The Doll Project As A Liberatory Art Intervention For Conscious Raising And Trauma Relief In A Chicago Marked By Violence

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The Doll Project as a Liberatory Art Intervention for Conscious Raising and Trauma Relief in a Chicago Marked by Violence

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy

National College of Education
National Louis University
August, 2017
Art as Social Action/Intervention

Abstract

This community/arts based participatory research project encompassed communal art making practices (art as therapy) to build community, heal and resist systemic oppression and community violence; as well as promote self-care, empowerment, and a sense of purpose. Participants engaged in community-based art therapy to build and heal communities impacted by gun violence; using an ecological model. This "Doll Project" developed as a grassroots approach to arts-based social change, an ongoing cycle of creation, reflection and action with the hope to create a wave of healing and understanding through impacted Chicago communities. This process was intended to engage communities and embody the use of creativity to shift power and flatten hierarchies, largely by building up leadership of those most impacted by violence. The art of doll making was used to memorialize victims of gun violence in the city in record high years of murders, while simultaneously creating a memorial of resistance, initiating community-based adaptive change practices for social equity, connectedness, and liberation. This project challenges the social norms of gun violence and examines the structures, policies and systems of oppression, racism, economic and cultural neglect that have created the tensions and violence caused within these largely isolated marginalized urban communities.
Acknowledgements

Much appreciation and thanks go to my husband for supporting this journey, my children for sharing with me the wonder and whimsy of the seemingly mundane, and to my parents for teaching me to see, do, connect and create. Special thanks to Chicago Public School teachers and students who without them this memorial would never have come to fruition.
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Purpose of Study

This community-arts based participatory project addresses the problem of psychological trauma instigated by gun violence and youth alienation through doll making, group dialogue and community connection. This study explores the historical, political and cultural enforcement of oppressive practices such as segregation, generational poverty and faulty educational reform policies that further exacerbate community violence, helplessness and apathy.

Research Questions

Research questions explored in this paper: How can community arts/exhibit 1) inspire and mobilize individuals and groups, 2) nurture and heal communities, 3) build and improve community capacity and activism? Other questions that were considered and surfaced during the research process: What does the practice of making, the repetitious act of wrapping achieve for those who participated in the Dolls4Peace Memorial? What is the relationship between wrapping and doll making and psychological responses to trauma and easement? Can art exhibitions/installations be community or cultural interventions?
Introduction

Chicago is one of the most segregated cities in the country. This segregation did not happen by chance, but was enforced and reinforced by city laws, institutions, and policies that celebrated and encouraged racism against Blacks through housing discrimination, white protest and riots, white flight and urban renewal. The Dearborn Homes are a Chicago Housing Authority public housing project located in Chicago between Bronzeville and South Loop neighboring communities. This housing project was constructed after the Depression during an urban renewal to remove the "Black slums" or dilapidated housing and Black overpopulation, and placed at this location when city officials and citizens protested the integration of their neighborhoods. The majority of public housing is located on the southside of Chicago where Blacks were regulated and forced to live during the first and second Great Migration. This segregation, attributable to housing discrimination, impacted the resources of children and families, education and perhaps the empowerment of poor Black people in this region of the country.

A new analysis of federal government data from 2013 shows that the majority of U.S public school children come from low income families. Two out of every five Black children live in poverty (Vega, 2015). Even as the economy has improved, poverty continues to increase. This epidemic has educational implications that start with kindergarten. Children often start school behind, have limited parental support and lack resources and opportunities afforded other
children. Arts and music programs are the first to be cut in schools servicing these communities.

Because of the dire needs of children in poverty, educators and policy makers must start analyzing how their educational needs will be met. Contemporary schooling teaches students that their own success depends on their ability to do better than others and is consistently measured by standardized tests such as the ACT, SAT, NWEA, and PARCC (Rose, 2009). In Chicago, students begin testing in Pre-K and are tested every 6 weeks. Scores are displayed and awards are given or privileges taken away for their test performances. Students are shamed and retained when they fail to meet their projected scores for the end of the year. This political movement of the school system has shifted the focus from the student’s overall development and negates their ability to be creative, caring, and connected to deeper truths found in literature, the arts, philosophy and civic engagement. The educational reform movement’s conversion toward a standardized method of evaluating and teaching further eliminates a sense of connection to others; exacerbating the alienation felt by youth already experienced in other ways. The federal government's obsession with results, as opposed to need, can be seen as faulty and naive. Instead of measuring schools on benchmarks and standardized testing and punishing them when they fall short, the government may be better off focusing on giving a meaningful education that teaches liberation, self-determination, arts/culture, and a rich student-centered curriculum. Students suggest that pressures of education and emphasis on achievement and success
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has resulted in less exploration of knowledge, including less autonomy for students and teachers to design and engage in meaningful curriculum (Rose, 2009).

Art, it can be argued, heals and empowers. Art can be used to nurture self-awareness and expression. There is a visceral need to address the social/emotional needs in urban schools riddled with a persistent normalization of poverty. Art interventions can provide a foundation for growth and advocacy within a community. The opportunity to talk about difficult issues and problems and express through imagery is both preventive and interventive, especially in times of potential or escalating violence. Art builds bridges and has the ability to acknowledge all members and honor all parts of the psyche. Funders and policy makers have long understood the need for character education, mental health services, and arts education and exposure, but the idea of a liberation-based art therapy has always been seen as something less fundable, a luxury that cannot be afforded.

Yet art can be used as a way that meets many stated, societal goals. Art can be used in a community to uncover, interpret and create their own identity (Rappaport, 1999). Art plays an essential role in the creation and evolution of the spirit and soul. It provides an alternate mode of communication to help us understand and communicate feelings that may be too difficult to express in words. Human beings have used art as a mode of expression since the very beginning (Gamin, 2013). The arts, and the culture and education it affords, can
foster empowerment; encouraging identity development and personal and social change (Rappaport, 1999). Teens who show an absence of hope for the future reflect their despair at not being able to make an impact on their lives and environments (Rose, 2009). Pent up emotions and aggressive behaviors are released in destructive and explosive ways, sometimes as a way for powerless and alienated youth to regain power and connection to others. Black youth may internalize negative feelings fed to them by mainstream society and reinforced by the educational system of being unlovable, insignificant, and inferior. Additionally, experiences of helplessness further mobilize rage and hatred (Akhtar, Kramer & Parens, 1995). The child that displays violence and aggression is often shamed and further alienated, creating a vicious cycle. This cycle can be caught earlier and reparations made through adult offers of support and empathy, found in community arts, helping to inculcate a sense of being valued and allowing space for youth to share feelings and gain an understanding of what is happening within their own minds. Art, storytelling and group dialogue provides a vehicle for expressing the shadow or repressed emotions in productive ways allowing the individual to grow closer to self-actualization. Art enables individuals to use images to explore parts of self that was lying beneath one’s awareness (Jung, 1968). Both Freud and Jung believed that neurosis occurs when unacceptable material is repressed and becomes unconscious. This repressed material eventually expresses itself through instinctual behavior.

Shamans have used art for healing and as a way to express inner meanings and conflicts. Healing forms of art, religion, and philosophy were
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intricately connected in pre-slavery Africa. The philosophy, morals, traditions, and ethics of the tribe were expressed through religion, oral traditions and proverbs; in addition to religious or spiritual artifacts such as sculptures, paintings and pottery. Religion was “not for the betterment of the individual, but rather something for the community of which the individual was an integral part” (King, Dixon & Nobles, 1987). Religion and healing was not an individual phenomenon but a communal one. In traditional Africa, to be human was to belong to the whole community. It was believed that the community created the individual, in contrast to Western tradition, in which the emphasis is placed on the individual and one’s role in aiding the community. It was understood by many African and Indigenous people that, through the community, one becomes aware of self (King, Dixon & Nobles, 1987). Joseph Campbell (Campbell, Moyers & Flowers, 2012) claimed the emphasis on the individual at the expense of the group was a major problem in contemporary Western culture. People have become less connected to their own ritual community, losing faith and hope and looking toward media to fill that lost sense of community; as can be seen with America’s obsession with archetypal movies and shows such as Star Wars, Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, etc. People have a basic need to “belong” and deep psychological urges to overcome this feeling of separateness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Community-based art therapy allows participants to join a meaningful ritual-oriented communal activity, fulfilling that psychological need to be part of community.
In 1943, Maslow (Maslow, 1943) developed the hierarchy of needs framework, proposing a pyramid of growth toward self-actualization. The fundamental step, beyond the meeting of basic needs, is acceptance or belonging within the community. This is not unlike the teachings of African culture on identity and community.

