interviews against the students' writings or video works referenced in the interviews. I also reviewed my own writings and teaching notes that correlated to the referenced events. In writing up these interviews, I moved away from the themes and towards a close reading of particular moments that may have suggested the circulation of affect and transformation for each of these students. In particular, I was concerned to look for specific instances of the central phenomenon of this study: how circulation of affect (through material engagement in art) affords transformative change for the redress of trauma. While the focus of this research, other instances and moments (e.g., non-transformative as well) also occurred. Each of the interviewee's spoke of

the community and intimacy established with their classmates as part of the peculiarity of their experience in my class.

*Jeff in the Pedagogy: Alienation and Affinity*

The first interview I conducted took place with Jeff. Jeff had matriculated and was working in a major city. We met on FaceTime in August 2016. During his interview Jeff noted that he had experienced a sense of safety in the classroom that he had not felt in other courses, specifically, "open, accepting and a space of no judgment" (Jeff, Interview, August 2016). He could not identify specific moments that necessarily created that sense of safety, but he did say that there was one event which returned in his memory repeatedly since the course ended. He told me a story of reading a free-write aloud early in the semester, and I remembered that it was a response to a writing prompt when I read the poem "Where I am from," a short sensory focused poem by George Ella Lyon. As Jeff recounted this story he began to cry, but continued to tell me of his experience.

> .... It was one of the free writes…were checking in and getting into this Zen…sort of mindset…. You said everyone is going to share the free-write and I was like, "Fuck, no." I remember writing it and thinking I sound like a huge asshole. I am being such a dick right now. And I remember you said, "Oh we are sharing"…. "Why this one?" I remember the actual first sentence was something like I grew up in a very wealthy, primarily white 'bougie' suburb. (Jeff, Interview, August 2016).

As Jeff reports, in the moment prior to the public performance of this new piece, he was anxious about reading this work out loud. His original piece as read in class is as follows:

*I'm from a predominantly white, bougie, rich suburb. A place I hated so much, but wish I could go back to. Growing up in the cookie cutter suburb I tried to find reasons to be angry and rebel. A kid so fortunate to live in a stable home in a safe neighborhood getting a good education, and all I wanted to do was break something. Listening to The Ramones, Bring Me the Horizon (the first album anyway), and Gorgoroth on repeat. Trying to find my own reason to scream. My own reason to turn my amp all the way up. My own reason to want to be sedated. The more I tried the more I couldn't find anything. It's so backwards to think I wanted a shittier life, but back then I wanted something to give me a purpose to fight. I came from a place people would die to grow up in, but a place I was dying to leave.* (Jeff, freewrites).

In this, the author reveals his childhood home, one he both hated and wishes to return to. He is alienated in his affect; his feelings are not correctly aligned with the "cluster of promises" (Berlant, 2007, p. 33) that white, middle-class US suburbanity offers. He feels displaced, not at home in his home. In this text, the author is an 'affect alien' (Ahmed, 2009, p. 4); he is "alienated—out of line with an affective community.... not happy in proximity to objects that are attributed as being good" (p. 4). He knows that others may envy his childhood home, but he is unhappy, even angry, and this misalignment between his angry affect and the objects expected to bring happiness is a disappointment, and in Jeff's case it is a source of self-doubt. Self-doubt he expresses during the interview as a reluctance to read his writing out loud to his peers. Ahmed describes this as: "Such disappointment can also involve an anxious narrative of self-doubt (why I am not made happy by this, what is wrong with me?) or (my own preferred response) a narrative of rage, where the object that is supposed to make us happy is attributed as the cause of disappointment. Your rage might be directed against the object that fails to deliver its promise, or

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spill out toward those who promised you happiness through the elevation of such things as good. We become strangers, or affect aliens, in such moments (Ahmed, 2009).

Ahmed's alien emerges from the Marxist concept of alienation, whereby an individual is estranged from themselves and their humanity through the conditions of mechanized and stratified social conditions. Jeff is also alien in its other meaning as well, one who is a stranger in the land in which they live. An alien in terms of citizenry is someone who is a non-native member of the country or community in which they live or appear to belong. Jeff is both alien and alienated from his community of origin. Jeff is alienated from his homeland, his childhood home. Proximity does not provide nor guarantee intimacy. Or as Ahmed (2009, p. 4) says, "Sharing a horizon is not necessarily to feel alike."

In the interview, Jeff expressed trepidation about performing this text in the public space of the class, imagining the perception of his position as one of privilege and his text as being perceived as callous complaints. However, when he does read his text aloud, this is the moment he recalls as being seminal to the feeling of belonging in the collective space of the classroom. Jeff felt relief after reading it to the class and hearing their responses. He said, "I remember feeling nice afterwards and I thought about that since and it was very unexpected and it was really, really nice" (Jeff, Interview, August, 2016). "I did not expect that sort of gratification from that, and reading it out loud and hearing it myself and having everyone saying thanks for sharing and moving on … it was really relieving. I had not realized how much of that stuff had built up from this shitty white suburb" (Jeff, Interview, August, 2016).

The affective artifact, in this case the free-write, seeks legibility. The author seeks witness. It is both the process of producing the artifact and then the process of performing the artifact that may contribute to an affective transformation from alienation to affinity.

When you write something and you hear it out loud it is two different experiences. I remember hearing it out loud, and…I felt really relieved because there was a lot of stuff in there about growing up in this very privileged thing and feeling conflicted about it and not liking it…Writing it down was one thing, so you write it down to paper and then saying it out loud and sharing it with a group of people who would not put it back in my face I did not expect that sort of gratification from that and reading it out loud and hearing it myself and having everyone saying thanks for sharing and moving on was really relieving. (Jeff, Interview, August, 2016)

The performance of this piece, and the reception of it within the community, led to an affective transformation; an alignment of affect for the author and the audience. In this moment, the affect alien, as the author of this piece, experienced a connection within the community, a feeling of (at least transient) citizenship. When this writing was presented in the class, Jeff's work along with the other students' writings collectively constituted an ephemeral archive of the cultural artifacts of an ephemeral and diasporic culture. In this moment, Jeff's presentation of his work provides him access to an affective community, co-constituted by the other individual authors, known and understood to each other through the cultural artifacts presented and performed in the classroom space. In some cases, an awareness of each other's specific sense of isolation offers access to increased intimacy and connection. This connection and inclusion occurs in brief moments of recognition of each other's common humanity. I would argue that it is through the very distance of the object, the written and received text, from the author that allows for this inclusion. The artifact serves as an intercessor between the alienated author and the affective community.

At the point during the interview in which Jeff's voice was breaking and he went silent, I could see on the video that he had begun to cry. I checked to see if he wanted to continue, if he needed a break, or if he wanted to tell me what was happening. Overcome, he said that maybe it was nostalgia, remembering back to a sense of community, the specifics of the class, and the experiences of being there.

When Jeff spoke of his experiences he made distinctions between what had been written on the page, a private narrative of displacement, and his experience of reading the text to the classroom. This could be indicative of a diasporic identity, a disconnection through individual alienation in contemporary culture. When Jeff shared his text with others, there was a moment of connection through the reception of his work. In the reception, Jeff noted that his classmates did not respond the way he feared, but that the shared performance of the works provided a commonality, a significance to the insignificance. To report his pain, to have it received and witnessed, and then to continue, was to show that in this community of the classroom the pain is shared, if not in specifics but in sentiment.

Although my conclusion of the close read—of this particular moment, when Jeff reads aloud a piece prompted and produced in the immediate moment that he has some trepidation about sharing—is that the piece allows for a possible transition from alienation through affective affinity, I do not propose this process of soliciting and revealing distress narratives as a pedagogical practice. In the presentation of the freshly produced pieces, students were invited to share and respond as part of the process; they were not, however, obligated to share the entirety of the piece. It is important to note that although my research focuses on trauma, when teaching I actively avoid showing or using works that contain explicit scenes of violence or trauma. Nor do I solicit or expect trauma narratives or descriptions of violence from students. Instead, the

pedagogical practices I developed were in the hope of increasing individual authorship and craftsmanship and increased awareness of intersubjectivity in the arts classroom, and in this process their trauma narratives emerged.

After learning the process of how to present and respond to these works, students were asked to volunteer to read. As an instructor, I struggled with how best to facilitate the solicitation and response of these works in the same way that I struggled with how to best facilitate class discussions of materials or ideas. The intersubjective space of the classroom is shaped by a combination of criteria, including the individuals present in the classroom. My inquiries in both my teaching and the writing of this research are investigations into the liminal spaces, the borderlands, the constellations of alienation and affinity that occur between materials made and presented, the authors and the audience, the students and the subjects, the instructor and the pedagogy—all of these intersections together offer an opportunity of investigation and observation for a closer understanding of the moments of affective transformation.

*Bill in the Pedagogy: Displacement and Proximity*

Bill's interview has been the hardest to write up. It has been two years since the conversation took place; unlike the other interviews, which happened over VOIP, our conversation took place in person. Bill chose the time and location; we met at my house and I conducted the interview in my office with my computer between us recording the conversation. We sat together late in the afternoon nearly two years after the class he attended had been completed. Once we reviewed the IRB protocols, Bill began. Before we even began recording, Bill told me that WWV was his favorite class. Letting him lead, I asked him what he wanted to tell me about it, and from the outset he seemed anxious. When I asked him if he was comfortable, he told me that he was "going to have trouble articulating fully. This seems to be an

issue for me with everything." "Would you rather do this in writing?" I offered, but he declined, reassuring me that he wanted to talk to me about the class. He began by telling me the story of how he took the class, and what happened for him. He quickly changed the subject to the in-class meditation.

Bill: I want to talk about meditating. The meditating was really hard for me actually. So we would start the class meditating. My mind back then was kind of a whirlwind, so the meditating did not work for me. I don't know if you like to hear that or not.

M: No, it's great. What does it mean that it didn't work?

Bill: I wasn't in a place to settle down my thoughts. Not to be aware of what was happening. My mind was kind of all over the place. It was easier afterwards when I had to write.

Me: Yes, those are all contemplative practices; the writing was a key part of it. Which is that when we are sitting, our minds do race, and then there is this exercise of writing it down, and really anything that comes to mind is still a contemplative practice. Does that make sense? It's not like there is a rule.

Bill: Yeah it does, there is not a right way to do it.

Me: So what would happen when you would write?

Bill: I guess I would notice how many things were going on in my mind and the different connections I would make. And yeah, I kind of would like what I was writing. I like that in the class we sat for a certain amount of time to write because I was not writing on my own.

Me: Do you remember when you had to read out loud, or when you chose to read

out loud what that was like?

Bill: Um, yeah whenever I would choose to do it would be something I was

comfortable with, I guess I would say it was nice to do that. I never really felt too

vulnerable. I would have if I read things that were more personal.

Me: Those things would get written but not necessarily read out loud.

Bill: Yeah.

Me: Your last work was really personal though, do you want to tell me about that?

Bill (hesitant): Yeah? (Sighs)

Me: You seem uncomfortable, am I asking you something uncomfortable?

Bill: I just don't know how to answer it, I guess it was about my personal

experience with mental illness and my relationship with my dad.

Me: Yeah.

Bill: Mmmhmmm (muffled) I guess that's all I want to talk about (he appears to

be crying).

In the interview, I reassured Bill more than once that we need not continue, that we could

in fact do this another time, or not do it at all. Each time he wanted to continue. In the other two

interviews, there were also emotional moments: Jeff cried as he reflected on what the course

meant to him, and what had happened when he showed his father his final work. However, the

emotions were clearer to understand in Jeff's interview; his affect and his speech were aligned.

In Bill's interview, there was an inconsistency between his physical gestures, those that

appeared to be expressions of discomfort and his interest and investment in completing the

interview. His discomfort seemed to be in trying to explain what had happened, trying to

assemble a narrative. He worried that he would not be able to explain it, or he worried that he would not explain it in the way that he thought I wanted to hear it. Saying things like "I don't know if you will like my answer" or "I am sorry if that bums you out."

During the interview, I found myself reassuring him that I was not looking for any particular answer and also that we need not continue the interview process. I also found myself reassuring him about his work and participation in the class. Bill communicated contradictions in his affect, in his gestures, in his speech and in the content of what he reported. During the course of Bill's interview, and now writing it up, I have been acutely aware of the complexity of trying to understand my role as teacher, researcher, and participant in this work.

When asked why it was his favorite class, he said that although he took the class to learn the technical aspects of making videos, once in the class he discovered "cool components like reflecting, and writing about the reflections" and that "it was nice to be forced to do that because it reminded me that I could be creative and reflect." But the most important aspect of the course was finding "like-minded people with shared values" in the class.

I sought to solicit from him how this came about, but there was not a direct answer. Instead, he told me of specific memories of time spent with his classmates, the closeness that was developed. In the class he said, "I guess I made friends pretty quickly and we had a lot of the same interests. I don't have many friends in Champaign Urbana, so it was nice to make friends in the class." Later in the interview, Bill talked about the huge social parties he attended and the loneliness he felt with others.

Although Bill was concerned that his explanations were not satisfactory either to him or to me, they were revealing to us both. In the interview, he spoke often of trying to understand his current emotional state with "who he was" two years prior. "I was such a different person then, it

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is hard for me to fully grasp what that time in my life was like." Bill explained that some of how

he came to understand himself was through his time in the class. From Bill's contradictions came

a kind of clarity.

> Me: You have said it was your favorite class, and from our conversation right
>
> now it seems it was really hard at the same time. What is the relationship between
>
> the two things?
>
> Bill: I think all my classes were hard, but the reason I liked your class was
>
> because you understood that it was hard for me. My time in college. It was nice to
>
> have a class where it was okay to be like that. It was okay to be wherever I was in
>
> life. Like in your class. And I wasn't going to fail.

*Gloria in the Pedagogy: Uncertainty and Safety*

The interview with Gloria took place on FaceTime at the beginning of September 2016. It

was the longest of the interviews I conducted. We had intended to meet in person, but Gloria was

ill and wanted to be in her own home for the conversation. So, we met with her in her house, me

in mine, with the conversation taking place between us on video screens before us. Knowing

Gloria from her work and our conversations, I already knew that she had a background in both

informal arts practices and in contemplative practices prior to coming into my class. Because of

these backgrounds, she could reference her prior experiences, her experiences in my class, and

her continued experience with both art making and contemplative practices.

After completing a discussion of the IRB materials and confirming her consent to be

recorded, I invited Gloria to tell me stories of what she remembered of the course, the content, or

anything significant she had wanted to begin with. Needing a bit more prompting, since she was

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"not sure where to dive in," I invited her to speak about what her experiences or reflections were on the 'coming present' practices in the classroom.

Gloria immediately and enthusiastically had a response to this invitation, saying that "I feel like one of the biggest defining features for me, at least that I noticed right away from the classroom, was the fact that there was a lot of uncertainty" (Gloria, Interview, September, 2016). This uncertainty she went on to say:

> I don't really know how to describe it, but you sort of tried to get the whole class to accept this sort of vibe of like 'All right, just trust me on this. We're going to try something together. It might work, it might not. We're going to just try something'. And things were always different. And some of those things were really, really strange. (Gloria, Interview, September, 2016).

Gloria described some of the somatic or contemplative practices I used at the beginning of class, the ones I described to the class as 'coming present'. These practices served as prompts for the creative writing that followed. They also served to allow for the processing of sensory information, which could then be described or translated into filmmaking. Gloria noted that these exercises "pushed people a little bit out of their comfort zone" and that these were useful not just "because of the activity, but it also helped them get in the mindset of just trying strange things for no other reasons besides the fact that, you just, were doing that in the moment, like that's what the class is gonna do." She described one exercise in which I instructed students to guide each other through sensory experiences outside of the building. Gloria remembered this event as "We were gonna walk around in that field, and because everyone had chosen to be there, like that's what they were going to do. Like no one probably would have done that.  Had they not been in that class at that moment, they probably wouldn't have gone walking around with a

friend with their eyes shut in that field.  But because they were all sort of in it together, that's

why they were ... All accepting, as like the activity to do. (Gloria, Interview, September, 2016).