This communal spirit was continued during the enslavement of Africans in America. The importance of the tribe was expressed through oral traditions passed from generation to generation, often centered on some type of art piece, such as a quilt or fetish doll. The communal art experience was an important part of life for Africans in Africa and enslaved Africans in America. The communal experience was healing in that it connected people with their ancestors and individuals to symbols and archetypes present in our collective unconscious (Picton & Mack, 1989). Humans are natural storytellers and myth-making creatures. Myths are like metaphors that guide and comfort people, giving a sense of connection and belonging (Moon, 2007). They make sense of things in a strange, dangerous, and uncontrollable world. Stories, myths and fairy tales are the precursors to art, religion and language, and serve mankind by psychological structuring and aiding in the development of the individual.

**Poverty, Segregation and Chicago Housing Authority**

In modern day Chicago the current violence cannot be understood without the concept of space, both horizontal and vertical boundaries, streets, neighborhoods, schools, segregation, and housing. The hypothesis of this
researcher is that Public Housing and its history is particularly relevant to modern day violence and the educational struggles forced upon so many black and brown Chicagoans today.

Public housing was an experiment in social welfare and urban planning, implemented in the 1930's and dismantled in the 1990's. Originally, short-term housing for working poor, its regulations pushed out most working families during the 1970's and 80's. The CHA is the 3rd largest public housing agency in the country (Hunt, 2009). Most of its housing, until recently, has consisted of enormous, prison-like high rises. Once considered modern and contemporary, originally known as a "tower in a park", the design was quickly to be seen as a way to cram as many people as possible into one block. By the 1980's, the Chicago Housing Authority had become the city's largest slumlord and became well known for the violence it engendered within its concrete towers. At this time the public housing population is almost all African American and large majorities are single parent, female headed households, many with several small children and teenagers. The CHA was started with the utopic intention to provide decent housing to low income families, but the unfortunate reality, realized decades later, was a complete urban policy failure. Up until the 1960's, the CHA was well run and under good management. Elizabeth Wood and Robert Taylor were New Deal social reformers who strived to replace slum housing for poor whites and blacks with better apartments in integrated neighborhoods. Wood was fired due to her advocacy and liberalism and Chicago's city council chose to locate public housing exclusively in poor, black communities (Hirsch, 1998). Many factors led
to the model’s epic demise: a) modern design of buildings complicated living; b) high rises were aesthetically cold and lacked spaces the tenants could control and supervise, leaving them open to crime; and c) the high rises created a lack of community, which also nurtured criminal activity.

Therefore, according to Hirsch (1998), one of the primary problems was attributable to design. The sterile, overcrowded environments demoralized and alienated tenants, leading to the psychological frustration that is well known to contribute to crime. While the “high rise” concept may have benefited some singles and couples, they were not ideal for families with children. Their inevitable collapse was also due to conservative opposition to placing public housing in middle class, particularly white, neighborhoods. Other obvious policy mistakes included income limits, cheap construction, poor locations and underfunded management. Forced racial segregation was also key. The physical and psychological segregation was implemented through systems of oppression in the guise of federal housing laws. The original plan was to build integrated housing on vacant land in white neighborhoods in the North. Crushed by citizen pressure, the aldermen insisted on building the prison-like walls in pre-existing ghettos, further reinforcing a segregated Southside ghetto. While the original plans intended to include veterans and working class families, the location and the product could not sustain a working class population to inhabit the dwellings.

Deliberate laws were enacted that set the stage for Chicago being the most segregated city in the country. It is hard to believe the well-intentioned roots of the plan—that the public housing program grew from a very visceral need to
help the poor and alleviate the horrible conditions of the slums, which were 
exacerbated by The Great Depression. The Great Depression started in 1929 
and continued into the late 1930's. The 1937 Housing Act created the American 
public housing program. Elizabeth Wood (b. 1899-d. 1993) was the first 
Executive Director of The Chicago Housing Authority (1937 until 1954). She was 
born to missionary parents, educated at the University of Michigan, and began 
her career as a housing advocate and planner after a brief stint teaching English 
at Vassar College. Wood wanted to use public housing to break racial barriers 
and force integration. She weathered many race riots as a result of her push 
toward integration. White residents and alderman violently opposed Blacks 
integrating their families into many of the neighborhoods, despite many of the 
family’s men being Veteran’s of the War. The riots began first in the Southwest in 
1946, continued in 1947, and then at Park Manor in 1949 (Hunt, 2009). An 
advocate of low-rise projects scattered throughout the city, Wood worked closely 
with the Parks Department to assure tenants adequate parks and recreation 
space. She advocated for the construction of community and cultural facilities 
within the housing sites. She then faced very public battles with city council 
members who wished to limit new public housing construction to black 
neighborhoods. It was the violent incidents at Trumball Park that stamped 
Wood’s demise and ended CHA liberalism.

In the 1940’s, even under Wood and Taylor’s oversight, historic stone and 
brick houses of the once Great Metropolis were demolished and replaced with 
high rises, blocking the growth of working class black communities. The
developers used cheap materials and labor and allegedly stole huge sums of cash for themselves. Many residents, making too much money to move into public housing, were relocated. The housing was also cut off from surrounding neighborhoods by expressways and subway lines, like reservations for poor blacks (Massey & Denton, 1993), disrupting family life, and thus education, and setting the stage for increases in violence.

In 1940-45 public housing was created to house war workers and families. In 1943, Robert Taylor was chairman of CHA. At the time African Americans, regulated by redlining real estate laws, and forced to live further south, lived within the Black Belt of Chicago, making African American communities increasingly overcrowded. Given the need for new housing, CHA expanded the Black Belt by opening up new areas to black residents. Woods and Taylor proposed 6 locations, most of which were refused due to threats of violence, push back from the alderman's office, and other legal mechanisms; although the birth of the Dearborn Homes, the origin of the current dissertation project, was brought about from the controversy.

Along the way there were attempts toward integration. In 1937 two projects were opened with White tenants. Nine black families applied but were not given residency because the alderman was concerned that no other black families lived in the ward (Trumball Park Homes located on Southside of Chicago). In places where blacks resided, CHA had a difficult time attracting and retaining white families despite separate entrances and exits.
In 1943, when Cabrini Greens had an occupancy of 80% white residents, racial tension surged to race riots as White mobs tried to forcibly remove African American families--most who were Black Veterans fresh home from the war. At Airport Homes, a white mob stole keys from the CHA office and White squatters moved into the newly finished apartments refusing to leave. CHA let some squatters stay and evicted the rest and in one case moved in a new black vet family, Theodore Turner, his wife and two kids. The resultant mob, originally led by white mothers, was so bad Turner left with a police escort. Later, in 1946-47, CHA also attempted to place a handful of African American war veterans into two projects located in white middle class neighborhoods, leading to a violent outburst, threats of white flight, and other forms of massive resistance in the North.

Despite many tensions in a sea of discrimination, CHA, under Wood and Taylor's tutelage, was a beacon of hope. Unfortunately, the more seriously Black needs were taken, the more alienated the white population became (Hunt, 2009). In the mid-1950s, Woods and Taylor were forced out and replaced with politically backed leaders, all lacking the original vision.

After Wood's firing, public housing sites were even less carefully considered, and usually built in preexisting ghettos—reinforcing segregation. The housing was isolated, lacking either social structure or leadership, and thus more vulnerable to crime (Halpern, 1995). CHA, afraid of race riots, while refusing to push racial boundaries, became increasingly less interested in rehabilitating neighborhoods. Ironically, despite Taylor's opposition to large developments in
poor neighborhoods, CHA named its biggest and most isolated high rise after him (Hirsch, 1998).

In 1946, Michael Reese and Illinois Institute of Technology called for the removal of the slums in efforts of urban renewal in the Bronzeville black belt area. Lake Meadows, Prairie Shores, and South Commons provide a middle class option, helping to eliminate the shortage of housing for middle income African Americans. These complexes used fences and other devices such as wide streets to mark off its territory. The middle income residents and institutions, rather than turning outward to promote community, turned inward, in a defensive mode.

In 1950, the Dearborn Homes project, to avoid threatening the white Bridgeport residents, was built on a densely settled slum near the edge of the black belt. Soon after, in 1952, the City Council refused the placing of any projects into white neighborhoods. The Dearborn Homes languished for 5 years due to shortage of funds and problems relocating residents. The project had 800 units, the first of five projects that would eventually line State Street for four miles, containing urban black populations, and ultimately reinforcing residential segregation.

Beginning in WWII, the 2nd great migration began to put additional pressure on existing black ghettos and questioned the rationale for the city's racial segregation. The federal court ordered CHA to build small scale, scattered site housing in white areas of the city. Due to protests, the order was halted and
CHA refused to build any housing, instead shifting to the system of Section 8 vouchers.

Leadership continued to be poor and characterized by corrupt practices in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Swibel, a crony of Mayor Richard Daley and known slumlord, served 19 years as chairman of the CHA. Conditions deteriorated, and increased police pressure, surveillance, and invasions of privacy became a consistent source of tension between the city and Federal government, and violent crime increased exponentially.

In 1988 Vincent Lane became the CHA chief and initiated aggressive police sweeps of gang infested building and commitment to tenant management. But in 1995, Lane and other members of the board resigned amid allegation of waste and fraud, leading Federal officials take over day-to-day operations. In 1994, a federal judge says CHA cannot do warrantless searches. Following the ruling, a gang war with 300 shooting incidents in 5 days occurred. CHA and President Clinton asked the judge to reconsider sweeps. Instead of sweeps, cops walked the hallways and stairwells and increased their presence. In 1995, HUD takes over CHA and, according to the Chicago Tribune, September 11, 1996, CHA sets sights on its State Street High Rises in hopes to transform the State Street corridor by demolishing Taylor Homes, Dearborn Homes and Stateway Gardens. In 1998, CHA started assessing properties, deciding which were viable and which should be demolished.
Social Emotional Implication of Poverty and High Rises

After years of neglect and community decay, a quantitative survey, given to residents in 1986, showed that 72% believed there was a "big problem" with burglary, shootings, violence, graffiti, rape, sexual assault inside and outside of the buildings. Violence leads to post traumatic stress disorders, depression, lack of motivation and hopelessness in children and adults. All children living within these environments are at risk for psychological trauma and intellectual deficits that result from chronic fear--not unlike children living in guerilla war zones like Cambodia or Mozambique (Garbarino, Kastelny, & Dubron 1991). The organization Rainwater states that the projects are disastrous environments for families resulting in high levels of anxiety and helplessness, drug use and sales and teen pregnancy. It also encourages a pervasive culture of distrust and fear.

These isolated pockets of poverty within segregated areas create artificial communities that lack social structure and economic foundations. As a result, gangs fill the void creating controlled connections, protection, and solidarity, unity with a double dose of fear, anger, and violence. A collection of extremely poor and troubled families in neglected, high crime public housing developments left them vulnerable to social issues such as unemployment, welfare dependence, drug trafficking, gangs, violent crime and disengaged youth. The death of Dantrell Davis, a 7-year old boy walking to school with his mother, occurred when he was shot down by a sniper. The murder forced the nation to respond to the violence. In 1992, Dantrell was one of 61 children shot in Chicago that year.
Much of the bloodshed was caused by the growth of gangs. With most of the leaders dead or in prison, young people took over. Gangs transformed communities into illegal drug markets and recruited young children to join. Family relationships already strained increased teens ties to gangs. Armed with high powered handguns, teens created a warzone within the towers (Kirby, 2015). Violent patterns are found most often among alienated youth in negative climates where society views them as the enemy (Rose, 2009). Historically, America has always painted a picture of fear, contempt and hate for the black population that has caused feelings of alienation further instigated by poor living conditions, segregation, lack of opportunities and chaotic living and educational environments. Violence and revenge, surfaces when marginalized groups or individuals can no longer tolerate being unheard and unrecognized by mainstream society (Mindell, 1995). In this way, the violence can be seen as a call for help, a means of getting attention for how they have suffered at the hands of others, a way for the powerless to gain power.

**Public Housing: Community Apathy and Blaming the Victim**

In 1999, the Chicago Housing Authority was handed back to the city. Mayor Daley privatized management and began demolishing the high rise projects. His plan called for replacing the concrete ghettos with mixed-income housing. Housing with building structures that ironically resembles the 19th century buildings and greystones that were removed 50 years ago to make way for the high rises (Issacs, 2009). Affordable housing supply is constrained and political interests in addressing affordable housing problems, for our poorest
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citizens, has not been seen as a necessity. Affordable housing was a hot topic in the 1960's and 1970's and the federal government offered assistance in many forms--low-interest loans, loan guarantees, construction grants and rent subsidies. Low income housing projects were developed by the states and counties and by non-profit, for-profit and for-profit sponsors (Lewis, 1998). Funds and construction slowed in the mid 1970's due to the Mideast oil embargo, which resulted in energy shortages, inflation, unemployment, and construction financing. As the economy improved, projects and construction resumed; but it was short lived. During the final years of the Carter administration, the economic disparities helped to usher in Ronald Reagan and his conservative agenda. Reagan's new ideology emphasized smaller government by removing the heavy hand of federal government out of the housing business (Lewis, 1998). As a result, national policy and legislation drastically cut back on federal housing programs and subsidies in the 1980's. The construction of new buildings was halted, and money for rehabilitation of existing buildings and upkeep disappeared. Americans seemed opposed to investing public funds in sheltering the poor. This mindset was fed by Reagan's story of the criminality of Linda Taylor, named the "Welfare Queen" by the Chicago Tribune.

Linda Taylor was a flashy, fur wearing, Cadillac driving con woman with over 80 aliases, a trail of ex-husbands who allegedly schemed the government and the American people out of $150,000 dollars of welfare (Levin, 2013). Ms. Taylor was charged with stealing $8,000 dollars in welfare aid and served 5 years in jail. And although, her story was true--it was by no means typical. She
was a singular monster who was believed to have been a murderer and baby
kidnapper. Her story enraged working class Americans, especially White
Americans. The image of the welfare queen, a black woman with 5 unkempt kids
scheming the system for the hard earned money of working class Americans
became a dominant narrative in America. Reagan never mentioned that Linda
Taylor was a White woman, seemingly able to shape shift into any age or race.
She was an extreme case that was falsely used to vilify poor Black people on
welfare but more importantly the Black Woman. It is difficult to say how much this
White House propaganda impacted Americans who only rarely showed anything
but apathy for the poor.

The lack of affordable housing production is rarely discussed and is not a
pressing issue for the White House or Congress. Fear and mistrust motivate
community residents to oppose affordable housing in their neighborhoods. The
"not-in-my-backyard-syndrome" secretly influences America's political agenda
(Lewis, 1998). As it did in Chicago, the aldermen fearful of losing their jobs,
resisted integration and insisted that blacks stay within their historical ghettos.
More than 90% of postwar public housing went into densely populated
neighborhoods that were already solidly black.