I asked her why she thought that there had been acceptance of this uncertainty, why there

had not been rebellion in the class for these activities.

Honestly, I... I kind of haven't figured that part out so much, because I feel like some of

the people in the class initially gave me a vibe of hesitation or like they were the type of

students who weren't fully present in the classroom. And I've gone through enough

education in my life to be in many, many classrooms where students aren't fully present.

And I've even been [one of] those students before, where I'm having an off day, or I'm

just tired, and I'm not fully present in the classroom. I'm not connected to what we were

doing. And when the teacher says like, get out a piece of paper to do an activity that

doesn't have to be turned in, sometimes I won't even really do it, cuz I'm like, okay, it

doesn't have to be turned in? That's... it's just for my own benefit, I'm not good at

benefits, so I'm not going to do it. And, but, it just seemed like, I mean maybe it was the

small class size? Maybe it was because we were all sort of looking at each other and

looking, like, inwards and sort of, like, everyone saw each other going along with it, and

at first because we didn't really know you, I think there could, in the class, be this sort of

vibe of, like, a shared like experience of like, "Oh, what's this strange thing this teacher's

gonna have us do?" and like the students could sort of see each other have hesitation but

do it anyways. And then eventually, it was sort of like, "Okay, well, Meadow said to do

this weird thing last time, and it ended up being, like, really fun and like had a cool

conversation, so like, sure let's go lay in the grass, and, like, smell stuff, or I forget, it

was- no, it was listening to stuff. Listening to stuff, and like that was just one of the many

things that I feel like people went out and did more smoothly or more acceptingly 'cuz it was just, like, the way the class was structured was a routine of uncertainty. (Gloria, Interview, September 2016)

This routine of uncertainty, allowed Gloria to relax into the unpredictable events. Creating a space in which uncertainty was predictable is part of the pedagogical practices I engage in toward establishing safety through shared risk. The idea of uncertainty returned in the interview with Gloria. This word was significant, since she reports needing predictability, planning, and certainty to manage a connective tissue disease that leads to ongoing injury and risk of bodily harm. As my student, Gloria, had discussed her disability with me as part of the university protocol for disclosure (as supported by the campus disability resource center) around what accommodations she might require to succeed in the course. This risk of bodily harm and experiences of chronic pain are part of her daily-lived experience. Because of her disability she is always 'aware of her body'. She spoke about this body awareness in the class when we would sit and do silent body scans.

I feel like I'm very aware from how I sit, stand, move, etc., I'm very aware of that, so when asked to do it in class, the only thing that really surprised me was the fact that other people were now doing that, too….I was surprised because it felt sort of, like, that now it was okay "that thing I do all the time, everyone else in this room is doing it, too, and everyone else is feeling different in their body than I'm feeling in mine because my body gives me different signals than their bodies do." And I - I definitely thought about that, and sometimes that's why my brain drifted off to, like, all the other people sitting next to me and, like, sort of feeling just the vibe of like humans on either side of me [laughs], like just sitting in silence. (Gloria, Interview, September 2016)

This awareness not only of her own body, but her thoughts within her body, and her awareness of her peers in their bodies shows empathic engagement within the classroom.

**The Personal Political and Absentee Observation**

One surprising aspect of all three interviews was that, when asked whose work they remembered, all of them mentioned one student in particular. Work by this student, which I anonymize as Molly, was the most memorable to them. Molly had been in my course twice, she was present in my first semester of teaching and then returned and participated in the same course as Jeff, Gloria, and Bill. When Molly dropped the course she had not communicated a reason. In my experience, both as an undergraduate, and in teaching undergraduates, this is not uncommon. It happens for several reasons: students can be overwhelmed by their schedules or intimidated by the work. After she dropped the course, Molly and I encountered each other in the hall. I do not remember what words were spoken, but I remember encouraging her to continue to make art. She was apologetic for having dropped the course, and then to my surprise she returned to my classroom years later in her last semester of her senior year. That her work in particular was memorable to each of my interviewees was less about her competence at the craft of filmmaking, but more about the story told. Her work was, as is the case with many students, inconsistent, at times remarkable, at times rushed and incomplete. Her final work was memorable.

The theme of the final module of the course, was Belief. Students were instructed to make works that provided understanding of, and rhetorical argument for, something strongly believed or understood by the student. The research process in the production of these videos was documented and explored in their pre-production journals, and then reflected upon after being screened and critiqued by their classmates at the end of the course.

On the last day of class, Molly was absent. The process of screening their work in person was a requirement of the class curriculum; without being present for the screenings, a student would not receive a passing grade for the individual module. In the case of the final work, which counted more in the final grade than the earlier works combined, not to attend the final screening would likely result in not passing the course overall. Moreover, this class was the last class Molly needed to complete her undergraduate degree. Instead of proceeding, I stopped the class and asked if anyone had Molly's phone number. As a class, we called her and encouraged her to come and bring whatever existed of her work. We began viewing other student's work, and Molly arrived near the end of class, ready to show her as-yet-completed final video.

Earlier in her process (described in her pre-production video journals), she describes imagining a video that would use the common political tropes for the arguments about abortion. In her journal, she contemplates creating a work she thinks will consider the main arguments for both sides of this politically contentious subject. If Molly completed this work, we could assume she would have produced a video documentary piece that would be very familiar and very legible as a rhetorical argument about abortion from a detached and neutral position.

In her production journal, she cites a conversation that she and I had during a pre-production student/teacher meeting. During that meeting, I proposed that in order to clarify her thinking about the topic, she might consider writing a letter to her mother directly. This suggestion, as a creative writing prompt, is one that I have frequently used in my own creative works and have proposed to my students as a creative prompt for their own. The brief letter she wrote to her mother is posted in her online journal. The text is one of intimate forgiveness. It is this letter that becomes the basis of the video work she completed and submitted as her final piece to complete my class.

Although I can't separate my sentiment from memory, and I am often moved by my students work since their process is visible to me, this work was particularly memorable. Built upon the letter she wrote to her mother, a letter of forgiveness and understanding, Molly made a film of strong emotion and sparse images, often still images. In the film, she reads the letter to her mother while an image of a sonogram picture fills the screen.

In the film, Molly describes her mother's abortions as instigated or required in her marriage because her husband did not want her to have any more children. In the piece, there is an allusion to the individual trauma and tragedy that her mother lived through, and lived through with some regret. Molly offers her tenderness and acceptance for this individual experience. When this individual experience is seen from a larger position, it exists in a larger political or sociological context as well.

As part of the political context of the piece are issues that affect immigrant couples. Molly's parents seek economic security; this economic background, while not explicit but implied, suggests that security is not feasible given the possibility of having more children. Similarly, a power dynamic is revealed, but not interrogated in the piece—presented in the way that artwork can reveal, but not explain, the arguments show, but not tell them. In that power dynamic, the work is briefly addressed, that the father informed the mother that she must have an abortion. This very personal work reveals the larger political context issues of immigration, economic insecurity, and gendered power dynamics. The gender dynamic is evidenced in the making of the work itself, in the labor of production. The presentation the film is of a woman speaking to her mother, while referencing and not directly addressing her father, and the forgiveness offered by the author is forgiveness offered to her mother and for her mother's loss.

Molly struggled to complete and present her final work, in the moment of tension to resist the public presentation of this vulnerable and exposing work. But the work that she worries is too specific, also alludes and provides a larger political context for these personal and private narratives. In the public space of the classroom during the final critique, she offers us a political description in the work. The piece itself does not give us answers to these issues, but gives us an orientation; it is an affective work in the sense that it is a force that provides transformation as well as circulation of emotion around the ideas presented. That political context in which the personal work is made includes a reference to the gendered dynamic in her parents' marriage that leads to this outcome. The work shows the unspoken way we have of understanding the structural violence we live in and the macro forces that shape our individual experiences.

Although this piece is not a trauma narrative of a specific lived embodied trauma, it is a piece that positions the author as part of the trauma diaspora. The affective transformation comes in the moment of recognition of belonging in transient moments in the classroom. This transformative moment of transitioning from affect alien and isolation and trauma diaspora occurs in the moment of reception of the author's work or reception of the others work, even if only transiently.

I call this moment transient because as a moment citizenry, i.e., a moment of inclusion in a community, can transform immediately; the sense of belonging does not change the structural inequity that students live in. In my class, the student distribution includes those attending a land grant institution on financial aid who must work to pay for their tuition, or work to care for their families while in classes. These students share space and imagined community with students who are so wealthy that their weekends are spent flying to and from vacation spots and tourist resorts. Moreover, the moment of transient citizenry that exists when there is shared risk does not

undermine the hierarchical relationship that I occupy with my students.  Although I read my works aloud with the students, in the end I will still grade their works and determine if they pass or fail my class according to the criteria of the curriculum I am teaching.

While these tensions still exist, there is also a transient moment in which there is a momentary possibility of transient citizenship in an imagined or affective community. This happens in the production of community within the classroom—an ephemeral moment like a constellation of shared understanding. These moments can accumulate points of connection, as in the case of my interviewees and myself vis-à-vis Molly's work. Borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) ideas of a rhizomatic structure, I imagine a *constellation of moments* that may accumulate in this type of affinity and association that then lingers despite its transience. The constellation may be made by points of connection directly or by proxy in the presentation of affective artifacts. In the case of recall of Molly's work by each of my interviewees that moment of reception of her work and witness to the story may be a mark in the constellation of connection.

Molly's engagement of trauma is emblematic of the trauma diaspora I seek to characterize. It is a touchstone of pained engagement, one that was so painful and/or fraught with public threat that Molly appeared to elect to forego her degree, and had to be collectively summoned by the community of the class for witness-bearing (and even then, in an only incomplete form). The work was remarkable to each of the interviewees; when asked if they remembered anyone's work in particular they offered Molly's as the most memorable. In remembering the work, they remembered her as well. Each of them remarked on who she seemed to be in the class, quiet and reflective, and how her work developed over the course of

the semester. It was not only the story they remembered but also the author, and the other stories that came from Molly as an author.

At the outset of this research, I sought to investigate how the specifics of particular practices may be used to inform the development of a practical toolkit for working creatively with trauma. Although the specifics of the pedagogical practices I utilized, such as contemplative and feminist pedagogical practices, may have contributed to the emergence and engagement trauma narratives, there were other aspects more elusive to describe and explain. When asked to explain how or why, students could not operationalize their experience in the course. It may be a limitation of my research practice, but it also seems that affective transformation is elusive to pinpoint in a linear narrative. Their answers pointed towards explanations, but did not explain; often their answer was that it was specific to me as an instructor. What I consistently found was that the safety or intimacy they experienced was remembered in specific moments of witnessing someone else's work, or in the creating and presenting of their own work. These findings led me away from the general themes and towards a theorizing of the central phenomenon of the circulation of affect and transformation that occurs in the making and presenting of their work, and in witnessing of the works of others. In choosing to write these interviews as stories, I am seeking to provide narrative description of what is elusive to explain.

The process of writing up these stories has been challenging as a researcher. I am committed to protecting the anonymity of the individuals I interviewed, as well as holding in confidence the issues they raised in discussion. Each of the interviewee's spoke of the community and intimacy established with their classmates as part of the peculiarity of their experience in my class. The context in which they revealed delicate information about their lives was one of trust developed through the course in which we shared our writings, and through

continued connection as they sought me out for continued mentorship or friendship after the

course ended. In writing up the interviews, I struggled with understanding these overlapping

roles.  What was revealed because they trusted me? How could I honor that trust by not revealing

the specifics of their identity? How do I then present my findings if I am inhibited about

documenting what I found? I am writing about the ways in which multiple layers of self are

simultaneously present in any given moment of experience or exchange. In writing up these

interviews, I cannot separate out my experiences as an instructor, from that of researcher, or as

member of the trauma diaspora I seek to theorize or describe. In the next chapter, I seek to show

these voices as concomitant, present and overlapping, in my own work.

# CHAPTER FIVE: THE CASE OF MY ART PRACTICE

Elaine Scarry (1985) in her seminal work, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, notes that private pain often precludes public language. Thus, the suffering body, like the subaltern, cannot speak. Might it then only be spoken for? To not be able to speak, or to speak and not be heard, is to be removed from political participation. To speak and to be spoken to in the public is to participate in political discourse. Private pain precludes political discourse.

Trauma, like pain, disrupts memory and identity. Trauma is both the event as described originally by Freud—the shock that jars the individual, that threatens death but does not leave a mark or accurate memory—and the subsequent return of this memory, the speaking wound, that emerges through somatic manifestations and interpersonal affect. To not be able to speak of either pain of the body, or trauma (pain without the body), is to fail to integrate or synthesize the particular individual experiences.

Because I work with the ideas of trauma, and trauma is intersubjective, I use both my former students' works and writings in my research as well as my own studio practice in the higher education arts classroom. In this chapter, I document, discuss and theorize my own studio practice as a case in this study. The approach I use departs from the linear argumentative form as represented in the previous chapters. This is intentional. This section is a collection of writings of the alternate timeline to my research.

*We are feminist not only through our theory, but also through our actions: my life is a performative act, this text is feminist speech.*

*If my life's work is intervening in violence, in making new worlds, then part of my research must reflect these other worlds- the borderlands, the boundaries.*

**Autoethnographic Work**


*Beginnings*

*For the Love of Sarah…*

 *This work has alternate timelines.*

 *Twenty years ago, I began the process of completing this dissertation. I began my academic career at Parkland Community College in Champaign Illinois. Deciding between moving to Portland Oregon or attending Parkland College, I chose to stay amongst corn and comrades. There were numerous reasons for me to begin a college education. What I told others was that I intended to change my class status --- I was not pulling myself up by my bootstraps, but building a bridge[2] with my back for others to cross.*

 *Here is my body, spanning the chasm. I must capitalize on my own cultural capital; I must span the chasm with my own body, allowing others to pass. I must also leap the chasm to continue passing myself. It is a treacherous game of leap-frog, I offer the advantage to others to reach across the divide, I leap again.*

 *In my first semester at Parkland, I wore a pair of blue jean overalls. Hand-me-downs from the poet Michael Holloway. Holloway wore only overalls, in the front pockets he kept note cards and pens- field notes, observations, formulations, research into worlds translated into words; words which then made the world anew.*

 *He was a scholar close to me; I would model myself after him. Overalls only, notes kept close to my breast. On the front of the overalls I wrote in indelible marker "For the love of Sarah."*

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[2] Referencing "The Bridge Poem" by Donna Kate Rushin, published in Moraga and Anzaldua (1981).

*My sister Sarah has been with me for all of my declarative memory; we are a year and a half apart. Born to the same parents, we come from different cultures. Born in the same country, we do not share a first language. My sister Sarah is deaf. Born a year and a half apart, I began learning sign language at the same time I began to speak. In the world where my body is a bridge, my mother is magic. She learned to sign, and taught me from the beginning of speech.*

*Later, I came to understand how uncommon this was; many deaf individuals born to hearing families are linguistically isolated at home. They are frequently forced through coercion, violence, and neglect to navigate the world in a language they struggle to speak. My mother the magician, learned my sisters language and taught it to her, I learned along with them.*

*When I went to college, it was to change class status as I said in brief. It was because I knew I would have limited influence in the world if I continued to be a poor, undereducated woman, from generations of immigration and illness. I knew that I would not be able to bridge the chasm without education, and I was bridging that chasm for myself, my sister, and other affect aliens.*

*This is a revisionist timeline.*

*The theory I use to explain my decisions, I learned later, long after I decided.*

*I come to understand the world by making it.*

*I make the world by writing it.*

*For the love of Sarah.*

*It is two decades later and I have been playing leap-frog across the divides.*


*A Representation of Trauma*

My studio critique one semester ended with the words "beautiful" and "disturbing" as the take away. Other ideas had also come to the surface, those of horror and the uncanny, identity

and embodiment. My studio work often addresses experiences of compromised embodiment, questions of chronic pain and illness, or of queer affect and alienation.