Americans remain apathetic toward the poor black populations in public
assistance housing; but as housing projects are being knocked down, CHA
residents are demanding Chicago keep its promise of providing affordable
housing where the projects once stood (Cholke, 2015). One such site is at
Cermak and State where the Harold Ickes structure provided residential homes
to over thousands of residents. In 2002, the National Teachers Academy was erected. In 2010, the Ickes was demolished. On the land, a track and football field was built to service students at DePaul and Jones College Prep. The housing that was promised to those who were displaced has not been realized. Controversy continues around this neighborhood, as the Chicago School Board plans to close the high performing black elementary school now known as National Teachers Academy and turn it into a high school for the rapidly growing, gentrifying and expanding South Loop and Chinatown community.

One of the deep rooted and damaging myths about poverty is that the poor are to blame for their plight. In the 1960's, a popular narrative was that the single mother family was solely a black phenomenon. Movies, like Claudine, tell the story of a single black woman abandoned by the father of her six children on welfare, looking for a good black man. The Moynihan Report published: The Negro Family: A Case for National Action in the mid 1960's put the blame solely on the shoulders of the black woman (Stallard, Enrinreich, & Sklar, 1983). Moynihan argues "a black matriarchy" theory is the true downfall of the black family and the reason for black poverty. This worldview perpetuated the myth that Black women have emasculated Black men since slavery and have not allowed the Black man to take his rightful place as head of the household.

Daniel Moynihan served as a New York Senator and President Nixon's Chief domestic policy officer in 1969. It was popular at the time to place blame on the victim (Valbrun, 2010). For instance in his book Wealth and Poverty, George Gilder asserts that if black women were more subservient inside and outside of
the family, black poverty would disappear (Stallard, Enrinreich, Sklar, 1983).
Conservatives today continue to espouse that behaviors and personal responsibilities are the main causes of Black poverty. They also attribute Black poverty to the effects of government funded anti-poverty programs (Valbrun, 2010). Blaming the victim justifies inequality by finding defects in the victims of inequality (Ryan, 1970). There is often an emphasis on “the other” and a focus on programs aimed at correcting the deficiencies seeking to change the victim instead of changing the policies and systems of oppression that are creating the social context and the problems and behaviors arising from the degrading social conditions such as poverty, segregation and inequitable educational systems. These narratives, embedded in popular culture, stigmatize the black family, creating alienation, apathy and even antipathy toward the poor and black families living within these oppressive and marginalized communities.

Segregated neighborhoods are more likely to be polluted, have less businesses, are less likely to have access to top notch hospitals, parks, art centers, jobs, and public services. The 1968 Fair Housing Act sought to end the long standing segregation of America’s neighborhoods. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was met with opposition from the white population, realtors, alderman, and policy makers. This opposition is made visible when public spats and disagreements surface at town hall meetings, when schools segregated by color and economics consider merging to alleviate school crowding.
Public Schools, Race and Resources

Segregation in education and housing cannot be viewed in isolation; one impacts the other resulting in inequities for school aged children. Each of these forms of segregation may also be the key to understanding the current day problems of violence in the city of Chicago. Many White families continue to leave the city for the suburbs with their school age children to attend suburban schools with better resources and schools.

Nearly 60 years after Brown v. Board of Education was decided, segregation of schools is still an issue. Legal segregation was ended in 1954 and despite the gains in the 70s and 80s, attributable to forced integration, further efforts have been abandoned. Although the country is becoming more diverse, as a whole, there are unfolding patterns producing increasingly racially segregated pockets across America (Wihby, 2014). Neighborhoods are often segregated along socio-economic lines. Research shows that school integration was at its peak in the mid 1980's and 90's but patterns start to suggest re-segregation in the early 21st century (Hannah-Jones, 2015).

According to the U.S. Census, about 51% of Chicago’s white children go to Chicago Public Schools. The other percentage attends religious or private schools. Eighty percent of African American children attend schools in the CPS system (Moore, 2014). Chicago neighborhoods can be seen to follow in one of two categories. The neighborhood is either 90% African American or less than 10% African American, and the neighborhood schools reflect this demographic. For instance, the demographics in the neighborhood of Rosewood is over 90%
African American and in Mt. Greenwood, 90% Caucasian, is reflected in the school.

Racial and economic segregation is a big problem for schools. The majority of schools in poor, Black neighborhoods with high unemployment, poverty and a lack of resources are failing. Natalie Moore, of WBEZ, reports that there are just not that many White children in Chicago. Despite this, Whites are disproportionately attending Magnet, Gifted and Selective Enrollment Schools. White students are twice as likely to attend classical, gifted elementary schools and selective enrollment high schools. Starting at age 5, parents drag their children to site to be given a standardized cognitive test that measures various skills like problem solving, mental control and logical thinking by psychology graduate students at Illinois Institute of Technology. Affluent White and Asian children are more likely to be determined "gifted" than any other minority and have more access to even getting tested (Sanchez, 2016). And in the eight selective enrollment high schools, nearly 25% of the population is white. The overall racial composition is: White-36,415, African American-163,595, Hispanic-180,274 (Moore, 2017). Hannah-Jones states that students that attend integrated school with various socio-economic levels have higher test scores and more students attend college. Educational reform is obsessed with Black and Latino test scores and closing the achievement gap with no concern if this is occurring in mostly racially and socioeconomically segregated schools.

In 2012, the Chicago Teachers Union reported that 54% of Black students were in schools that were intensely segregated by race and class. These
students had less access to substitutes, experienced teachers, art and music, and had a disproportionately higher chance of attending a school slated for closure. Currently, only two predominantly black high schools have full time librarians. Desegregation efforts ultimately fall in the laps of Black families. The bussing option is equally problematic. The black children who must wake up early to go to white schools have long bus rides, leaving their community and having a sense of not quite belonging within the school.

School attendance boundaries, if they were to be redrawn, hold the potential to create stronger and more integrated schools and neighborhoods around the city. Research shows that school integration provides the best opportunity for all students, potentially breaking down racial barriers and the fear of the "other" (Moore, 2017).

In attempting to understand the connection between segregation in housing and education on violence, it is impossible to avoid paying attention to racial and economic justice, and here, critical race theory is particularly relevant (Smith & Stovall, 2008). Critical race theory is an academic discipline focused upon the intersection of society and culture, race, law and power. Resources within schools in segregated, low income areas struggle to provide equal access to arts, librarians, money, books and educational resources within schools. The inequities in housing, education, school closings and lack of employment directly leads to community violence, chaos and instability. Segregation in housing leads to segregation in education and vacant properties perpetuate neighborhood disinvestment. Lack of financial opportunities and poverty directly lead to
violence which disproportionately affects black and brown people in the Southside and west-side of Chicago.

Critical Race theory (CRT) recognizes that racism is ingrained in our society including our education ideology. Ideas become ideology or coherent repeated patterns (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

"Once my friends in the city started having babies, one by one they started leaving to go the suburbs. It was understood that this is what they needed to do...so that they could secure a good school for their child. The public school was not an option. It was assumed that all Chicago public schools are awful with the exception of the selective enrollment". Caller on WBEZ commenting on Curious Minds.

The idea that urban schools are inherently bad has turned into a normative given, and the pattern of moving from the city to the suburbs, white flight, has become a repeating pattern within the city of Chicago. CRT examines power structures based on White Supremacy and White Privilege which perpetuate the marginalization of people of color. CRT has major themes and characteristics.

- Reject the idea of colorblindness
- Storytelling/counter storytelling: renaming, retelling one's reality.
- Revising interpretations of civil rights law and progress.
- Examination of race, ethnicity and class
- White Privilege-the benefits and advantages that come with being of the dominant race. Whiteness as property.
• Micro aggressions- Small acts of racism that are consciously or unconsciously acted out toward people of color that is jarring and dispiriting.

• Empathic fallacy- the belief that someone can change a narrative by offering an alternative one.