In reflection, the piece addressed in the studio critique investigated a specific act of ritual and trauma, and in reflection sought to make artifacts and signs of experiences of the Freudian idea of repetition-compulsion. The work—a three-minute video of a female form submerging and re-emerging from water—offered a visceral and experiential reference of drowning to the viewer. The installation was presented in a small room meant to convey a bathtub, with water dripping from the ceiling into a tub of water on the floor. The video, set on a loop and supported by the sounds of pouring water, displayed a female form face down in the water emerging and gasping for air.

How my work is viewed—and the context in which it is viewed—is largely shaped by the audience's cultural and political values (Bennett, Grossberg, & Morris, 2005). The choices I make in aesthetic representation, as well as my subject matter choices when showing the work to others, exists within a discourse surrounding art objects. Here, neo-Marxist analysis through a critical lens, as well as an understanding of contemporary visual culture, is important for the interpretation of my work and my intent. Visual culture can be understood as "anything visual produced, interpreted or created by humans which has, or is given, functional communicative and/or aesthetic intent" (Barnard, 1998, p. 18), which is to say our aesthetic inclinations are largely influenced, if not dictated, by the role of popular visual culture in modern cultural production (Duncum, 2006).

Bodies in artistic presentation historically, and even contemporarily, may be expected to exemplify perfection, and deviations from those expectations of bodies can be considered transgressive. Art objects are read through cultural histories. The expectation that the art should

strive for perfection can be the continuation of the high culture influence on artistic production and consumption (Bennett et al., 2005). The influence of the mimetic theory of art may be some of the reasons we expect the nude female form in art objects to represent perfection, a limited imagination of perfection that excludes other representations, including bodies in distress.

I use my own body to represent distress, in the hopes that my distressed body can be used to move from the specific of my lived experience to the general of representations of distressed bodies. Whether something is viewed as beautiful or as abject is a cultural interpretation. "There can be no non cultural [sic] or natural form of the visual in visual culture. In so far as it is meaningful in some way, it will have been made meaningful according to cultural codes and therefore be culturally meaningful" (Barnard, 1998, p. 11). Often in studio critique, the responses I receive to the work is an interpretation of the distressed body as abject. Aesthetic conformity in contemporary visual culture is one that references the abject, and may be read as tortured, compromised, raped, or violated. This may provide a counter-narrative in one reading or a confirmation of a dominant narrative in another reading. Though it is not the intention of my work—to represent the female form as abject—I cannot control the values or interpretation brought by an audience in observation. The affective alienation I experience when my work is read differently than I understand is a conflict between intention and interpretation.

While one may discern numerous art, or anti-high art, trends that run counter-to the notion of perfection without challenging the premise of consumption, the high-art notion of perfection remains widespread for images of women. Consequently, "art historians set about to expose the racist, sexist, and classist ways of seeing that are constructed in images and also engendered by them" (Lauwrens, 2012, p. 5). The history of visual images in western society has been largely rhetorical. Paintings offered narratives of understanding and ways of

communicating and creating the dominant paradigms. They are both painted in and perceived through an embodied cultural lens. "Both the image and the beholder of the image are viewed as embedded in social, political and cultural life…." (Lauwrens, 2012, p. 5). These narratives could be seen in the aesthetic and semiotic choices made. Though ideology has always been embedded in these forms, analysis tended to employ the modernist understanding of aesthetics that privileged face-value understandings of imagery. Images served not only to inform, but also to instruct.

How a work is interpreted is read through one set of signifiers, and how a work is understood to have been created may be read through a different set. Expression theory does not claim that art is the imitation of ideal forms, but rather that it is the expression of an intent or emotion. For an object to be an object of art, an artist with the intent to communicate an underlying ideal must have created it. Likewise, intention is more important than representation. Through the process of investigation, I have become aware that although the idea that an artist communicates ideas through the significance of signs may be correct, my intentions in creating a piece may not even be clear to me when I begin, and that the meaning of a work can be constructed after-the-fact through discourse surrounding the work.

The piece referenced above was created towards the redress of trauma. I was not consciously aware of that at the outset—I had originally intended to explore the iterative nature of making—but upon articulation of my intentions to my colleagues during critique, other understandings of the work were revealed to me.

The film presented in the installation is made of archival footage of a larger endurance piece in which I repeatedly submerged my face into a body of water and remained in this position to the point of compromise. The act of this endurance, and the images later recorded for

installation, were recreations of an earlier experience. This process then was the investigation of iteration and presentation. The images presented and processed in studio practice were representations of impulses that emerged following a life-threatening trauma. I might argue that through artistic practice and writing, it became clear that this urge to have my head held under water was a kind of repetition compulsion in an attempt to have mastery over that earlier violent trauma, and that I sought integration by the creation of an affective artifact of this experience: the endurance, the film, and the installation. By processing both the original trauma, the repetition compulsion in ritual, and then through the production of an external art object received in the public space of the critique community, I sought to create both distance and synthesis of this experience.

As a cultural artifact, or art object, this work may or may not have value independent of my relation to it. Whether something is considered art is a cultural interpretation. "There can be no non cultural [sic] or natural form of the visual in visual culture. Insofar as it is meaningful in some way, it will have been made meaningful according to cultural codes and therefore be culturally meaningful" (Barnard, 1998, p. 11). These cultural codes are both written and read on the social body and the embodied subject.

The piece is not explicit. It does not contain a narrative of the inherent trauma, nor does it express the motivation to bring to the surface the unconscious urges and fears associated with it, but it does have a visceral and visual representation of the body in distress and resistance. The act of making it manifests viscerally the largely psychological trauma, as per Freud (1924) and requires the use of active imagination, as per Jung (1966), for synthesis.

**Antecedents of Trauma Discourse**

*Psychoanalytical*

Both Freud's concept of sublimation, i.e., the redirection of primal drives towards more productive expressions of cultural production, and Jung's procedure for 'active imagination' or actively directing the images and symbols of dreams and fantasies into a material form through artistic practice, seem relevant here. Whereas Freud's sublimation describes an unspecified series of re-directions of unconscious drives, Jung's active imagination deploys an exploration of the details of archetypal material or imagery that appears to consciousness out of the unconscious. This very specific instruction to move dreams and fantasies from imagination to formulation thus describes a set of instructions for making artifacts.

The issues of compulsion and mastery as they relate to trauma, repression, repetition and/or the manifestations of repeating and completing trauma are discussed in Freud's (1922) *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. It is important to place the text in its historical context. Written after World War I, it is concerned with how a traumatized individual may become permanently altered by war neuroses. Freud had long contended that neurosis was not caused by physical injury. His original writings were on hysteria; an illness attributed primarily to women and commonly believed to be the corporeal manifestation of psychological trauma. Freud cites two main conditions as necessary for the creation of traumatic neuroses, or trauma, which an organism is unable to transcend: the inability to predict the coming event, and the absence of a physical wound (Freud, 1922). In this context, fright (or 'Shreck') plays a crucial role because, as Freud defines it, fright does not allow the organism to prepare itself for the oncoming trauma. It is the suddenness with which an individual faces or perceives a life-threatening experience for which the mind was not prepared that causes the traumatizing rip in the psyche.

Freud also believed that if an injury were sustained during the course of the trauma, then no traumatic neurosis would result (Freud, 1922). He appears to suggest that a physical manifestation of the experience (such as an injury) allows the individual to recognize that although they faced death, they have nevertheless survived. If there is no resulting physical injury, then no trace is left of the experience except for the memory, which is not bodily. In this case, the psyche has a memory of facing death, but no physical evidence exists to reassure the individual that she/he has escaped unharmed (or, ultimately, recovered). This constitutes a contradiction. Without resolving the contradiction, these experiences are then pushed to the bottom of the psyche. The mind has trouble reintegrating the traumatized part, and the experience comes up again and again in the form of nightmares or compulsions in an attempt to reconcile the experience with the rest of one's living life.

Freud (1922) says that it is through the study of dreams that the "deeper psychic processes" (p. 9) of the traumatized individual will be revealed. Because, in the event of traumatic neurosis, "…the dream life has this peculiarity: it continually takes the patient back to the situation of his disaster, from which he awakens in renewed terror" (p. 9). The individual is then a victim of the trauma again through passive repetition. Freud says the individual is not aware of these dreams in their waking life, despite their frequent recurrence during sleep. The assimilation of this trauma would be to move it from the domain of dreams, repetition-compulsion, and neuroses.

Freud's ideas regarding the redress of trauma came in part from observing his prelingual grandson and a game the child invented and repeated. A game of 'fort' and 'da' in which the child pushed toys away from him and then brought them back. "The fort and da referred to the child's mother when she left for periods of time, fort, and then her subsequent return, da. The

absence of the mother was traumatic for the child and by playing this game he was trying to make her absence ... right with himself, so to speak, by dramatizing the same disappearance and return with the objects he had at hand" (p. 3). He says that the formulation of the game—at first in playing only the departure, and later playing both the departure and the return—indicated a shift from passive to active, respectively. "This effort might be ascribed to the impulse to obtain the mastery of the situation" (p. 14). The child is making a new ending to the sad story, similar to how a person re-paints their past to make a new ending for their story. The trauma goes from passive repetition, nightmares, masochistic personality complex, and death instinct, to active repetition and thus mastery.

*Philosophical Antecedents of Trauma (Discourse)*

This act of making material underlying ideas in order to resolve contradictions within the self of the ideas and symbols of the imagination—whether these originate in dreams, visions, or psychic material related both to trauma or the repression of trauma—is a long discussed topic in the philosophy of art. As part of this discourse, Kant offered a key distinction in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) between that which may be known sensorially, or phenomena, from that which may not be known but by hypothesis can be stated as likely existing, or noumena. In these terms with respect to art practices as traumatic redress, we may understand that symptoms and experiences of trauma that occur must, per Kant's distinction, lie in the phenomenal domain or the consciousness, even as we hypothesize noumenal or unconscious sources for that trauma. Consequently, the premise of art as activity for the integration of trauma involves its proposed moving of phenomenal material out of the psychic realm and into the physical realm as an artifact. Kant's distinction of the noumena further points to the potentially anxiety-inducing unknowability of the noumena, especially as it relates to trauma. A key factor in Freud's theory

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of trauma formation involves the individual's inability to predict the (re)arrival of the trauma-inducing experience. If fear takes an object, while anxiety does not, then the unknowability of the noumena makes it ready ground for anxiety and thus unpredictable trauma.

If the foregoing offers the distinctions of noumena, phenomena, and physical actuality, it does not yet describe any mechanism that implicates imagination and art as potentially central to traumatic redress. Kant describes the productive and reproductive imagination specifically, but his use of the faculty of imagination in this case seems invoked to solve other questions in his theory of mind. In contrast, and expanding Kant's ideas of imagination and understanding, German idealist philosopher Joseph Schelling included the production and examination of art in his text *Deduction of a Universal Organ of Philosophy* (1800). Here, Schelling saw art as a means of self-discovery by way of various states of consciousness or experience, including states or experiences that seemed otherwise empty or non-productive (Yates, 2013). He maintained that these latter states were in fact most productive of sublimity, insofar as a reflex action of the imagination would fill the emptied or seemingly non-productive space left open by the disrupted experience:

> ...fantasy, of all things, enjoys a privilege that philosophical abstraction, deduction, and construction would do well to absorb. Moreover, where this imaginative reflex obtains there is also a prescient awareness of 'the initial ground of existence,' an eternal 'region of darkness and formlessness' (Yates, 2013, p. 65).

Schelling believed that nature allowed for no gaps, that the spaces must be filled by the Kantian concept of the 'productive imagination'. Accordingly, the productive imagination according to Schelling reconciles the contradictions in human experience, and offers a description for the mechanism of imagination in artistic production as well. By contrast, Hegel

also responded to the concept of the productive imagination: "Productive imagination, instead of merely putting two different pieces in an external unity, is their inner unity, their 'common root' raised from its unconscious pre-reflective status to post-reflective awareness" (Cerf, 1988, p. xxxi). Here again, we see a description of a mechanism that, in Hegel's case, does more than simply concatenate or put together entities or elements but brings about a product, originating in an unknowable, i.e., unconscious pre-reflective, state and then manifest in a known, if still not yet physically embodied, post-reflective state as an object of thought.

Although there are greater distinctions than simply differences in semantics between each philosopher, Kant's, Schelling's, and Hegel's formulations supply different versions of productive imagination, along with a mechanism for an imaginative cognitive faculty that serves to consciously embody material originating from an immediately unknowable realm. This now-conscious material then becomes useable as an object of consciousness outwardly to express as art, if not in other ways, and thus enlarges the scope of objective reality to include the traumatic experience—an experience which otherwise was not, and by definition could not have been, anticipated by the subject, thereby provoking its own assimilation through the means of the imagination. In so doing, we move from the trauma as it appears phenomenally and empirically to the trauma as it actually is noumenally and by hypothesis. By this perception—by offering a hypothesis about it—the trauma can then become subject to the process of mastery. Or again, rather than confronting phenomena only in terms of the bare fact of its occurrence, our imagination permits us to hypothesize a ground, a cause, an origin for the trauma, by which hypothesis we might then find a route for alleviating the trauma. Moreover, should a given hypothesis prove inadequate, we might then try another, or simply give up, but however we might theorize the epistemological veracity or not of any such hypotheses, we can still see how

this description of an imaginary (or imagining) mechanism capable of expression, as art, can participate in a redress of trauma.

While the foregoing describes the imagination as a faculty capable of embodying and moving experiential material from the unconscious to consciousness and into physical expression, Schelling argues this kind of self-discovery offers the most powerful means for disclosing unity in opposites. For example, the opposition between the self and nature is reconciled by means of the artwork, and the self and nature mutually illuminate one another. As Schelling explains,

> Consequently it can only be the contradiction between the conscious and the unconscious in free action that sets the artistic impulse into motion, just as, once more, it can only be given to art to satisfy our infinite striving as well as to resolve the ultimate and most extreme contradiction in us (Behler, 1997, p. 207).

It is this contradiction and reconciliation between the conscious and unconscious that brings to the surface repressed trauma that otherwise might be inaccessible to an individual. But more than this, Schelling specifically invokes the creative, artistic impulse as key to this integration of the contradictions. Whatever dubious distinction we might try to offer between something like art and mere expression, we may at least understand from Schelling that what is at stake involves satisfying "our infinite striving … to resolve the ultimate and most extreme contradiction in us," that art, whatever that may be, has such a capacity to satisfy that striving.

The distinction between art as the expression of emotion and art as the production of a cultural artifact or art object may come at the public presentation of the object for interpretation, reception, or integration. Art objects are culturally produced and interpreted, and the lineage of understanding and assigning meaning to these objects has a philosophical history, which includes

the body and embodiment as sites of artistic investigation, reproduction, consumption and control. These are understood through theoretical frameworks from the cultural turn towards the sensory turn and including the affective.