In 2012, Rahm Emanuel shut down 50 public schools in predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods. Eighty-six schools were closed within the previous decade with reasons ranging from failing schools (based on standardized test scores) to underutilization of the building. Of the 49 schools that were closed, 90% had majority African American demographics and over 71% had a majority African American teachers. This was the largest school closing in history affecting over 12,000 students. Looking at this phenomenon through the lens of critical Race Theory, one would consider race (closings schools within black and brown communities, firing of black teachers) and white privilege (students and teachers within white communities did not have to worry about schools). A recent compelling story is the closure of a high performing elementary school on the South side of Chicago to create space for a high school for the prestigious South Loop and Chinatown communities. This elementary school has top notch facilities and wrap around community services that serves 91.4 low income children (mostly black and brown). This area was once the home of Harold Ickes Public Housing project which was demolished between 2009 and 2010 displacing over 1,000 CHA homes (Koziarz, 2017). Public housing residents were promised mixed income housing and a promise that they
would be able to come back to the area, but this has yet to happen. According to the 2010 census, South Loop is the fastest gentrifying neighborhood in the United States. The White population increased from 37.7 to 75.4 percent white. Following this trend, Douglas and Bronzeville and areas along the lakefront will continue to gentrify, breaking down the historic Black Belt of Chicago and uprooting black and brown residents that are occupying those areas.

In the last 12 years, CPS has shut down 15 schools in the Bronzeville area and demolished all of the public housing towers within the area. This has caused students to shift from school to school, sometimes moving schools once a year, ultimately destabilizing education and breaking up communities. Drake Elementary took over Williams Multiplex and Williams Elementary in 2012. Hale Williams elementary school was closed in 2001 for low performance. It became two schools, an elementary and middle school, CPS calls this "a school within a school." In 2008, Urban College Prep moved into the building. In 2012, the school was closed and Drake Elementary took over the building. The two schools and staff were consolidated and many teachers, janitors and administrators were dismissed. The community lost the historical name of their school (Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, an African American and the first doctor to perform open heart surgery) to John B. Drake (the multi-millionaire White hotelier). This metaphor of erasing the name of a prominent black historical figure and replacing it with the name of a white millionaire has not been lost on the families of the school and within the community. The closing of the schools was a deliberate attack on black and brown communities. Schools were consolidated because of under-utilization
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or small school and classroom sizes. Students were forced to attend larger schools in unfamiliar neighborhoods. Greater school size inhibits student learning due to greater difficulty in meaningful communication and personal contact (Haller, 1992). The increased school size made it difficult for students, teachers and parents to identify with school as a community-centered institution, instead resulting in feelings of disengagement and resistance. This decision has devastated families and communities, as the empty schools once full of life, sit empty--rotting as the grass and weeds take back the landscape.

The Current Study: Art as Activism/Art as Social Action

In contrast to decay, culture, storytelling and art animate our communities; they bring people together to share experiences, enhance our imaginations, solve conflict, release aggression and anger and foster a rich and varied quality of life. Community-cultural development is a growing field but is often overlooked and underfunded within public schools, particularly in marginalized communities. Effective community and cultural development requires sustained engagement, discussion, and ongoing dialog between artists and community leaders. Art is the interpretations of our experiences and is a way to communicate narratives, the shared stories of a community.

Art can be both product and process and may include the audience as participants. Communities can uncover and create their own stories, expressed through the creative arts--owned by the people themselves. The arts foster empowerment and encourage self-determination. Community art projects are also about reclaiming spaces and building sacred spaces in a trusting circle of
friends. It fosters a sense of belonging amongst participants offering a safe place to land and be. Poverty is a collective trauma and naming our world-through art and stories- empowers us, developing hope and dignity (Watkins, 2015). Witnessing and testimony enables those who have suffered violence and alienation to exercise agency and to make their experiences public, to be acknowledged and witnessed. This process, embodied in liberatory community-based art restores and strengthens self-respect and a sense of agency.

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of communal art making or liberatory art and socially engaged art created by a collective of students in a community that is being erased culturally and literally by institutions and systems—housing, police, education—of oppression. Schools and communities must better employ artistic and social justice practices as an alternative to the historically produced situation of gun violence. Community-based art practices are essential to developing activism and creative resistance.

**Memorials and Ritual in Grief and Trauma**

Rituals and memorials are ancient ways we cope with tragedy. Ritual is an act while memorial is a space, both invested in meaning. This section will discuss the importance and the role of both ritual and memorialization during times of grief, tragedy and crisis.

One of the first written accounts in history or rituals is The Egyptian Book of the Dead which describes rituals that should accompany death. It infuses the common with meaning. Examples of this are rituals using water to cleanse the
Memorial is a space (public or private) set aside to commemorate a tragic event. It can also be portable, like a memory box or quilt, such as the AIDS Quilt which remembered and honored people who have died from AIDS. Memorial is space set aside to remember, discuss and process. Public memorials and rituals provides social validation and supports public recognition of the collective loss. It taps into our archetypes as a collective people--part of the human family.

**Craft Culture as Liberatory Art Therapy/ Art Action**

There are therapeutic benefits to “doing”. Research has studied the therapeutic benefits of fiber arts such as quilters making quilts to cope with difficult times. Black enslaved women would spend hours quilting after working
in the fields and after Reconstruction, quilting was more than a practical need but was a form of creative expression as can be found in Gees Bend quilts and Harriet Powers’s story quilts. Quilting keeps the mind busy, acting as a form of meditation. At the end of the task there is a feeling of accomplishment although there may still be feelings of turmoil and distress. This act of “doing” is also seen in knitting, gardening, cooking and other craft arts. The individual uses the activity as a means to achieve a desired state of mind (Dickie, 2010). When coupled with activist acts, craft culture rethinks traditional activism. It becomes an indirect activism promoting real social change indirectly through cultural action (Chansky, 2010).

**Methods**

The method for this study came from a visceral need to address the gun violence that was impacting the culture and climate of the school and the surrounding community and housing projects. The researcher responded to the tragic shooting of a recent graduate of the elementary school. Students and teacher worked collectively within an open art studio space in which participants created wrapped dolls for those mortally wounded by gun violence within Chicago. Students worked communally to wrap, tie and bind fabric in the shape of a doll. Participants were asked to write a brief narrative about their dolls. An open art therapy studio was held in an open space for youth to create art communally. The youth showed other youth how to make the dolls and then began to share this method with others.
The practice and ritual involved in the making of the doll, the repetitious act of wrapping created safety and security during a chaotic time. From the actions and words of the participants, a clear relationship seemed evident between wrapping and doll making, a feeling of easement and positive psychological responses during this process of making, storytelling, processing and reflection.

This study started with a small collective of students residing in Dearborn Homes Public Housing in Bronzeville. Bronzeville has a population of roughly 120,000. The sample included an African American urban group housed within the Dearborn Homes public housing projects located on the 27th-30th blocks of State Street. This housing project was recently remodeled in 2012. While other housing projects were closed and demolished, the Dearborn Homes were spared. Children, adolescents and their families attending John B. Drake Elementary School, formerly Daniel H. Williams Elementary School, participated in this study. In 2013, Williams school was closed and restructured for the 4th time since 2010. The teachers were fired and the administrative staff members were replaced. Drake Elementary, located two blocks east, took over the Williams facility. This action has created a plethora of tension within the community, and many of the original attendees of Drake Elementary abandoned the new school. The school's population is made up of students in grade k-8 from the adjacent community, within the public housing projects known as the Dearborn Homes.
This study started with a focus on students in grades 3-8th, some identified with learning and behavior disorders, and yet transformed into an intergenerational project stretching throughout Chicago. The project grew to a communal art making that included creative spaces within 50 Chicago Public Schools, 5 universities, and 1 community art center. The participants had the opportunity to partake in communal art-making in which a doll was made for each person mortally shot in Chicago starting in 2015. Storytelling, testimonials and group dialogue were utilized to reflect on the art making process and the experience of gun violence and its impact. The communal art experience relied on the unity of the participants. The process of creating and sharing artwork was intended to recreate community and build trust. The project acted as a container for participants to share stories, seek relief and find connection with others by engaging in a collective social action effort that intended to create agency and build hope.