*Alternate Timeline*

*Gentle Reader,*

*I apologize in advance for repeating the story. I apologize now for retelling the tale. You see, the story repeats within me. Each iteration, the copy changes, farther out on the dendrite the DNA unfurls. I am fighting against entropy. The four fundamental forces, weak force, strong force, electromagnetism, and gravity. But what they fail to mention is the omission; the absence of memory.*

*Anomia*

*Aphasia*

*Dysphoria*

*Decisively returning to indecision. When my hand hesitates, my letters linger. So I return again to the stories already told.*

*She was given her first journal, a small bound book lovingly received, lost later like all loves. The object gone, the memory mapped and remapped but the story a flash of images, a narrative tying the text to correlation, causation, it continues.*

*A small child in a big world, her parent's living room, a duplex. Next door the alcoholic father of her favorite friends, Amber older and tender like she, the brother brutish and older than them all, and two more- a sister in between and an even younger boy, a child of five.*

*A small penis- the girl had noted. She had seen her father's while he stood in the bathroom. She had seen this child's too, the brother of her beloved friend Amber. She knew they*

*were the same yet different. She knew too that her penis was not present because she was not a boy but a girl like Amber. She would stand to pee if permitted, pretending to have power, standing like a man.*

*But biology is destiny, and memory is mythology.*

*Her myths memorialized in the now long lost blank bound book but once recorded there. The book came as a gift the blank pages ones she could mark into. The walls were not for marking, always-white rental homes peeling paint, crusty carpets; the only marks made were in error and with consequence. Dirty dishes to be cleaned, soiled linens to be washed, stains to be scrubbed and what was broken would never again be whole. Furniture is shabby, windows are sooty, and there are marks made with intention on the walls or the furniture then correction would occur. We cannot replace the couch handed down from friends or relatives; we cannot get back the rental deposit.*

*But the blank book was full of empty open promises of promiscuous production a space to write and record a place of play and experiment a location of lived experience, planned and scripted. It wasn't until she was older that the books became objects of anxiety. This first encounter with the first blank book was an open opportunity, the small book in her small hand held close and with careful cautious scripting she started to make marks.*

*How do you spell homosexual she asks her mother. Her mother answers spelling it out letter-by-letter h-o-m-o-s-e-x-u-a-l. Her mother doesn't ask why, doesn't flinch like some other mothers might. They were used to one another, mother and daughter, had known each other from the mother's womb, maybe before and maybe after. The mother knew her daughter's inexhaustible curiosity, and her questions and questioning of things here and farther. The*

*daughter knew her mother's unflinching generosity in sharing all that she had including quiet knowledge that could be unlocked with language.*

*So with one hand she wrote, with the other hand she held the book she read. Our Bodies, Ourselves by the Boston Women's Health Collective. Not-so-strange to not have a penis like her father, mapped out clearly and plainly in text and images; a map of what her body was, being and becoming. What it was, and what it will be and she imagined her future and formation with text to read and text to write about her body and herself.*

*I want to be a homosexual with Amber she wrote.*

*And here gentle reader, I ask again for your indulgence as I have said these stories now-fact and fiction- told many times so that all that remains is a palimpsest of memory etched in my mind, marked in my body.*

*Did she or didn't she write this?*

*Did she or didn't she hold a book close or far?*

*Our Bodies, Ourselves, the bound blank book, the duplex, the alcoholics and addicts, the large sprawling ficus tree growing outside shading and protecting her as she hid high in its long yearning limbs.*

*I can only tell you what she has told me with her small child's voice, I no longer have the long lost blank book and that copy of Our Bodies, Ourselves it is no longer in publication. That has gone. The tree may remain. But her story, which I repeat here, again, is as true a telling as I can recall.*

*She is reading in her parent's living room. Our Bodies, Ourselves, the chapter of which is no longer in print, the Boston Women's Health Collective may no longer exist, "In America They Call Us Dykes." She told me she remembers the picture on the front page of the chapter. A*

*joyful woman holding her lover close. Two women photographed in black-and-white, a woman wrapping her hand around the body of her partner, cupping her breast, and both of them smiling, laughing; embarrassed, forward playful.*

*"In America They Call Us Dykes."*

*"I want to be a homosexual with Amber," she wrote in her seven year old script. Imagining a life together, wives; like the marriage of her parents but joyful and playful less lost and lonely. She loved Amber, admired her. At night they would brush each other's hair, they would scratch each other's backs, tracing the soft skin covering strong shoulders. Sun marked and tired they would sleep close at slumber parties. She wanted to protect Amber from the beatings of the alcoholic father. She followed the arbitrary and cruel instructions alongside Amber, in solidarity, as the father would bark commands to his children. His parenting was violence. Sit in a line outside, and silently the young girl would join her young love, Amber, sitting on the ground under the shade of the ever-watchful ficus. Sitting there with Amber's siblings, silent, hot cement, scraggly grass, crawling fire ants. She would listen through the wall dividing the duplex to the sounds of Amber's cries as her father beat the children for not following the instructions close enough, for not satisfying his demands. Nothing could.*

*Addiction is a plague; an answer to a problem not fully formed, not correctly named. How do I silence the horror in my head? How do I escape open empty void of my suffering, the gnawing abyss growing wider and wider? He would pour liquor into the chasm and the chasm would expand, swallowing him and his family whole, a sinkhole of a human. An alcoholic, dry or drunk will swallow all around.*

*The land of her childhood landscape was treacherous terrain. Limestone, porous, calcified, fragile and sinking. Later in other houses, with other lost blank books, in other*

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*neighborhoods, rental homes with peeling paint, shabby furniture, sooty windows, crusty carpets, dirty dishes, soiled linens, fleas, mosquitoes and horrors of other addicts- she would witness a house sinking slowly into the ground. Not yet swallowed by the limestone sinkhole but threatening its imminent demise. What seems solid is unstable, what seems fact may be fiction, what is remembered may be myth. Those houses gone, bound books lost, the text rewritten.*

*I pray gentle reader that the tree remains.*

*She knew not to trust what changed: the moods of men, and the blank pages were traitors once words were written.*

*She told me, gentle reader, what I tell you now and have told you before, what she cannot quite remember, and she like all good girls doesn't want to be a liar but she is not sure what is true. Were they told to sit in a line outside for minutes or hours were those monsters that hit and hurt? Or were they men? Were they men or were they sinkholes? Do houses stand or do they crumble? Which of these stories are true? I can only tell you what she told me, the book no longer blank, marked with her words names and dreams: incriminating.*

*Causal*

*Correlative*

*Remembered*

*Forgotten*

*The brutish brother of the young girls love, also from Amber's alcoholic father found the bound book and read the words.*

*Actions have consequences*

*Silence may be best*

*Be still*

*Make no marks*

*Tell no one*

*Keep quiet*

*Hold your breath*

*Apologize for your slippery footing in the opening maw of violence, poverty, and addiction*

*Make no marks*

*She tells me the brother beat her for her words and text, marks made in a once blank bound*

*book.*

*She remembers the story but not the event*

*She remembers the cause but not the condition*

*She remembers the consequence but not the origin*

*He beat her for her text. The one I kiss will be Jesus Christ*

*Traitor, texts are traitors not to be trusted*

*She learned it then and later*

*Books were to be lost*

*Hidden*

*Erased*

*Denied*

*She lied when confronted, dissembled under distress. No I didn't say that. Mocked by the*

*brother and neighborhood boys Amber kept her distance ashamed confronted accused*

*Still she looks for erasure, oblivion, sinkholes*

*Later she would make her own chasms, ones she would try to control, pouring alcohol*

*into emptiness, answers to questions that could not go unasked but also could not be answered.*

*Her first journal was lost like many after. Texts were traitors and still her best friends. Both written and read. She kept writing through childhood. Sometimes as long letters to far away friends, sometimes to imagined readers, conversations with invisible interlocutors, answering and explaining the world.*

*Words make the world smaller bound and held delineated and described.*

*Words make the world bigger, each symbol a sign each sign a signifier, each signified a world unto its own.*

*She kept reading all through childhood books as friends and futures, worlds and wonder*

*The Catcher in the Rye. If you see a body, catch a body comin' thro the rye. Judy Bloom, Of Mice and Men, Lolita and the Hobbit.*

*Later she would read about sex again; no diagrams, no explanations, but narratives. She told me that she drove cross country at eighteen; not long after she had dropped out of high school - ashamed of her difference, ignorance and exhaustion from biking to work after class to the fast food restaurant where she worked- the very one in which she was sexually assaulted by a coworker, early in the morning before anyone else had arrived.*

*Compassion is not intimacy it is distance. Don't confuse the two, and don't mix them in your own body for answers to questions that cannot remain unasked and may never be answered.*

*Sex was not like she had read it, the text betrayed her.*

*On her drive cross country in the car she bought with money from the fast food restaurant with her best friend Glen and his best friend Dave she found the world outside nothing like it was promised in the world inside the books she had consumed.*

*Text was treacherous*

*Promises untrue*

*Iterations and reifications of nothing that remained*

*New Orleans was not sultry and sweet. It was hot and drunk, it was loud and lewd, there were no blues, no soul to the city, but drunk frat boys diving into a filthy river while exhausted old musicians played worn out melodies on electric guitars in front of brightly lit bars on bourbon street against a backdrop of day-glow advertisements and the relentless sound of recorded blues standards blaring from loudspeakers.*

*It was not what she had thought she would find.*

*They kept a journal together along their drive, the girl now a grown working-class woman, her best friend Glen who had gone away for college returning for the summer, and his best friend Dave an already alcoholic from a hippie family like hers, bohemian but broken.*

*Their journal like all was untrue. The words marking sorrow and resentment the drive a disappointment.*

*Nothing like Jack Kerouac had promised. Had she had a penis like she had hoped as a young child, not the penis so much as the power - the power to name and make, to protect and participate, maybe the drive would have been different.*

*You see, she had read, On the Road, Travels with Charley, Tortilla Flats. She read of the men's adventures. Where were the women she wondered? In On the Road, women were written only as men's lovers, picked up and put down as the writers traveled on.*

*If she was no man's lover, was she anyone to the story?*

*Later she would find other texts that seemed untrue, equally treacherous, a danger of her future. But that, Gentle Reader is a story still to be written; remembered, forgotten, embodied, betrayed.*

*Only the tree still stands*

*The chasm opens, closes, and begins again*

**The Body and the Aesthetics for/in/of the Redress of Trauma**

Two theoretical frameworks for understanding the body and aesthetics are 'the cultural turn' (Jameson, 1998) and 'the sensory turn' (E. Edwards, 2009). The cultural turn posits that aesthetics and ideology are intimately linked and that the ideological nature of art serves to construct the experience of embodiment. The 'sensory turn' focuses on the body as the sensorial location of knowledge and experience and emphasizes less the use of semiotic analysis—looking at the signs communicating ideas in art—and more the sensorial nature of art as experienced by the body.

The essence of art is nothing less than the conservation of the human experience itself. The artwork as symbolically significant sensuous manifold is able to express the decisive relation between subject and world at a level that does not obliterate the concreteness of the relation (Crowther, 2001).

This "ontological reciprocity" of embodiment and art can be understood as culturally constructed, linguistically clarified, sensorially explored, and biologically reasoned. Consequently, both the cultural and sensorial turns have as their base the same foundational theories, from Aristotelian and Platonic considerations of rhetoric, Baumgarten's introduction of aesthetics, and Kant's reformulation of beauty and the sublime. The shift between the cultural and the sensorial is essentially a shift in emphasis in the relationships of perception and cognition and thus the meaning of the aesthetic experience. The cultural turn offers linguistic explanations, and the sensory turn a corollary biological reasoning.

*The Cultural Turn as Housing the Sensory*

This cultural turn has in its heritage the Marxist dialectical discourse of critical theorists from the Frankfurt school (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972). Much contemporary cultural theory

arises out of the contributions of the critical theorists. The ideas of the Frankfurt School are grounded in the Marxist analysis of the world, which becomes important because Marx's work is key to the introduction of the idea of materiality as a moving force.

From Kant comes the aesthetic; Hegel studied with Kant, Marx studied with Hegel, but both Kant and Hegel drop the body from their discourse. Kant's idea of aesthetics rests on the ideas of beauty that do not require or recognize embodiment. Similarly, Hegel's ideas for how the world moves forward rests on a dialectical idealism of conflicts within ideas. Marx's conceptualization, by contrast, represents an inversion of this: the material reality is most important and thus is grounded in the lived experiences of the material world. Marx then prioritizes an embodied sense of the world and he links it to culture in the following way.

The class, which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas.

Here, Marx has inverted Hegelian dialectical idealism, noting the ontological relationship between the material realities of the lived experience with the ideological underpinnings that come from those experiences. Marx posited that it is the material realities that push history forward, and not the ideas, as posited by Hegel. Thus, he foregrounds lived experience and, by implication, the phenomenological and intersubjective nature of experience. Although Marxist conceptualizations of culture were rather limited, the cultural theories that were developed by the critical theorists preserves this philosophical underpinning as central to all cultural theory. Thus,

the Frankfurt School takes the Marxist idea of base and superstructure and changes the emphasis (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972).

Culture and ideas were not only the consequence of the lived experience, and the artifacts of cultural production did not simply reflect social mores, but shaped them. They were and are physical material objects that are made and serve to shape the lived experience of people and societies. Cultural Marxists use Marxist methods (historical research, the identification of economic interest, the study of the mutually conditioning relations between parts of a social order) to interpret the complexity of power in contemporary society and to make it possible to criticize what, cultural Marxists propose, appears natural but is in fact 'ideological'.

The body in relation to cultural artifacts, then, is that of the consumer body with respect to the hegemonic force of capitalist desire. Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) introduce the idea of the 'culture industry' in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. They describe the production of mass culture as an industry that creates false desires that take us away from happiness the more we externalize our desires for the products of mass production and consumption, rather than meeting our desires as they relate to our personal and social needs.

The main structure of this control comes from an aesthetic hegemony that communicates and underlies capitalist ideology. Gramsci (1973) describes how hegemony is used by the ruling class as a kind of aesthetic coercion by which agreements are made for mutual understanding based upon social folklore, myths, or shared conceptions. Behind this coercion waited the threat of violence, which would come in a crisis of authority or power. How does this relate?

It is with just this imagination of violence, power, and hegemony that the conceptualization of embodiment is culturally constructed. Building upon these ideas, post-structuralists, feminists, and post-colonial theorists establish the relationship between art, as an

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ideological structure that serves to assert hegemonic control and the cultural construction of embodiment and experience.

If art is seen as one of many forms of cultural production, then the act of making and viewing art can be seen as a site of cultural contestation, one that may be seen as supporting a dominant narrative or providing counter narratives specifically within the context of their cultural production (Bennett et al., 2005; Strinati, 1996).

As such, the idea of art is not without consequence. The making of art objects by artists exists within a history of analysis of the significance of art objects and the role of artists in societies, often through a semiotic analysis. The artifacts and art objects that are created and then curated by a culture have political consequences (Duncum, 2007; Rampley, 2005). Bordo (2004), "The body is not only a text of culture. It is also, as anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu and philosopher Michel Foucault (among others) have argued, a practical, direct locus of social control" (pp. 241-2). The relationship between art and embodiment includes both the textual exchange and the practice of power. Susanne Kappler (1986) in her book *The Pornography of Representation* observes,

> Representations are not just a matter of mirrors, reflections, key-holes. Somebody is making them, and somebody is looking at them, through a complex array of means and conventions. Nor do representations simply exist on canvas, in books, on photographic paper or on screens: they have a continued existence in reality as objects of exchange; they have a genesis in material production (p. 3).

The continued existence in reality as objects of exchange here is understood as a Marxist exchange represented by labor and material production. The objects also offer affective exchange, a circulation of force through the impulse towards action. The function of ideology

need not only or always be to force or coerce a particular automatic reproduction of it in a body—though this possibility always exists under the threats of Power—but also sets the terms of a given cultural discourse; it establishes the defaults which, if not reflected upon by a cultural agent at the moment of choice, will be habitually acted upon.

*History of the Sensory Turn*

Where the cultural turn had in its history Marx's reformulation of Hegel's dialectical idealism, the sensory turn has in its history Husserl's reformulation of Hegel's phenomenology of spirit. Where aesthetics comes from the Greek word for the senses, phenomenology comes from the Greek word for "to see." The phenomenological philosophical contributions of Maurice Merleau-Ponty are foundational to the developing cultural turn. Merleau-Ponty's (1945) text *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) prioritizes the bodily perceptions as the location of knowledge.

> When I say that I have senses and that they give me access to the world, I am not the
> victim of some muddle... I merely express this truth which forces itself upon reflection
> taken as a whole: that I am able, being connatural with the world, to discover a sense in
> certain aspects of being without having myself endowed them with it through any
> constituting operation (p. 194).

Whereas the previous turns focus on signs as the means of understanding culture, this turn focuses on perception in the body as the means of experience and understanding culture.

The body, which had been excluded from theoretical discourse because of modernist aesthetics (Duncum, 2012), has returned with a growing field of scholarship across disciplines. "The senses are now being investigated by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers

and literary scholars among many others" (Howes, 2006, p. 1). The body as site and circulation of emotion and affect connects the sensorial turn to affective investigation.

*Affect Theory*

The sensorial turn includes in it a shift in cultural and aesthetic theory towards the "contemporary emergence of affect as critical object and perspective through which to understand the social world and our place in it" (Hemmings, 2005, p. 548). It is important to not take the affective turn as a metonymy for the sensory turn. The scholarship of affect includes the body as the site of knowledge through moving away from linguistic signs as communicative and towards affective experiences as dialogic. Affect theory is "primarily focused on the non-discursive constituencies of cultural experience and subject formation" (Lauwrens, 2012, p. 13). The subject in affect theory is one that is non-discursive, but still communicative.

The concept of the affective is that of a relational dynamic. Ahmed (2004) explores the "about-ness" of emotions, noting that the sensory experiences and emotional feelings are dynamic, that emotion may in fact come from the outside in, and not only from the inside out. This bi-directionality of the experience of embodiment posits emotion and sensation as the communicative exchange in contrast with language. The introduction to the *Affect Theory Reader* (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010) says that "affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon" (p. 1). This particular type of communication then complicates the directional models of sign, signifier, and signified in semiotic meaning-making typically marked between embodiment and aesthetics. However, it continues the consideration that meaning is made contextually, communicatively and cognitively.

The discarded Descartian duality has been reconsidered as a healed whole through the concept of embodied cognition. The sensory turn's scientific take includes that of cognitive

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neuroscience and neurocognition. Not only is the environment and aesthetics a part of the cognitive and experiential nature of embodiment, so also is the enactive self. This enactive self connotes the complex relationship by the original research done by Maturana and Varela (1980) and Varela et al. (1991) in their introduction of the idea of the embodied cognition. That work expressly included the relationship between the body and the environment, linking them indissolubly. It is in this exchange between the self and the environment that the sensorial turn dwells.

*Where The Sensory Turn and The Cultural Turn Meet: The Redress of Trauma*

        Both the cultural and sensorial turn considers knowledge and experience as culturally constructed, communicated, and understood. As the cultural turn's understanding of the body was largely influenced by Foucault's (1977) post-structuralism of proscribed embodiment, the sensorial turn is largely influenced by Merleau-Ponty's (1945) phenomenology of described embodiment.

        Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology locates agency in embodied subjectivity, while Foucault's post-structuralism describes bodies as constructed by and subjugated to external, discursive forces. Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes intentionality while Foucault, it would seem, denies that it exists because poststructuralism in general posits that our 'intentions,' to the extent we have them, are constructed by social/historical forces (J. Levin, 2008, p. 5).

        Where there seems to be discord in imagining the nature of a body that is both subject and subjected, the considerations of sensorial studies resolve this by noting that although the senses are primary, perception is not *a priori*. The senses are understood to be culturally

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contextualized; thus, where culture was the signifying system for the signs of the cultural turn, culture continues to be the signifying system for the perceptions of the sensory turn.

This intersection where the sensory body and the signifying systems meet and co-constitute each other is location of the redress of trauma. The somatic marking of trauma on the body, and the continuing consequences in individuals and cultures, are materially consequential. The traumatic event constitutes not only the event but also the event's return. A trauma is known as such not from its singularity but from its plurality, the traumatic incidence occurs, the wound is made in the psyche, and the wound returns again and again. The speaking wound, but the wound is aphasic, somatic and not linguistic. And yet, as the wounds speak via an interlocutor, mediation, an intermediary, to whoever hears, a material consequence emerges as it becomes reified through material practice. It travels from the private into the public and back to the private. It enters circulation. There, it takes on a life of its own and interacts with the signifying systems and bodies.

**Returns**

- Can the subaltern speak?

  *Here are some questions I struggle with. I have long noted that I am exceedingly private unless what is personal to me may be political to others. To put a narrative pain into the public is to make a political gesture. But what right do I have to tell others' pain narratives? When I speak of my past, I speak not only of my own life but the lives I have lived with others. If I speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, what are the ethics of this in teaching?*

- How can I embody someone else's experience as a performative practice?

  *Because I work with the ideas of trauma, and trauma is intersubjective, I use both my*

  *former students' works and writings in my research as well as my own studio practice in*

  *the higher education arts classroom.*



**Figure 5.1**: Piece: Cataplexy 2014

The image you see is my mother. This image and the following text are artifacts of an investigation I conducted with her regarding trauma, embodiment, disability, and identity. I conducted a series of interviews with my mother over a number of days in a hotel room in the Midwest.

I sought to better understand, to put to language what could not be explained, to ask her, and to know her through empathetic engagement, from intimate attention, from making language, what cannot be known. In this interview, I asked my mother about the death of her first

daughter, about her struggles with poverty and disability, and specifically the shattering of memory, identity and continuity by her experiences with narcolepsy. Because her descriptions of those experiences are not sufficient for my understanding, I also sought to stay awake until I could bear witness with my own body, some of what she suffers with hers. The following text records that arts-based research practice.

*Artifact: Documentation of the Practice sent as an Email*

*March 13, 2013*

*Current questions: How can I embody someone else's experience as a performative practice?*

*My mother is narcoleptic. She has severe cataplexy. A moment of stress and her face drops, her head droops, she falls forward, sometimes hitting the ground. Going out. That's what we call it. She goes out. It is dysphoric, frightening, painful she is somewhere in between. "I wonder where I go?" She asks of herself and of me, her witness. I have a sleep disorder also, congenital? Trauma based? Viral? Who could say?*

*I cannot understand my mother's experience. I am not in her body. How can I use my body to understand hers? How can performance be compassion?*

*I have been awake for 3 out of 6 days.*

*Wait until summer, Michael implored with a pained look on his face. I don't want this to interfere with your work. This is my work, I thought to myself. He is right though, there are risks. I cried when the office was locked today and I had to turn in a paper, cried when the printer did not work in the TA office, cried when I had to go find paper from Marsha. I lost track of conversations, time slipped past. I missed a step on the stairs. Also, surprisingly I lost control of my bladder. Not much, just a drop in the knickers, not a deluge, but enough to know that my body was not entirely mine in that moment.*

*Something was going out.*

*I felt my mother for a moment today. I could feel the submissiveness in my body, the sweetness, and confusion deep confusion. I could not track ideas. Noisy black birds flocking and flying far and wide. The landscape littered with cacophony. I smiled, I breathed, I tried to cover my tracks. Why so many small mistakes? The flock moved in unison, moved apart, feathers fell.*

*I feel stupid. Confused. Small. Where are my keys? In the car? Two parking tickets today? I keep changing the topic of conversation. I have criticized my mother for this so many times. So many times…*

*I am sorry momma I said tonight. I am sorry. I have not understood. I have tried.*

*I want to carry your burden I said when I explained what I have been doing. You have she said, you have. Not yours momma, not yours. Your family's yes, your history yes, the history of poverty, immigration, illness, madness, but not your burden momma.*

*My knees hurt. It is hard to walk. My feelings are easily hurt. I feel self-conscious in public. I am worried. Sitting in class aware of my wet knickers. My momma has wet her pants so many times. Don't tell her I told you so. It would break her heart.*

*Don't do this she said tonight. She does not argue too much. When I was younger I would give up words for days. My sister is silent I should be too.*

*Is this an art practice? How do I document what I do?*

*I understand now momma, and I am sorry for being frustrated at your slowness. Steely Dan invades my consciousness and then Saul Williams- the preacher son from Haiti. Who rhymed a lot and always got the dances. I am brought out of my reverie by the awareness of the cramp in my back. How long have I been slumped over this computer typing to you? Black Stacey, the preacher's son from Haiti.*

*The birds are quieter as they fade against the darkening sky.*

*I will sleep soon. Me and Saul. I will sleep soon.*

*I am sorry momma*


*Trauma*

Could I have known in my own body what she knows in hers, without having engaged in this kind of close attention? The suffering body, like the subaltern, cannot speak. It can be spoken for. To not be able to speak is to be removed from political participation. To speak and to be spoken to in the public is to participate in political discourse. Private pain precludes political discourse.

Trauma, like pain, disrupts memory and identity. Trauma is both the event as described originally by Freud, the shock that jars the individual, that threatens death but does not leave a mark or accurate memory, and the subsequent return of this memory, the speaking wound that emerges through somatic manifestations, and interpersonal affect.

To not be able to speak of either pain of the body, or trauma-pain without the body, is to fail to integrate or synthesize the individual experiences.

When we cannot speak in public, the art object may serve as proxy for speech.

# CHAPTER SIX: INTERMISSION

*Gentle reader,*

*I tell you this, it is not the distraction that causes the delay in this dissertation, it is the delete. It is not the spot it is the retreat. It is not the words that are missing, it is the coherence.*

*Language falls away. I don't know what to say.*

*1. I watched his gaze fall on her, loving, open, soft; a spring yet to come.*

*2. She brought up the problem of kindness, "We are taught to be kind." she told me, "the greatest betrayal of women to themselves. What we will do in service of our imagined obligation to kindness."*

*3. "The ghost came in the night," she said, "it brushed my face and I rushed to the mirror."*

*" In the mirror,"- and I am translating for you now, gentle reader, both here in the moment and in the memory, in the mirror she gestured- and her hands brushed her face as if it had melted. Is this the memory or the moment?*

*He asked me, "and what do her doctors say about the ghosts?"*

*I am in traffic, trucks and cars, a capital corridor, the apparition of hills emerging and vanishing as my glance moves from traffic to trees. From brake lights to fading light. From map to memory.*

*"What do her doctors say about the ghosts?"*

*"They say nothing." I reply. "What is there to say?*

*Fixed delusion. Post-traumatic psychosis. Post-traumatic stress disorder. Schizoaffective disorder, OCD subtype.*

*I know better.*

*This is where translation fails. It is not between sign, signifier, signified.*

*Not between speaker, reader, record. But between memory, moment and madness.*

*This gesture. Her fingers along her face, the disgust and horror.*

*Remembering then, the ghost, but what came before the corporal?*

*Has her face melted is that what she is signing is that what she saw in the mirror?*

*Is she remembering the psychic injury that left the now imagined wound? The speaking wound?*

*It speaks through her. To me. Shape to sound, words to my mouth.*

*Sign, signifier, signified.*

*I count the number of doors through which I must pass to make my way back to her incarceration. A prisoner there. I park and pass through the frozen lot; there are lions at the gate. Guardians at the door.*

*I pull my identification from my wallet, pronounce myself a free citizen. I have come to this land of prisoners. Some are locked away for life for their transgressions. The simple transgression of a somatic response to the structure of violence. The simple transgression of the public presentation of madness in modernity. I have seen them there and I recognize them upon my return. They may or may not know me, yet another face without name, a specter that passes freely, a ghost of another world allowed behind the gate, past the guards. I remember them when I come to their world, and carry what I can.*

*I wait for the guard to come through the locked doors.*

*"Front desk to downtown. Front desk to downtown. An escort is needed to A1."*

*I know the drill. My legal document returned, and now my pockets emptied. I lock up my valuables, or objects that are considered a danger, pen, purse, pills, billfold, keys, and ID- in the small metal lockers. I wait.*

*"Downtown to front desk," message received.*

*Sign, the words on the walkie-talkie,*

*Signifier; the waiting,*

*Signified; the woman between the worlds.*

*Still I wait.*

*The hospital guard arrives. My hands are empty, pockets bare, I am prepared. I have nothing to hide, nothing to give, nothing to gain. I am ready.*

*Escorted through each locked door, each guarded gate. One and then the other. Corridor to corridor, and the walkie-talkies announcing my arrival through the gauntlet, the locks click quick as I pass. This world to the next.*
*Five locked doors until I reach her and the others.*

*Each time I have found her there, she has wept upon my arrival. Each time I have left her there she has watched, empty and dead. She anticipates my presence, with dread. All of the feelings kept hidden, safe from view from the other prisoners, from the guards, from the ghosts, her body betrays her when she sees me and she shakes with open emotion. Our hands begin. Gestures, language laden, heavy and heart felt. Silent words, visible gestures. Indescribable affect. Sign, signifier, signified.*

*Today I waited for her arrival in interior. One of the other prisoners, a woman locked away for life approached me. "May I tell you stories from my life history?" She asked me. I am ungenerous. "You are welcome to join me." I tell her. I am waiting behind an open door in a locked room reserved for those of us with citizenry in the other world; the holding cell for specters passed between glass and guard. But today I will not give her my attention. I am impatient. I am waiting for my friend. I cannot smuggle them out with me this time; the stories*

*she wishes were free. She wants to tell me that she too was once a citizen of the other world; she was once part of the tribe of the living before locked away here, neatly and discreetly forgotten by her family. Not today, I am already carrying too much heavy ephemera.*

*I am already carrying my prisoner with me.*

*1. "She thinks her food is poisoned" I say, apologetically. I have nothing to apologize for, nothing to explain. It is simple. Her food has been poisoned in the past, why not fear it now. She was poisoned as part of her punishment, and eats in dread.*

*2. She asks if my companion might pray for her. My companion is a former professor, well educated, college degree, a home full of antiques, a life of theater and accomplishments, grandchildren and quiet grandeur. My companion says she does not believe in God. A luxury of the protected. I translate it differently, lies of protection. "Of course she will pray for you."*

*3. She tells me that God hates her, is angry with her, angry with her because of her past. I weep into my open empty hands. I have carried nothing in with me, but my rage and regret. I will carry everything out that I can.*

*Every night the guards would call. "Maybe you can calm her down," they would say to me. I repeat myself, gentle reader. The speaking wound speaks for itself; this is not my story to tell but the burning blister, a war-weary wound. It oozes out the evidence. Stuffed and staunched, effluvia of the other.*

*"Can you calm her?"*

*I speak to her in the night. I am awakened in my bed, in my homeland. Depending on my companion, determines my response. I am a free captive. Either I speak with her patiently and leisurely, or I am quick and harsh. Go to back to bed, I tell her. Let me speak to your guards again. Traitors all of them.*

*I do not trust their aspartame smiles; you are as culpable as I am, as complicit as the rest. We are part and parcel of this machinery.*

*I take on the affect, the idiosyncrasies of speech of her guards. In order to be understood I must translate into their language.*

*I say, "If she, your prisoner, excuse me- your patient, were a Vietnam vet- you would not send a man in fatigues with a gun strapped to his chest into his room at night." I listen to the silence on the other end of the line. You see, we understand war, the Vietnam vet, the war wound, male hysteria, shell shock. I wait. My voice sweet and obedient. My affect open. The guard grunts understanding. "Well, imagine that my friend, your prisoner, your patient is a Vietnam vet and you are sending a camouflaged soldier into her cell at night with his weapon at the ready." "But the weapon that is ready, for a woman in post-traumatic psychosis is the guards very gender his camouflage the façade of kindness. Maybe tomorrow night you can send a female nurse to check on her in her sleep. As a deaf woman locked in a mental ward, maybe she will be less startled, if a female nurse were to find her there tentatively asleep, barely unconscious, waiting for the next attack." The guard grunts agreement. It will happen again, the next night, and the next. A new guard, a new nurse, and the same query- "Can you calm her?"*

*1. Each patient a prisoner*

*2. Each visitor a specter*

*3. Each guard a ghost*

*I smuggle her story out in my empty pockets open hands hollow affect.*

*I empty myself of affect. Blood, water, waste. I carry the heavy ephemera out. A smuggler, refugee tales with no home.*

*She tells me the hospital is bad.*

*She is not lying.*

*The nurses mock the patients. She gestures, gestures of mouth open mockery.*

*She sees everything.*

*The research reveals that individuals with borderline personality disorder are sensitive to micro-expressions, able to see communications we think are invisible. They are not imagining the affect of the other, they are simply more observant.*

*Lithium, Depakote, Risperidone, Trazodone.*
*My father's mouth trembles as he ages; my friend's mouth trembles as she decompensates.*