The intention was for the co-participants to in some ways imitate the tribal/communal expression and shared experience, making art side by side. This process created an extraordinary bond among co-participants with the hope of developing a trusting environment. Emphasis was placed on creative expression through the arts and story-telling limited to fiber arts. Components of the project included observation, evaluation, art therapy, and communal art production. Data was obtained from participant observation, review of dolls and narratives and written testimonies with select participants. The data was coded to identify themes.
Art availability for individuals within segregated, poor communities is often overlooked. Rarer is the therapeutic art practices within schools to address trauma, self-development, bereavement and other social/emotional difficulties. The Southside of Chicago, once a mecca for the arts, performance and music is now an arts desert; only 3 art spaces serve youth, teens and young adults. Neighborhood and community factors such as poverty, unemployment, violence and under-resourced schools impede the positive development of young people. Art is known to heal and maintain mental, physical and spiritual health and has been used in poverty stricken communities to strengthen community bonds, neighborhood beautification and to offer opportunities to engage youth (Dahlem, 1996).

The larger intent of this study was to explore community building and engagement, creative resistance and memorialization through art and social justice practices within alternative art spaces temporarily constructed within institutional public and private settings. The intent was also to examine the ways in which race is implicated in structuring everyday life and the politics of identity in low income communities. Three dominant themes emerged. Doll making as: 1) Communal, intentional activism; 2) therapy; and 3) resistance against gun violence through agency and empowerment.

The initial project was entitled The heART Project/ Dolls 4 Peace, a communal socially-engaged art project striving to combat poverty and inequality in a small isolated public housing community and to bring awareness to gun
violence within Chicago. The heART Project worked to rectify the effects of poverty and create a culture of calm in a marginalized community predisposed to violence or passivity. This project worked to reverse oppressive practices by creating a memorial of resistance, protest and action through the arts.

While art-based liberation therapy cannot alone change discrimination, segregation, and violence in Black communities in Chicago, it can provide coping mechanisms, agency, connections and community, and it can alleviate stress, offer education to promote understanding, and spark activism within the community. The act of making is connecting. It forms social connections on various levels. Within this project there were various points of connections, starting with getting art materials, distributing materials, asking questions, sharing stories, collecting dolls, and finally assembling and participating in the memorial. Through making and sharing participants increase engagement and connections with our social and physical environments. The project increased solidarity allowing participants to become active agents rather than passive subjects.

At the very beginning of the initiative, 18 African American students participated, all with identified disabilities such as ADHD, autism, learning disability, bipolar disorder and depression, etc. Students attended the neighborhood school nestled within the grounds of the CHA homes and were all students within the Special Education Resource Room. Teachers and administration at the school noted a culture of apathy, poor academic performance and attendance amongst the participants. At the time of this
research, a 14-year old student, a recent graduate of the school and resident within the housing complex was shot and killed on the West Side of Chicago. The shooting crippled the small student body. Students were grief stricken--unable to focus, function and concentrate.

The day after the shooting the researcher gathered students together and began wrapping and tying fabric into dolls. The circle became a healing space for students to talk about their fears and intentions around death and gun violence. Participants used the space to remember relatives and friends shot and killed in Chicago. They used the space to create a memorial for 447 victims slain by gun violence within the year of 2015-2016.

Field texts, such as stories, testimonials, conversations and dolls were used to assess and analyze the participants’ process and any benefits of the experience. Artwork was used to stimulate conversations about death, violence and grief. Narrative inquiry and doll making was used as a therapeutic tool to understand how the participants recognize and cope with violence within their communities and deal with grief within the educational setting. Story-telling and doll making was used as a tool to create action and change. The doll project was recreated throughout various Chicago communities bringing dialogue, awareness and hope around the issue of gun violence and the importance of community during times of grief and sudden loss.

Narratives can be viewed as a frame through which people make sense of their lives. A narrative perspective suggests that experience is both conscious
and unconscious re-storied stories retold and relived through the process of reflection. Narrative inquiry is the re-storying of the narrative structure, focusing on experience (Leavy, 2009). Stories were used to understand a participant’s viewpoint. The multi-method research included ethnography, exhibition as social action, and narrative inquiry. A narrative approach was applied, as participants wrote a story about their dolls. Narrative inquiry is increasingly used as a methodological approach in trauma studies focused on the process of trauma and recovery. Narratives were coded in the following categories, narratives/archetypes of: a. suffering; b. helplessness; c. hope; and d. resistance.

Participants were asked to make a doll using the materials and were asked to write a story about their doll. These stories act as narratives important to the individual, but together the themes provide a collective narrative, about the particular community, around death and gun violence. Community narratives are derived from the interviewing process, analysis of the dolls and stories and the interpretation process (Olson, Cooper, Viola, & Clark, 2016). Psychologically, testimony is important-speaking and writing about the trauma initiates the healing and recovery process (Goggin, ).

The artwork produced during the project is an important and essential part of this study. The researcher suggests that exhibition and memorialization can operate as an agent of social change. The AIDS Quilt (a quilt to memorialize people who have died from AIDS) and Chinese artist: Ai Wei Wei attempt to bring awareness to Syrian refugee’s death by drowning by covering a Berlin landmark with 14,000 life jackets. These are just two examples of artists/ artist collectives
developing unusual methods for engaging individuals, audiences and communities in the production of art in which collaboration, cooperation and social participation is encouraged. Art practices that include socially participatory events and performative actions and happenings challenge the normative institutional boundaries of gallery and museum and how communities engage or disengage in them (Decter, Draxler & all 2014). Cleveland (2002) states that community arts can nurture many purposes: to educate and inform us about ourselves and the world, to inspire and mobilize, to nurture and heal, to build and improve community capacity. “The process of engaging in community arts is in itself a research process, a collaborative process of producing knowledge” (Knowles & Cole, 2008).

Beyond the initial origin of the project, the initiative was expanded and replicated through different schools and teachers. Again, narratives were recorded and shared using paper and pencil, audio and/or social media. Teachers wanting to participate in the Doll project were given a lesson plan/protocol with a box of art supplies. Teachers or student leaders led the group and stimulated conversations about gun violence, death, healing and community.

This study was classified as a participatory research project starting with a group of African American students within a public school setting and spreading throughout Chicago. Professionals, students, and community members participated in the Doll Project to bring awareness to gun violence through doll making and memorialization and to build community supports during sudden
tragedy. Emphasis was placed on the artistic process as a means of emotional expression and as a springboard for conversation and the formation of narratives and the exploration of emerging archetypes.

During the process the focus was on the release of toxic emotions that are considered stressful to the physical, affective and cognitive domain. Stories written about the dolls, personal testimonials and reflections of the subjects and researcher were also used to evaluate individual engagement upon the completion of the project.

The doll making method of wrapping and binding fabric to make a rag doll was administered in this study led by an art therapist, art therapy interns, art educators, and student leaders. The focus of the study centered on the natural healing aspects of the art materials, identification, expression and transformation of emotions through art production, and the communal aspect of making art in a group. The researcher assumed the role of artist, therapist, teacher, mentor and confident.

The following text explains the procedures of sessions that took place. The researcher created the protocol for teachers and students interested in conducting the workshop in their schools. The researcher facilitated 8 workshops within Chicago, including an introductory doll making workshop for Chicago Public School Art Education teachers and social workers. This section also includes a list of materials required for the project, along with detailed explanations and/or rationale for each session.
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*Materials*

This section includes a list of the art materials obtained before the start of the project. It was important to include a variety of fabric and found objects so that the participants would be able to choose exactly what medium represented the texture of mood of the emotion or narrative they were feeling and composing. The following materials were used: acrylic paints and brushes, several fine point black drawing markers, scissors, glue, a collection of found objects, such as buttons, shells, stones, ribbons, string, costume jewelry, a collection of assorted fabric swatches of different textures, such as lace, velvet, burlap, satin, several needles of various sizes, yarn and crochet hooks.