*I speak with her social worker, she signs to me, "Deaf individuals have a harder time with emotional regulation due to the linguistic isolation. "Research shows. Research shows she tells me; they are often born into hearing families, and have no internal language until sixteen years of age- on average." Thus emotional regulation is a complex task of critical thinking when you do not have language for your emotions.*

*I watch her, the patient, the prisoner. Punished for her transgressions, somatic signs of her suffering.*

*A sin of sacrifice. Take this my flesh, and they did. Took of her flesh, fistfuls of hair pushing her head down into dirt, cock, squalor, and madness.*

*"I am afraid of disassociating," She signs to me. She cries. We are sitting in a Longhorn Steakhouse. My friend, myself and my companion- my former professor of women's studies, the one who spoke of the importance of feminist praxis--the lesbian separatist who fought for civil rights.*
*My companion- my former employer at the women's center, friend and mentor for my future.*
*My friend the hidden painting that reveals my past.*

*I am not sure how to translate this word. Which gesture is this, I wonder? I watch as she signs. The hands come close together in front of the chest, closed fingers but open fists, the thumb and forefingers of both hands come close into a small circle and then separate the hands come apart, the fingers fly open like an object shattering in between. "I am afraid she tells me of this" I wonder, is it disassociating? Is it psychosis? Which translation should I reach for?*

*"What would you do?" She asks my companion.*

*"I would try to help," the professor responds.*

> *1. Don't leave me alone she is asking of us.*

> *2. Take me with you, they are pleading.*

> *3. The prison is the present, the madness is the memory.*

*Which word am I translating now? Is it the memory or the moment? He is asking me now as I drive away from the locked doors, the guards, the gates, the medications and madness. I am on my way. He is asking me once I am free to move with my likeness locked away.*

> *"What of the ghosts?"*

> *"I cannot say for sure," I tell him. I offer guesses. "Fixed delusions?" Like the poisoning of her food. Like the needling of her skin? "Speaking wounds?" Memory emerging through her flesh, tearing through her psyche rendering her apart?" Or, maybe, there are actual ghosts and they come to the mentally ill because they are captive audiences. Trapped already." I cannot be sure which is true. "If the devil stops talking when you take your Risperdal, then there is no devil," I tell her. "It is a chemical imbalance". But I am lying. I am lying to liberate her.*

> *Lie*

> *No one is poisoning your food*

> *Lie*

*You will get better*

*Lie*

*The doctor knows what he is doing*

*Lie*

*The hospital staff cares about you*

*Lie*

*You are a prisoner, my beloved friend, because you transgressed; you made manifest your memories. Your beautiful body made abject object, used, defiled, discarded.*

*You are a prisoner; they call you a patient.*

# CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

In this study, I ask: in what observable ways does trauma emerge within the higher education arts classroom? And how I might articulate a model of trauma diaspora known through affective artifacts as I serve to facilitate improved and more culturally informed higher education arts pedagogical practice?

To answer this question, I constructed an interdisciplinary framework in Chapter Two articulating the diaspora of trauma and its relation to political action through affective archives. In Chapters Four and Five, I employed extended case study methodology to expand this initial theoretical framework into two specific cases (of my students and my own aesthetic work) for further complication, clarification, and discussion. In this chapter, I conclude by succinctly summarizing my final argument to my research question, which outlines the extended theoretical framework unfolded in previous chapters, by a close examination of one last story in my classroom.

## Last Story

Every semester that I taught Writing with Video (WWV), I showed a brief video blog by a thirteen-year-old girl in which she addresses an issue of gender-based violence in her school, the problem of slut shaming (MacLeod, 2012). She conducts excellent research that I hoped my undergraduates would imitate. She expresses why it is of interest to her, notes the problem, cites her sources, offers a critical analysis, all as a video blog in front of her computer camera.

One particular semester, the conversation took a troubling turn. I noticed that only the male students responded to the video, while their female colleagues remained silent. The men who spoke up did so critically, defensively. I facilitated the conversation to the best of my

ability, encouraging an open dialogue around both the content and craft of the video. I was forlorn before the classroom consensus that women were not as oppressed as men and that this video just seemed like a complaint and accusation. I must admit that I felt that I had failed in my practices of feminist pedagogy and teaching critical media analysis.

However, at the very end of class, one of my students asked to speak to me. She said very quietly, looking around anxiously, "Are you a feminist?" Yes, I answered, I am a feminist, surprised that she was asking, since I had mentioned it repeatedly during that particular class session. The word seemed to frighten her. She continued to whisper, asking a second time, "So are you a feminist?

Yes. Yes, I am a feminist.

"Because I need to talk with you about something," she said.

I could see that she was struggling with the word feminism, to see what that word might mean to her and what stories were underlying her quiet and reluctant engagement with the word and the stories in the class. So I met with her, as often as she wanted. What she wanted to talk to me about were videos she had encountered regarding the status of women in her home country, specifically a video of a woman assaulted in a hotel lobby, and the discussions that happened on public blogs about it. She could not make sense of these videos, but knew that the word 'feminist' somehow connected to her response, that she cried when she spoke to me about it, and was confused when struggling through her own work. She was looking to name what she did not yet know.

Catherine Malabou (2012) writes that:

> The work of contemporary neurologists helped me to discover the impossibility of
>
> separating the effects of political trauma from the effects of organic trauma. All

trauma of any kind impacts, the cerebral sites that conduct emotion, whether it is a

matter of modifying the configuration of such sites or, more seriously, rupturing

neuronal connections. Even in the absence of any patent wound, we know today

that any shock, any especially strong psychological stress, or any acute anxiety,

always impacts the affective brain, this unrecognized part of the psyche (p. xviii).

The political environment of this individual student is revealed through discrete

narratives of individual trauma and observed violence. When the associations are made through

observation, it reveals the larger political context. This political context emerges in the

classroom, during my time teaching; one of my colleagues was murdered by her boyfriend who

had driven cross-country to abduct her. Later, this man would attend one of the sessions of the

poetry class I taught in the county jail. During that semester, my student's works addressed and

reflected this event. In the discourse of domestic violence, we often think about this as an

individual experience, seen as a romantic problem, even as the larger political context of this

situation can also be seen in the one student's affinity with my identity as a feminist. In the last

semester while I was teaching, a Chinese national student was abducted and murdered in

Champaign-Urbana. There is in this a pattern of recognition of something elusively nameable,

with slippery points of connection for looking at and imagining together. In these cases, what my

students read situationally comes out through their political context and the stories they present

in their works.

In the case of the one student, the identity of feminist offered transient political affinity;

an ephemeral moment. This student found a moment, an ephemeral moment, of association and

connection with me. She then utilized this moment to have a larger political analysis; this

moment of tethering was reinforced through frequent meetings in which she processed

experiences. These meetings took place after the end of each class meeting. The student resisted speaking up in class, possibly because the class itself recreated the political context she was seeking to understand. The hierarchical relationships observed in these images of violence may also have been felt in the class filled with her peers, other Chinese national students, and male students who would make arguments against the power and competence of women. These are specific political traumas. Although not part of international forces per se, they are macro-forces comprising part of the polity and the political context in which these women live, and these traumas become embedded as a part of individual and political identity.

## Political Action Through Public Discourse

To participate in public discourse is to engage in political action. According to Arendt (1970), acts of speech, to speak and to be spoken to, is to be part of the polity. That which is not spoken in public is private, and the private domain is not political. To articulate the personal, to make public the private, has political consequence. From Scarry's work, she offers descriptions of what it means to document the suffering body, the political consequences of accumulation of those narratives—documentations that lead to political change from the narratives of Amnesty International to the construction of medical pain scales.

The act of making public and political the personal narratives of oppression to create social change and personal liberation relates to the Marxist-feminist strategy of consciousness-raising. Consciousness raising was a process by which groups of women organized for mutual aid and social change and sought to solicit and share stories of their gendered oppression. They were informed by the Marxist idea of 'false consciousness' in which ideology obscures the forces used for control of the proletariat by the ruling class. The falseness of this consciousness

is not that the circumstances understood by the proletariat are incorrect, but rather that they are incomplete.

Feminists engaged in consciousness raising sought to make descriptions of their particular lived experiences. Taking what was considered apolitical, trite, or insignificant and was even criticized as such by those outside of the organizations, namely 'feelings' of the women who participated, to then see these descriptions not as isolated events but part of a larger system of relations. Sarachild (1978), "The idea was to take our own feelings and experiences more seriously than any theories which did not satisfactorily clarify them, and to devise new theories which did reflect the actual experience and feelings and necessities of women" (p. 148). This text has very specific material consequences, to take the feelings as more important than the theories, gives agency and voice and directs action. "The only 'methods' of consciousness-raising are essentially principles. They are the basic radical political principles of going to the original sources, both historic and personal, going to the people — women themselves, and going to experience for theory and strategy" (ibid, p. 202).

Ideas and experiences have real correlates in the material world. As Marx and Engels (1932) said in *The German Ideology*, "The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises" (p. 47). By revealing the 'phantoms formed in the human brain' or these feelings they have, they are able to see what the material premises are or conditions that create these phantoms in their brain and then take actions to change their conditions, which would then lead to a change in their experience. With each movement, from the personal is political mantra of the feminist movement of the 1970s, to ACT-UP aids activism of the 1980s, and to this immediate moment of the late 2010s naming the lived experience of #Me Too, *Say Her Name*,

and *Black Lives Matter.* These later movements are shaped by the emerging political presence of intersectional feminism as a resistance to racial oppression. The overlap of these individual stories leads to a more coherent narrative, around which we can organize in resistance to dominant forces.

Arendt, the political theorist, articulated that politics is whenever two people are talking. Political participation is participation through speech and presence, to be in public, to be heard, to speak and to be spoken to. Arendt describes the human condition as intersubjective, human nature is unknowable, and the essential nature of what it means to be a human being cannot be individually known because it is co-constituted. But we can know what makes humans distinct and this includes *action*. "It is the function…of all action…to interrupt what otherwise would have proceeded automatically and therefore predictably" (Arendt, 1970, pp. 30-31)—this is in contrast with *work*, which makes the predictable, occur. So, to speak in public is to be part of political participation. And to take action is to cause disruption.

However, what if we are unable to verbalize our lived experience in the public discourse? What if our action is the gesture of art making, whereby that art and its affect is the transformation, the disruption?

## Witness, Testimony, and Trauma

When talking about trauma in either clinical or critical terms, the terms testimony and witness are commonly used. In clinical terms, testimony would be the therapeutic process of telling one's story to the witness; in psychology, this witness is the therapist, in a context of talking cure that Freud spoke of. The talking cure leads ideally to synthesis of 'unclaimed experiences' (Caruth, 1996). In critical terms, testimony and witness speak to the articulation of a collective cultural experience. The concepts depend upon the capacity to articulate, to narrate,

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and to make speech or documentation of either individual or collective experiences. However, trauma itself is disruptive of memory, identity, language, and temporality.

Testimony and witness also assumes that there is an author and an audience, a writer and reader, and the text in between. Whereas the individual needs testimony, the text needs legibility. And that legibility is elusive when speech is severed from memory—or rendered silenced in the public domain, when speaking is precluded. Is part of Spivak's famous question "Can the subaltern speak" to include, "May the subaltern please be allowed to speak?"

The somatic marking of trauma on the body, and the continuing consequences in individuals and cultures, are materially consequential. The traumatic event constitutes not only the event but also the event's return. A trauma is known as such not from its singularity but from its plurality, the traumatic incidence occurs, the wound is made in the psyche, and the wound returns again and again. The speaking wound, but the wound is aphasic, somatic and not linguistic.

In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry (1985) notes that pain is experience without object. Pain precludes language, rendering the suffering individual beyond the scope of speech, left only with the pre-lingual utterances and cries. To Scarry, pain can neither be described nor believed. To be in pain is to be disbelieved, for the body in pain, there is nothing but the pain; for someone who is witness to the body in pain, there is disbelief. "To have pain is to have certainty" (p. 7), Scary writes. "To hear about pain is to have doubt" (p. 7); the interiority of the experience is so specific that it exists in the realm of the private and, because it is without speech, it is removed from the domain of the public. Psychic trauma, like physical pain, leads to disbelief by others.

In the case of my classroom, this returns to the class session when none of the women spoke. None at all. In effect, they were abstaining from political participation. Letting others

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speak for them. Letting others do their naming. This is what Adrienne Rich implores us to resist. By their silence, do I assume their consent? Or do I simply assume an absence of experience?

And yet I know that they have not lived without encountering gender-based violence. We are steeped in it. Some experiences we are able to name, others, we have yet to find the language for. My students may know in their bodies, in the social fibers of their interactions, what those words are and what it means to experience either encountering or encouraging implicit, explicit, verbal or physical violence. It seems statistically impossible not to have experienced gender-based violence either through observation, participation, or victimization.

The 2006 UN World Report on Violence Against Children (Pinheiro, 2006), for instance, identified violence against children—including in school settings—as a global phenomenon. Yet almost a decade later, we still do not know the full scale and impact of gender-based violence in schools. Much research on violence against children in schools has neglected to explore the role of gender, yet most forms of school violence are deeply rooted in unequal gender relations, gendered social norms, and discriminatory practices. We cannot question what we cannot formulate; we cannot name what we cannot see. On 16 April 2015, during UNESCO's Executive Board meeting, an historic resolution, *Learning Without Fear*, was passed that condemned gender-based violence in and around schools. The Resolution, signed by 58 countries, recognized that

> Violence against children and school-related gender-based violence, in particular, have a devastating effect on the dignity of children and on the enjoyment of human rights, and constitute a major obstacle to the equal enjoyment of the right to education for all, gender equality at all levels of education and inclusive, transformational and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 2).

So in my classroom, the consensus that was agreed upon, by the dominant discourse of male voices in a mostly female classroom, was that women are not oppressed, that for a 13-year-old to comment on sexual politics is inappropriate, and that she was complaining and biased, despite citing sources. This "consensus" is in direct contrast with what the students, female and male alike, have lived.

Hannah Arendt has told us that any public speech is in fact political participation. But sometimes we cannot know how to name something; it may be as of yet unknowable to us. We do not know that we are experiencing or observing gendered violence in the case of traumatic events, which may be subsequent (directly or indirectly) to such violence itself. Both language and memory may be interrupted, and we cannot speak or write in the public to organize around change. Trauma constitutes both the event, and its return. While trauma disrupts language, memory identity, social inclusion and leads to alienation from self and others, this disruption (as interruption) is an action, not work, in Arendt's terms. This discloses traumatic recurrence as itself already political and personal.

### Public Witness to the Diaspora of Trauma through Affect

Returning to my student who meekly asked me if I am a feminist, we met a few times. Actually, I met with her as many times as she wanted, as she struggled to sort through the ideas of her work, which at first she did not want to make into her work. Instead, she wanted to talk to me about events of public violence discussed in a public setting, on websites, and YouTube videos of violence against women. She cried, because these experiences of being directly faced with violence and injustice inspire fear in us as part of our experience as intersubjective and social beings. But over the time of writing and making, she started to construct a story. In her final works, she made a piece about the experience of women's oppression in China, a five-

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minute reflection narrative documentary. Her work was like a weapon, a response to her silence. In creating this work, she created (creates) a counter narrative to those images that have been created and curated for her about her identity.

On naming it, again and again, the acts of art practices put feeling and affect into the public discourse. I posit, carefully as it is still coming to into view, that the artistic artifacts produced affect, informed by our experiences (the ones we cannot yet speak) may serve as proxies of our public speech and begin the arc of an increased understanding. It is there, in such actions as art, that we begin to formulate the language, while naming the objects external to us, that (or when) we cannot speak directly. These works, when put in relation to one another help facilitate an increased discourse. They allow us to make legible stories that may otherwise be illegible to us or to offer witness to experiences that would otherwise be elusive. Moraga and Anzaldua (1981) note "the political writer then is the ultimate optimist, believing people are capable of change and using words as one way to try and penetrate the privatism of our lives. A privatism, which keeps us back and away from each other which renders us politically useless" (p. 257).

With that, through the resistance of privatism through political speech we can organize. And through organizing, we can resist. This is why the personal is still political, even now. Because the collecting of these experiences, these moments and objects, that are sometimes disparate, disrupted, unspoken but affective and somatic—through inscriptions, art practices, or sometimes, in the case of this semester in particular, quiet whispered conversations—when held up against the others like it help build a lexicon. This begins to comprise the dialect in which we tell the personal stories in public, as political discourse meant to change the public, the polity, and our own private lives.

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For Scarry (1985) the feeling of pain cannot be believed unless the wounds or the weapons are visible, and sometimes not even then. For Freud (1920), trauma leaves a wound that is not visible. The making of the object may serve as a proxy for speech, speaking when the individual cannot (or is not allowed to), or can only respond in disrupted, non-sequential narratives of experiences of that-which-we-cannot-yet-name. The object, once in relation to other objects, accumulates affect and meaning, and the transformation of affect comes from its distribution in relation to others not in isolation.

Thus, I argue that to make a cultural artifact in a higher education arts classroom is to participate in political discourse. In the case of traumatic events—where they may be shaped by structural violence, institutional sexism, racism, poverty, or any number of these events, including the large-scale epidemiological studies of adverse childhood experiences through gender-based violence in schools studied by the UN—these phantoms of the human brain, this trauma from structural violence, necessarily have sublimates in material life. Out of the events that led to the violence and trauma, long-term consequences to the individual follow, including early death and disease, withdrawal from school, and poverty.

These students may not be able to name what they know in their bodies, but they can come to understand what they make as resistance and counter-narrative as artists and authors. They may be able to name what they make in observation, in documentation, in the intersubjective space of imagined and affective communities, what constellations they create in ephemeral moments of affective affinity and reintegration from alienation through affective circulation. The creation of both the affective object, and the subsequent curation of the ephemeral archive, offers an assemblage of moments and memory that potentially counter-wounds, unwounds.

**Epilogue**

*I started with a book, mostly blank, but lined. A book bound, bought back when I began to write.*

*My walls lined with bound books with words of writers I will rarely read.*

*After the accident, the one she won't remember… After the accident, the one she won't recall…*

*She reached for the books, which lined the walls.*

*After the accident. Amnesia. Aphasia. Anomia.*

*After the accident. The books bound were a burden.*

*"I want to empty the house of all that it hosts." After the accident.*

*So she started to write, right hand hoping that each stroke of the pen would produce something worth saying but nothing comes. "I write and nothing comes. Nothing." Then something.*

*Imagine if you can the open, empty space between breaths. Between heartbeats. The blood rushes, returns, gathers and gasps.*

*If forced what would I produce? Furtive, fervent, fecund forms. I write delete, erase, repeat.*

*So, this does not count as a dissertation. This is not the end of capitalism. This is not the feminist revolution; this is neither problem nor solution.*

*This is the duration of time, the curation of queries. Invitation and invocation.*

*Make lists. Write letters. Wait. Work. Want. Write. Wait.*

*She sits. I stay.*

*"Please," she says, "I need ECT, so bad." What do I say?*

*"At night they needle me," she tells me. At night the ghosts. At night.*

*"Dear God," Words whispered and unspoken. "Dear God."*

*And ask yourself, right here, right now…how many of you are huddled in silent prayer, secret supplication?*

*Terse textual pleas and provocations.*

*Keep the pen moving, keep your mouth quiet. Write as witness.*

*There are no rules, but there are consequences.*

*If you could tell me any story, and I promised to keep your secrets…what words would you use to woo me to witness? Would you tell me of shame and silence?*

*"Please" supplication, salutation.*

*Her texts come brief and often.*

*Prayers and pleading to the powerless.*

*"Please" I repeat her words, cacophonous choir, passing text to tongue, letter to language.*

*The Wailing Wall wants none and witnesses all.*

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# APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Archiving the trauma diaspora: Affective artifacts in the higher education arts classroom

**Informed Consent**

**Description and Purpose of the Research**

Meadow Jones is conducting research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Art Education.

The research consists mainly of qualitative ethnographic/case study fieldwork, which involves observations and interviews, as well as interpretation and analysis of information gleaned from these activities. The general purpose of ethnographic research is to learn how members of a community (for example, students in a club or employees in a dining hall) make sense of their own community and its relationships with other people, communities, and institutions. This study will be looking specifically at the experiences of producing personal video narratives regarding trauma or emotion in the higher education classroom.

**Voluntary Nature of Participation**

You must be 18 years old or older to participate in this study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or you may discontinue participation at any time during the project without penalty. Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your current or future relations with the University of Illinois

**Confidentiality**

In this study, every effort will be made not to reveal personally identifiable information in publications based on this research. To accomplish this, no records will be created or retained that could link you to personally identifiable descriptions, paraphrases, or quotations. Your actions or things you say may be presented without specific reference to you, reference only by pseudonym, or combined anonymously with the actions and words of other participants. While photos and recordings are considered individually identifiable, investigators will only use images and recordings in presentations and publication with permission from the participants. We may present our findings in the form of papers and/or presentations. Appropriate steps will be taken in order to protect your work and identity from disclosure.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. You will not receive compensation for participating in any way; however, it is hoped that the results of the study will contribute to our shared fields. We may use a summarized version of your comments as a case study for pedagogical purposes in courses, or in other settings, or publish your responses in a peer-reviewed journal.

**Risks and Benefits**

Your participation in this project should not involve risks beyond those of ordinary life. You will not be paid for your participation in this research project, nor is it expected that your participation will bring you any benefits, tangible or otherwise. There will be no costs for being in the study other than your participation time. We do not anticipate that there are any risks beyond those experienced in everyday, ordinary life associated with your participation in the study.

**Explanation of Procedures**

Your participation in this project will involve short interviews of approximately 30 to 60 minutes in duration about your experiences as a student and artist in producing narrative videos and writings in ART 350 Writing with Video. We will conduct this interview at a time and place that is convenient to you. We plan to create either a video or audio recording of the interview to ensure that we accurately capture your thoughts and comments, but this is optional, and you may decline to have the interview recorded. You may also request that we stop the recording at any point during the interview. If possible, we are also interested in viewing samples of your work that may help us understand your answers to the interview questions. We may also contact you briefly after we analyze the data from the study to confirm that we have accurately characterized your comments. After we have analyzed the data, we will destroy the recordings in order to preserve your anonymity.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this research project, please contact the Responsible Project Investigator (RPI) or Project Investigator (PI):

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I have read and understand the forgoing description of this research project, including

information about the risks and benefits of my voluntary participation.

I give my permission for this interview to be audiotaped_____ (Please check to grant consent)

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# To write what you know: Embodiment, authorship, and empathy

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the consequences of mindfulness and embodiment practices in undergraduate university education. Utilizing teacher-initiated qualitative action research, consequences of mindfulness and embodiment in the classroom was investigated, with students serving as co-investigators. Seventeen students in an undergraduate narrative arts class met twice a week over the course of a semester, and, as a class, participated in embodiment and mindfulness practices in connection with the scheduled course content. The dictate to 'write what you know' is a familiar one in creative writing classes, but it seemed that students were not sure what they 'knew' until they came present into their own bodies. In so doing, and by placing their cognition in their embodied practice, the students discovered they could achieve a position from which to move into authorship. Two coders engaged in a systematic inductive analysis of students' writings following the embodiment practice to identify themes present in the written material produced by the students. Themes include embodied attention, authorial voice, and empathetic response.

*Keywords: Embodied cognition; Mindfulness; Art Education; Empathy*

This paper reports on a preliminary investigation into the use of embodiment and mindfulness practices in an undergraduate narrative arts class. This pilot study aimed first, to observe emergent themes of embodiment, empathy and authorial voice in student work, along with student and teacher experiences of the practices as part of the teaching process. Second, the study is intended to trigger thought and discussion among teachers, students, researchers and creative practitioners regarding the deliberate incorporation of such practices into creative pedagogy.

This paper briefly reviews arts and authorship, embodiment and mindfulness, and mindfulness and empathy practices as they relate to education. The purpose of this is to lay down a theoretical foundation for a pilot study examining the effect on students' creative writing of standard pedagogical practices for creative writing that have been modified using embodiment and mindfulness practices. The study was conducted using the paradigm of teacher-initiated action research (Elliott, 1990).

## Authorship and Arts

The body can be understood as the location of lived experience; as the only object that we can know from the inside, and the location of our subjectivity. It is the only object that we can know the boundaries of from both inside and outside, and from beginning to end of its existence. Art, as a complicated and arguably impossible to define concept, may take form via different modalities, such as film, painting, novel or musical composition. Across such diverse forms of expression however, art, as an abstract concept and as material practices, embodies our lived experiences. As Crowther (2001) articulated:

> "*the essence of art is nothing less than the conservation of the human experience itself. The artwork as symbolically significant sensuous manifold is able to express the decisive relation between subject and world (ontological reciprocity, as I have termed it) at a level, which does not obliterate the concreteness of the relation.*" (Crowther, p. 7)

Theoretical and material discourses between art and embodiment are innumerable, and can be considered to span across the whole of art making history. There are multiple ways to think about these dialogues, including consideration of the fact that we use our bodies to make and perceive art, and that our bodies are both the subject and object of art. One approach to understanding the complex relationship between art and embodiment is through examining the art-making process that constructs authorship.

It is important to learn how to move metaphors across domains of understanding, in both the making and interpretation of art. Artists and authors commonly strive to bring the viewer or reader into a world made through description or expression. This created world operates via multiple aesthetic and affective modalities that connect with the viewers' other life experiences

and visceral bodily/emotional reactions, in order for the creative expression to make sense. Artists must therefore be able to move metaphors across linguistic or visual semiotics and structures (from their own experience, to the creative work, to the audience): a kind of rolling translation between different material and conceptual discourses. Students in creative arts classes typically learn to create and respond to works in multiple modalities, including textual, visual, temporal, spatial, and experiential. To construct a narrative story that exists over time in a sensorial medium like film, the author must create a kind of world for the viewer, one that references the viewer's experiences and physical self.

Thus, students benefit from a sense of their own experiences, in order to transpose them into a creative medium such as writing or video making with a resonance that reaches an audiences' own embodied experience. This aspect of the student process can be described as the reflective awareness of their present and past being, and of how these operate within the world in relation to other objects or beings. The practice of narrative documentation, either visually with a video camera, or with the written word, can be used as a teaching aid to assist students in beginning to reflect on their embodied experiences.

In an undergraduate video arts class entitled *Writing with Video*, wherein students explore and construct narratives in textual, visual, and temporal forms through writing and filmmaking, ways that embodiment practices might affect the students' authorship were investigated. Here, authorship is defined as the integration of both craft and creativity in practitioner work, as well as a kind of ownership of what they have created. Authorship, which involves making and creating using the surrounding environment, requires higher order cognition. High order cognition is the cognitive process that deals with abstract concepts and problem-solving using skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (Newmann, 1990). The ability to synthesize information directly relates to one's ability to combine the given experiences and create new knowledge through appropriation and reconfiguration. It has been proposed that all higher order cognition comes from primary metaphors made within the body (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Gibbs & Macedo, 2010). Moreover, these authors suggest that understanding arises as a kind of gestalt between thoughts and perception (Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

However, in the years preceding the present study, it was observed that students were not making connections on their own between their perceptual experience and the creation of their work. As observed in the first few semesters of teaching this class, students were not able to create coherent narratives through their films, and the films created lacked authorship stemming from the students' lived experiences. Instead, their films were often mere mimicry and repetition of stereotyped filmic narratives. This inspired me to incorporate embodiment mindfulness practices, in hopes of bringing students' present in creating their own films.

## Embodiment and Mindfulness

Embodiment and cognition are at the foreground of discourse in many fields from psychology to cognitive science, philosophy to literature. In the field of education, there is increasing interest in how mindfulness practices affect overall behavioral and performance outcomes in schools (Flook, et al., 2010; Huppert & Johnson, 2010). To date, however, little research has investigated how such practices can benefit students in undergraduate education. To be present in the lived moment and the lived experience of the body is part of the complex discourse regarding embodiment. For some theorists, embodiment is the foundation for all perception and other forms of knowledge (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The relationship of embodiment and its connection to cognition and understanding remains much discussed in contemporary scholarship (Shapiro, 2010; Clark 2008). Furthermore, the connection between embodiment and mindfulness was posited over twenty years ago (Varela, et al., 1991).

Mindfulness may be understood as acting in a self-aware manner, wherein the person takes account of and receives cues from the process of acting as it occurs (Hanh, 1987). Embodiment literature often invokes a philosophical position by acknowledging that all human experience arises from the social-cultural-psycho-biological matrix of human identity (Varela, et al, 1991). Mindfulness practices as they are known in Western scholarship and clinical practice today arose out of ancient Eastern traditions of inquiry. Two main techniques are studied: open monitoring and focused attention mindfulness (Davidson 2008). Open monitoring practices involve non-reactive monitoring of the moment-to-moment content of experience, whereas focused attention practice entails voluntary and sustained attention on a chosen object (Travis & Shear, 2010). Studies on mindfulness practices have discussed changes in the brain's plasticity, improvements in educational outcomes, and their effectiveness in stress reduction and in the management of depression and other mental health issues (Hölzel, et al., 2011). To my knowledge it is yet to be shown how and to what extent mindfulness practices can assist with authorship in a higher educational setting, and whether they can be usefully deployed in this setting using understandings from the embodiment literature.

## Mindfulness and Empathy

Empathy is a state of awareness of another's experience. According to Gallagher (2012) empathy is characterized as being (1) a primary, non-reducible, other directed feeling of concern or interest that (2) is characterized by a clear distinction between empathizer and the other person, that (3) targets the other's situated experience and (4) consciously ascribes that experience specifically to that other. Mindfulness practices have been shown to be effective in helping to develop empathy (Block-Lerner, et al, 2007), and it has been suggested that embodied awareness increases understanding of others' experiences (Lopez, et al. 2013).

## Current Study

During the first two years of teaching an undergraduate narrative arts class at the University of Illinois, pedagogy was augmented to include frequent embodiment practices with the students. At the start of each class, students were lead through a mindfulness practice to help them become present in their bodies and surroundings. A variety of techniques and practices were employed in several locations over the duration of the course, including (mental) body scans, silent meditations, and walking meditations; mindfulness techniques already tested in educational settings (Holland, 2004). Other sensorial exercises, including aesthetic engagement, focus exercises on the senses via experiencing and experimenting with guided movements, as well as in sensorial responses to art objects and practices. The students practiced silent meditation with their eyes both closed and open to relate to both auditory and visual sensory information. For instance to relate to the idea of diegetic sound (in filmmaking- diegetic sound is sound that is part of the narrative component of a film, as in contrast with sound added later as in a soundtrack). They also practiced silent attention to visual forms, including works of art and natural structures to have a sense of focused attention on either visual or auditory sensory elements.

Students engaged in these varied practices in the classroom space, outside on the building grounds, and inside the campus art museum. Students and teacher worked to understand the body, its sensations, and attentions in different types of spaces and in relation to different sensory inputs and demands. The most frequent practice was the use of contemplative practices at the beginning of class, followed by a reflective journal-writing period, during which the whole class wrote individually on a shared or self-selected theme. For the purpose of this study, at the end of the semester, an analysis was conducted of students' journal entries and teacher notes from direct observation. Although the class consisted of a video-making component, as well as a writing component, for the purposes of this study only the reflective writing component was analyzed.

## Method

### Study Context

**Teacher initiated action research.** This study is based on data collected in a single semester of an undergraduate arts class at the University of Illinois. The paradigm of teacher-initiated action research was used to investigate embodiment practices. In the field of education, action research gained prominence in response to a movement of curriculum changes occurring in England in the 1960s (Elliot, 1990). During this period, teachers sought ways of evaluating their curriculum practices as they implemented changes. This type of 'reflective pedagogy' has a particular take on curricula, which is that "the curriculum is always in the process of becoming" (Elliot, 1990, p. 6). Action research in education is similar to other action research practices in that it uses problem solving and participation in order to create strategies for improving practices or a working environment (Lewin, 1947). It is an active and responsive process in which participants solve problems as a way of learning.