*The Sessions /Doll Workshop*

Art activities were developed by the researcher. The researcher implemented and designed a protocol/lesson plan that reflected a communal art experience, narrative therapy and narrative inquiry. Fiber arts in the form of doll making were used to initiate narratives around gun violence, social justice and creative resistance. The dolls were collected after each session/workshop and mailed or dropped off at the exhibit space. The dolls were used to construct a memorial/ art installation at the Hyde Park Art Center. Participants were invited to the event to help memorialize victims, celebrate life through shared food, song and meditative walking and affirmation reading and to make an intentional pact to create spaces of peace for the summer.
Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the benefits of a liberatory art therapy/socially engaged project and exhibit with a focus on trauma and psychological alienation brought about by gun violence—a symptom of poverty, segregation and faulty educational reform practices. The best means of knowing and understanding a community is to record and listen to their own personal voices. The dolls, eventually 1,405, were created by participants, and each was asked to tell a story about their doll. Many participants chose instead to write what they were thinking, gave a testimonial, reflection and a solution. These writings were evaluated and separated into two types of narratives: stories about the dolls and testimonials. This data was transferred into codable form. The stories were coded and sorted into archetypes. The testimonials were coded into themes. An explanatory schema for the findings was generated.

Fifty stories created by 5th grade elementary students, college students and teachers in Chicago were coded into Jungian archetypes. An archetype is a universal symbol; character, theme, symbol or setting. Carl Jung stated that archetypes are experiences shared by a race, culture or group of people that become part of our “collective unconscious”. The hero archetype appears in religions, myths and fairy tales across the world. Personal myths can govern the life course of individuals—in most cases unconsciously. Unconscious images/energies are given form through art, literature and religion.

Testimonials were coded based on themes that consistently surfaced. The following section will provide analysis of these stories and testimonials.
of the 50 stories, the two Jungian archetypes that appeared the most were the Hero and Caregiver. These two archetypes and the cultural implications will be examined and explored in the next section.

**Hero.** The hero archetype is the warrior that tries to overcome bad (good versus evil). The core desire of the hero is to prove one's worth through courageous acts. The hero fears appearing weak and vulnerable and tries to be as strong and competent as possible (Jung, 1964). The hero may also be arrogant and always searching for the next battle to fight. Out of 43 stories, 11 were categorized as the hero archetype. Many of the heroes also had magical powers or unusual strength, showing the influence of modern media on the hero archetype. People need the hero archetype to confront the darkness in the world, the ultimate fight between good versus evil in the world and within the self (Campbell, 1972). The individual is able to remain the innocent victim waiting to be rescued powerless, paralyzed and without action. Many of the stories written by grade school students characterized there hero's as being wealthy, good at sports and having a lot of money. Students in low social economic households often value possessions such as Nike Air Jordans and name brand clothes and cars as a way to gain status and importance. This is reflected in their hero stories. Heroes imagined by high school students were compelled to find peace for the world and to stop the violence. These archetypes are useful as a coping mechanism but is repeated in behaviors of waiting to be rescued or relying on the super person to save the day or stop the violence. The problem of violence is so overwhelming, terrifying and heartbreaking that only a super hero can stop it.
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Coupled with collective feelings of alienation and isolation perpetuated by poverty and segregation this thinking can be detrimental, paralyzing and promote learned helplessness in the African American community.

"I would like my doll to save the people that are going to die. My doll can help the bad people be good. The doll knows when people are going to die. He is a wall that can block shots and he can fly!"

"My doll represents my uncle who served in the military and came back and survived. I made my doll look like a regular person with shorts and green shirt with a cap saying “CJ” meaning Caption J. Meaning that he has served and protected our country from hurt harm and danger. He is a Hero to me because he didn’t have to fight for are country but out the kindness of his heart and belief he did anyway. My uncle CJ is my hero, the U.S.A hero, my family’s hero just like all the others who served for our country. the gun on the doll represents when he was in the military he was the sniper hiding out on high buildings assassinating enemies."

"The doll represents my grandpa since he passed away this year. The decoration on my doll represents a cool, superhero figure. The gold part represents how he can cheer up people like make them feel great and make their day even better since gold is like a light color it gives out light and hope. The black cape represents a superhero like vibe since he always helped out as well as helped my older brother and I with things. The doll makes me remember all the good times we had."

"My doll represent a hero with fur that it’s so soft, meaning that the theme of the doll is hoping that one day we will get peace from the violence that we’re having in this city. I made the doll with these tiger like fur wrapped around the legs and
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arms so that would show we have strength in ourselves. A cape like a superhero also made of soft material to show if we fight we would get peace and quiet.”

“This doll is a ninja which represents silence. Moving in silence is the best thing to do. You become invisible to negativity. The cloth covers the face separating self from Chicago.”

The first narrative is written by a fifth grader. The super hero is addressing the violence and is able to stop bullets and people from dying. The child is expressing his fears, recognizing the villain and identifying the superhero to combat and fight the evil. The following narratives are written by high school students. They have identified real people as their heroes. Some alive, as in the military figure and some who have died such as the grandfather. Life experiences and learning from mistakes eventually encourage awareness and better choices in life. The older student seems to connect their hero to a real and/or tangible person. Someone they know or knew perhaps looking for that model to copy as a life mentor or coach.

Caregiver. The caregiver is the archetype that is fulfilled and sustained by taking care of others. The caregiver is moved by authentic compassion to help others through dedicated assistance and generosity (Jung, 1962). The caregiver fears selfishness and ingratitude and overcomes this fear by doing things for others. The caregiver weaknesses are martyrdom and being exploited and is also known as earth mother (Jung, 1962). Out of 43 stories, 14 were categorized as caregiver. Narratives of caregiver are below.

“This doll represents my grandmother. Before my grandmother died she used to love and care for me. She used to babysit for my mother. Every night I used to kiss my grandmother. She is always in my heart forever and ever until I die and leave this Earth. Until now, all I can say to this doll
is RIP to my sweet beautiful, peaceful, caring, and lost by not forgotten 
and loving grandmother.”

"My doll was created to absorb all the stress and trauma and grief we 
experience on a daily basis. It's meant to help ease the stress that 
surrounds our life and our communities."

"...When I see the doll, I see a sacred light and it lets me feel that the light 
is protecting the [helpless] woman."

"This doll represents my grandmother who always stood up for what is 
right. But not only does my doll represent her but also the fact of people putting 
up a stand to violence and coming together peacefully. The white soft fur on the 
doll shows that this doll isn't meant to feel rough or painful but soft and something 
that comforts you. The feather in the hand shows the doll stating that her weapon 
is peace and not danger. She has white hair because she is wise and strong 
referring back to my grandmother but also all the older people out there trying to 
get use young people to stay safe and stop using violence. The hearts are 
basically saying that I keep my grandmother in my heart and the letters around 
the base of the doll spell out the word ‘peace’ all around. The cape shows that 
she's flying high in heaven and she's watching over me.

"This doll is special and can cure anyone exposed to violence.”

The caregiver gives love unintentionally and cares for others selflessly. 

This story is important to the individual who may feel alienated and isolated from 
society and humanity. The imaginary figure embodied by an actual family 
member, most often deceased, provides love, support, care and acceptance- all 
that is not readily available in the real world. This can be harmful in that adults
may carry out the archetype to the extent of stifling those they care for further alienating themselves and others or become angry or upset when they feel that they are not appreciated.

Archetypes and myths teach and organize our lives. It is the unconscious human desire to give content and processes of the collective unconscious concrete form. The hero and caregiver reflect each other and have the same motivating orientation (Campbell, 1971). For example, the caregiver is driven by the need to fulfill ego agendas through meeting the needs of others, which is a social orientation; whereas, the hero, which is also driven by the need to fulfill ego agendas, does so through courageous action that proves self-worth. These unconscious behavior patterns found in the doll narratives can be used to decipher the internal motivations of the writers. Those who wrote about the hero are searching for self-worth and grappling with the ideas of good versus evil. The caregiver narratives came mostly in the form of a woman/grandmother type figure reminiscent of mammy and/or Aunt Jemima stereotypically caring and helping at the expense of herself.