**The class: Writing with Video.** This study took place in an undergraduate narrative arts class offered in the art department, although it is not specifically for art majors. The class meets general education requirements because it is a composition class, a Western civilization course, and a course in arts. The course curriculum includes the viewing, interpreting and making of documentary films, as well as considerable reading and writing of texts. According to the *Writing with Video* website (Squier, 2014), the course is:

*"an advanced composition course that engages students in a comprehensive exploration of contemporary rhetoric, creative inquiry, design thinking, media authorship, self-reflection, and social engagement. Directed writings in concert with video production projects allow students to experience an integrated process of thinking, creating, and problem solving."*

The objective of this curriculum is to equip students with video art-making abilities as well as to support their philosophical investigation of identity and authorship.

This curriculum consists of three film production cycles. By the end of the semester, students each have made three short narrative films. Between each production cycle, students are assigned various related readings or videos, to write pre- and post-production

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descriptions, and to give feedback to other classmates' films. Besides the video component, embodied mindful practices were incorporated in the beginning of each class meeting, which was followed by a reflective journal writing component. Observed improvements in the quality of students' film production stimulated the interest to examine the relationship between embodiment practices and students' learning and to document in this paper. However, for the purpose of this study, only the reflective journal writing was analyzed.

**Students as co-investigators.** Students were taught, and engaged in, embodied mindfulness practices, and were asked to reflect upon these through discussion and writing, which made them both participants and co-investigators. Several times during the semester, students were offered the choice of skipping this process; however, they were keen to continue with it. Throughout the semester students reflected on how the practices affected them in larger ways, including in their other classes and other aspects of their life. As the students were involved in the embodied mindfulness practices, they were critical to the interpretation of, and production of meaning from, their experiences. Thus due to the nature of the research and pedagogical practices, the students themselves became co-investigators of the consequences of mindfulness practices in their classroom experience and in their lives.

## Participants

There were 17 students in the 2013 Fall (Autumn) Semester, and of these 9 were women and 8 were men. The students participating in the class were pursuing a diverse range of majors, including art and design, cinema studies, computer science, engineering, creative writing, media studies and psychology. The course met twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 am to 12:10 pm.

## Procedure

At the beginning of each class meeting, the students and teacher would have a brief discussion to decide which type of embodiment practice they would engage in that day. The decision was made through student-led open discussion as to whether the class would engage in a silent meditation or a facilitated body scan. Once decided, the process commenced and lasted approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Following the mindfulness practice, students and teacher documented their experience of that practice through writing, with the intention of determining the consequences of engaging in this practice. The whole class participated in post mindfulness practice writings and facilitated

discussions. As part of the class curriculum, students were required to post their writings in online journals. Not every student wrote in their journal each class meeting, as they may have been absent, late or may simply have abstained from participating in either the embodiment practice or the reflective writing. Nevertheless, each student wrote a minimum of 15 journal entries over the span of the three-month semester, with the entries varying in size from several sentences to over a page in length, depending on the specific author and particular journal entry. The amount of data collected totaled 130 pages, which consisted exclusively of post-mindfulness practice writings.

## Data Analysis Technique

In analyzing the students' writings, several steps were followed by two independent coders. Each of the coders' relationships to the data was utilised. Coder 1 was also the principal investigator, and was thus familiar with the students, the data and the pedagogical process to which the students were responding. Coder 2 was completely independent and received only the text for establishing codes. This allowed for a more complete understanding of the data given the different relationships to the data and participants.

Based on the grounded theory approach (Corbin, et al, 2008), coders performed an inductive analysis of these writings and engaged in an iterative review process. Coders began by reading the entirety of the students' collected writings from their online journals to get a general sense of what their experiences were. Next, by isolating the post embodied mindfulness practice writings, several emerging themes were noted. Student writings that referred specifically to the embodiment/mindfulness practices and identified categories of shared experiences were separated out. Coders independently coded the data, recorded findings, and then reviewed each other's findings for consensus of the salient themes. Final codes were based on consensus coding, which is quite common when coders have different relationships to the data (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). To protect student confidentiality each student was assigned a pseudonym, with these pseudonyms used to represent the students in the discussion below.

## Results and Discussion

In analyzing students' writings regarding the effects they perceived as arising from the mindfulness practices we performed in class, several salient themes emerged. These included: *embodied attention* as seen in descriptions of the immediate moment, sensorial experiences, imaginations of past or future, and concerns and queries about identity and experience; *authorial voice* as seen in reflection on their creative

process, their own writing, exploring tense, voice, and form; and *empathetic response* as seen in a movement from self-awareness to awareness of others, and imagined experiences of others in the classroom or elsewhere. This was evident in their writings specific to class activities; however, it also came through in the students' creative non-fiction essays, as well as their critical responses to course materials.

## Embodied Attention

Embodied attention refers to students' writings that responded to the experience in the moment, which relates to the immediate experience or the perception of bodily states (Koch & Fuchs, 2011), or an awareness of the lived body as the primary site of knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

*" ...It's difficult to stop the thoughts racing in my head, but this [practice] allows me to calm them. I find this calming helps me take more creative risks with my writing. It also breaks down the general wall of hesitation I usually find myself trying desperately to break through, climb over, dig under, run around when I am writing." —Lindy*

This student's thoughts progress from observations of the present moment, the embodied experience of 'thoughts racing,' to a reflection on the shifting experience from the meditative practice 'this allows me to calm them,' to self-awareness about how this affects her writing. In describing her breaking through, climbing over, digging under, and running, the student moves embodied experiences into metaphor. This ability to make metaphors from experience or memory may have allowed the student to improve her writing skills and move toward what Lakoff calls higher cognition (Lakoff, 1980). This writing excerpt records a transformation in the student; the student is able to transition from a state of emerging self-awareness of existing obstacles, to a state of reflection towards overcoming those obstacles.

In embodied attention practices and subsequent reflection on the experience, the students had varied responses. For example, a student may report feeling energized by the practice on one day and not energized the next. Some struggled to stay awake and viewed that as evidence that the practice "didn't work," while others felt the sleepy moments freed them to experience creative insights. For some, it was neither energizing nor sleep inducing, but instead described as relaxing.

*"Wow, that was probably the most effective "coming present" moment for me. I feel energized and ready to go"—Abby*

*"Usually I experience nothingness after the exercise. I like how it feels".—Becca*

*"Sometimes when I come present I reject following through. As I am following the motions in my head, going from my feet to my ankles, my ankles to my calves to my thighs, I have a vivid daydream. I think that's what I would call it. A moment of pure inspiration? An image in my head so strong it would seem that I fell asleep, but I didn't. Today for instance, I was going into my knees, feeling my pants and the ways they touched, when suddenly so vividly I saw a page design for a mission statement for Harvard. It was so vivid I was knocked by it."—Katie*

Noticing one's brain wandering is a conscious act that may lead to a greater level of conscious action overall, according to mindfulness theory. Hence, a student who notes: *"My brain is wandering again,"* —Dylan is engaging in a process that may lead to greater levels of self-direction and learning.(Block-Lerner et al., 2007).

## Authorial voice

The students' ability to reflect on their own work or creative process was observed in their writings. As the course curriculum includes a considerable amount of authorship in both writing and film-making, the ability to reflect on their creative process was one that seemed beneficial to the students.

*"Not every word has to be perfect. I am who I am right now. I am where I am right now. These words are what they are right now. Letting myself sink into my present self helps me accept the words and thoughts of my present self."—Lindy*

As students come to be present through these embodied meditations, they are connecting their previous experiences with their present consciousness. At the same time, it can be observed that this connection to their present self empowers them to acknowledge themselves as authorial beings as they are, regardless of judgment. Students can be seen to have accepted what they created, and to have claimed ownership over their creation.

*"However, over the semester, I've found myself concentrating more and becoming more comfortable with [the] idea of coming present with complete strangers in class twice a week. But are they really complete strangers? [...] I think the idea that the class as a whole is one unit with diverse perspectives has let me come present better and has let me open up in my writing". —Heather*

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There seemed to be some relationship between the ease that the students felt in reflecting on their own writing, or that of authorial voice, and reflecting on the experiences in the class, which we identified as empathetic response.

Besides being able to identity with one's authorial creation, students became more confident in their authorial voice through reflecting on their creative process. This can be observed in the following:

*"College is four years of incessant classes and professors that you either like, dislike, or don't care about. So when I am only in the second year of this rat race, I didn't expect to take a class that changed me. It isn't often that you meet people that touch you, and that's what [teacher] did for me. I can probably take the right to say that I'm probably not the only one who thinks so…; [teacher] left no stone unturned to make the dingy, dark, overwhelmingly warm classroom a safe space, as she liked to call it. We were all ourselves, 100% of ourselves in those 6 hours a week. Sometimes, it wasn't enough for me. I wanted more of class, more time to explore, more time to spend with myself. 5 minutes of silence, and many more of discovery. Writing with Video has been a journey in every aspect. It made me reflect, and question. It made me believe…This class, believe it or not, helped me with my other classes too; I have seen a definite change from my previous routine. I have seen myself become more organized, more hard-working, and more convinced with my work. Can all this be attributed to one class; one Grad student teacher? It doesn't sound very believable, but the more I think about it, the more true it feels… I plan to take whatever I learnt from this class with me, and I think this one semester will prove to be the foundation for the rest of my time here." —Jack*

This student was able to reflect on their creative practice, both inside and outside of this class, particularly through identifying their lived experiences. Moreover, it is evident that this student became both more reflective and confident in their creative process.

## Empathetic Response

Some of the responses found in the students' writings we regarded as a kind of empathetic response. This was seen in the students' imagination of the state of someone else. This kind of imagination of another's experience fits the concept of empathy. Empathetic response can be defined as 'perspective taking' (Block-Lerner, et al, 2007) and as a consideration or imagination of others' states of experience. The construction of empathy is one that is considered in both educational (Stojiljković, et al, 2012) and therapeutic relationships (Block-Lerner, et al, 2007).

*"…Back to the breaths. This is just what I'll have to remember today. I just need to breathe. "She let her mind wander as she still focused on the intake and exhale of air, a slight whistling in her nose to remind her of the season." It's not up to me anymore, so all I can focus on is breathing. Support. Support your breath. Support your breath. Support your breath. How do you support your breath? You actively engage your diaphragm. You stick your gut out and take a deep breath and then keep your diaphragm out so when your lungs are out of breath you have that extra pocket to help you out. Support. How do you support a friend? Is it active? Is it passive? What do you do? What does she do? You breathe."–Abby*

According to Gallagher (2012), empathy may be best understood through a narrative context. In the excerpt above, this student's writing shows a fluid movement from embodied attention toward empathetic response. In reflecting on her own breathing, this student transitions to questions about presence in relation to others, creating a partial and questioning narrative around her experience. According to Block-Lerner et al, (2007) an observer is created in meditative practice. This third-person observer is part of the process of meditation and may be responsible for the compassion that comes out in meditation (Block-Lerner, et al, 2007). Here the student is writing, in part, in the third person, exploring variations in authorial voice, creating a distance from herself through language.

*"It's been two months. Two months of this routine and I think I finally see what I can get from it. It took me awhile, but I think it was worth it. Yes, me being me, I probably won't be doing this too often. I like the noise inside my head; when my mind races, it gives me an odd sense of energy. However for the sake of my sanity, I also need to know when to stop. When to stop thinking and when to just be present. Be present in the moment, in my own space, for me. These five minutes have given me something else. They have given me the voice of silence."–Janice*

By distancing herself through language, the student is able to reflect on the being she was or is. This distancing allows for empathy for the authorial self, as seen here. In this piece of writing, the student shows consideration and imagination for the experiences she has or had.

*"We're in a dark room, all of sitting with ourselves, making peace with ourselves. What are we all thinking? What are the walls saying? Are we really listening? As I sat in complete silence and tried to focus on my breathing; blocking the world out, I noticed my mind wavering. Maybe struggling is a more apt response. I*

*was thinking of not today, not now, but the future. I have to decide on which apartment I want to live in next year, I have to decide where I want to apply for internships, I have to decide what kind of person I want to be remembered as." –Carol*

This student's writing moved between present focused attention, the ability to describe her moment and experience, to future attention. She shifted her attention from sensorial descriptions, to perception of others, to an empathetic imagination of others' experience and even the experience of the walls, through to future imaginations of herself in relation to others.

*"I may not have always been the most vocal participator or the most insightful class member, but I genuinely enjoyed the space that our instructor actively created for us. There was an unprecedented level of intentionality to build a sense of community in this class. Walking out the door on the final day I saw students giving hugs of thanksgiving for the unbridled encouragement, the safe space, the honesty. I feel like more than anything else, through this class I've learned that there is a better way to teach. And this semester, I got to experience that way." —Lindy*

Through the construction of empathy that is shown in these writings, students have begun to construct community within this classroom. One key aspect that contributed to this community is that students were able to partake of each other's perspective and take such into consideration as their own.

## Limitations of Current Study

This study grew out of a pedagogical practice aimed at prompting discussion and triggering new ideas about how to explore embodiment via mindfulness. This led to emergent themes on authorship, and empathy. This is an area that involves an intersection of phenomena best represented by the uniquely personal voices rather than the broad strokes of quantitative data. (McGrath & Johnson, 2003) Thus, my methods were more descriptive than inferential, and the results are unique. Rather than providing generalizable theories, the work points to directions for further research.

A second limitation is the small sample size, with only 17 students included in the current study. Although this was the case, it was also true that this was the class size, and data was qualitative. The qualitative nature of this study increases its richness because it allowed for deeper information regarding each participant.

Finally, it was not possible to tell which themes emerged *following* the meditation practice and which were *prompted* by the class itself, as students were responding to their overall experience. Furthermore,

factors external to the pedagogical practices of interest may have influenced results. Possible confounding factors include: the content of the curriculum, demographic attributes of the participants (due to selective process of admission to the university), self-selection into this course, as well as the attitudes, manner, and pedagogical style of the instructor.

## Implications and Future Directions

These findings have implications for pedagogical practice. The data suggests that embodiment and mindfulness practices influence student engagement and focus. They experience an overall positive influence from these practices and report an appreciation for their inclusion in the course. The emergent themes regarding "Embodied Attention ," "Authorial Voice," and "Empathetic Response" are all broadly relevant to the quality of student experience and engagement with course content. This research suggests that educators may wish to integrate opportunities to explore embodiment and mindfulness practices into tertiary level classroom learning in order to assess their utility for different contexts and curricula. This will inevitably require some consideration of the time constraints and curricular priorities of any given course.

One important extension is to follow up with students in order to determine whether mindfulness practices in the classroom were the direct cause of these strong student responses. In addition, the research will benefit from designs that address the limitations of this study. Future research should seek to isolate the mindfulness practice from other factors. For example, one could administer pre and post participation Likert scale measures of the variables under investigation. This would allow for a set of quantitative data to support or validate the qualitative data utilized in the study. Furthermore, future studies could record which students had already meditated and which had not. Since the brain changes with meditation (Davidson, 2008), it is possible that a more experienced meditator may have different outcomes from this class. The study could be further improved by conducting focus groups pre and post study, by using only blind thematic coders, and by use of a randomized control trial incorporating two classrooms of students taking the same class, one in which mindfulness practices occur, and one in which they do not.

The role of embodiment and mindfulness practices in higher educational pedagogy has heretofore been overlooked as a new and innovative method for fostering student engagement and scholarship. As my research suggests, incorporating embodiment practices into the undergraduate classroom can generate increased focus, empathy, and authorship. Within the fields of educational psychology, curriculum

development, art and design, and creative writing, future studies of the role of embodiment practices in the classroom could explore best practices for incorporating embodiment in curriculum design, assessment and instructional pedagogy.

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