**The House as Archetype.** The house is one of the most common dream symbols and was a common theme in the narratives. Humans seek a secure place that is fundamentally their own. The earliest home is the womb and humans are forever seeking to replace that perfect paradise. The house is also a metaphor for personality. Is it tidy, well-kept, or falling apart? The house also symbolizes the inner world. Jung (1968) states that the house is a universal symbol and a reflection of the individual in the house. Jungian therapy is much
attuned to the theme of house; especially at times of crisis. This researcher suggests that the archetypal symbol for “projects” “ghetto” and “public housing” is problematic for those living within causing alienation and feelings of demoralization. Media portrays the projects as violent, dirty, poor and neglected. Children internalize these ideas and often think of their homes as less than and not good enough which causes internal conflict and uncertainty. Many of the narratives contained stories about “big” houses and rooms as if to compensate for those inner conflicts. On the other hand, public housing projects also have a rich history of community and activism which is being eroded by increasingly transient living situations causing distrust, anxiety and uneasiness.

Fifty testimonials were evaluated for themes and patterns. Testimonials were given by Chicago high school students speaking on their personal experiences with gun violence, its impact on their lives, and possible solutions to the violence. The testimonials spoke of neighborhoods riddled with fear and violence, youth afraid to go to the park or play outside and heartbreaking tales of friends and family members whose lives were snatched away unexpectedly by gun violence. Some students pondered how to create safe healing spaces and resist oppressive systems and institutions. Students asked for more counselors, programs and community centers “so teens can be inside safe versus outside doing nothing- where anything can happen at any time”. Some asked for more community-oriented police officers who are part of the community and there to help rather than harass. 81% of testimonials reflected the themes of alienation, isolation and numbness to the violence. Over 85% of the stories indicated
students were operating on high alert at all times, fearful to leave their homes and neighborhoods. Only 12.5% of testimonials did not have a direct experience with gun violence but stated that they were negatively impacted by violence via social media and the news to the point of being fearful and paranoid that gun violence may happen to them at any time.

"I can't go outside for too long, I worry every time someone I know is out for too long and they're not replying to my messages."

"No place on Earth is safe."

"I watch my surroundings."

"Growing up in Little Village was tough, there was tons of violence. There was a point where I wasn't able to go to the park because my parents thought I wouldn't come back alive. They were scared, the Chicago violence really affected my childhood, but then I was introduced to this program called beyond the ball. It really changed my life, its purpose was to make Little Village safe for the kids to play at the park and not be scared of getting shot or killed."

"These past few days a lot has happened, one of our classmates died due to the gun violence going on. This also happened last year another one of our classmates had died because of this too. Chicago is becoming more violent every day and it's causing us to feel unsafe to the point where we can't go out. This is why I want people to look at my doll and think that there's still hope for all of us. We need to find a way to stop all of this
violence because for us living here is becoming a normal everyday thing and it shouldn't be like that.”

"Violence in Chicago has really took a toll inside of my life. Just growing up around violence and losing people that I've loved to it is one of the toughest things I've faced in my life. I probably have lost "5" people in the last 3 years to violence in Chicago. I feel as if where I'm from we really don't have a choice but to act violent and that's upsetting.”

“Systems and institutions can oppress because kids in this generation gets lots of pressure from home and form school….the schools want kids to deal with so many problems at once, so they feel like everyone is just there to use them and nobody is really there for them at times…”

The Gun and Doll as Archetype. The gun and doll represents archetypes in our culture and are often the first toys that little girls and boys gravitate towards. The gun represents an archetype masculine Animus in its primitive form. It can protect and kill and is a symbol of power and prestige.

The doll is the oldest known toy, used as an educational tool, ritual, protection and in religious ceremonies. The doll has also been used to tell stories and myths of culture. The gun and doll represent female and male parts; which must be balanced. The contextual idea of building a memorial of dolls to combat deaths from gun violence completes a metaphorical balance within the art as a type of intervention. The act of making a memorial out of whimsical dolls enacted tangible change within a united Chicago community afflicted by gang
violence/activity. The meetings of students and teachers to create the dolls and then the meeting at the memorial site created a sense of place, ownership and home- a site of possibility where change might be initiated.

**Exploratory Analysis**

Death rivets our attention. A glimpse of death reminds us of how valuable life is allowing one to reprioritize and reconsider life and life choices. Traumatic events like school closings, shootings and the death of a classmate can create moments of community and patriotism. The tragedies of 9/11, Sandy Hook and Columbine are examples of people rallying around each other to support and grieve. The understanding that something is shared between people creates communion and the bonds that are formed from processing and reflecting on shared pain can encourages community.

Where is the rallying of the community around the gun violence? Where is the outrage and empathy from others outside of the community? The current White House administration has called Chicago’s gun violence a morality issue instead of looking at the root causes of the violence; further demonizing and alienating populations that have systematically been oppressed, marginalized and abused. The gun violence is a symptom of generational poverty, segregation, lack of opportunities, and a school system that stifles instead of encourages creativity.

**Art as Activism/Exhibit as Social Action**

"Community arts are a critique of the domination of Western mass media and popular consumer culture." Knowles & Cole, 2008
Art as Social Action/Intervention

According to Knowles and Cole (2008), the purpose of community arts is to raise consciousness through education and information about ourselves and the world. It should 1) inspire and mobilize individuals and groups 2) nurture and heal people and communities 3) build and improve community capacity.

Over the past two years, the researcher has developed partnerships through a process of public exchange that has extended the role of audience beyond spectator to that of participant extended the role of student and teacher to that of artist/activists extended the role of public space to that of memorial and social collaborative art action. It reimagines the relationship of art to place and people jarring people into seeing and thinking differently. A form of creative empowerment, this project addressed trauma through the arts, making beauty to inspire hope and forging links between creative art therapies and the broader community.

Special features of participatory action research that makes it different than other forms of qualitative research may present certain limitations. One problem associated with this study is the informality of the art experience. The study is based on the participant’s own opinions and reactions during and upon completion of the project. A working hypothesis was used in this study focusing on perspective rather than objective truth. In qualitative research, case studies are generally limited due to lack of precision in the collection, construction, and analysis of the materials.

Society through media and art has shown what it believes poverty looks like. The stereotypes abound, from the welfare queen to the drug dealer; the
chronic violence and the low test scores are stories that the dominant society has created. Perceptions of blackness, poverty and public schools are framed by a host of negative images and assumptions that began during slavery, persisted and still exist today with permutations. Cultural resistance is the practice of using meanings and symbols, that is, culture, to contest and combat a dominant power, often encouraging change by constructing a new narrative and vision of the popular belief. Weingarten believes that sharing one's life experience is a form of cultural resistance and a challenging of cultural beliefs. The use of narratives, storytelling and art amplifies voices through respectful, nonjudgmental listening and group dialogue. Creating art communally within discursive settings is creative cultural resistance and works to destroy apathy, increase coping strategies, nurtures empowerment through creative resistance, and builds sense of community and connection. This shared encounter acted as a connecting factor—bringing individuals together in the cultivation of a sense of belonging.

**Discussion**

Systemic racism enforces poverty and alienation within the black community. The unequal distribution of wealth, income and power is based on a supremacist racial caste system. The constant threat of violence causes toxic stress which affects the health of the body and brain. When the brain is constantly exposed to a toxic environment, it will shut down to protect itself from that environment (Young, 2015). The brains rate of growth slows down creating a vulnerability to anxiety, depression and less resilience to stress. Research shows the younger the brain the more damaging the effects causing problems
with impulse and emotional control. Art, community and dialogue can help a child see the world as less threatening and build self-esteem by giving meaningful praise and opportunities to succeed and gain a sense of mastery.

This project offered opportunities for communities to connect and engage in collective social action to address gun violence supported creative student-centered educational activities, built positive connections between teachers and students, encouraged safe havens for social change.

"It's hard to know a person and see them every day and then for them to just disappear." Students are "disappearing from classrooms every day from gun violence. A school that participated in the Dolls4Peace Memorial had 10 students "disappear" in 4 months. How is gun violence and the resulting deaths affecting youth and teachers psychologically? Transient housing, school closures and anti-black rhetoric within our society encourage feelings of alienation and isolation in the black population. These feeling of worthlessness, numbing to violence, and the idea that justice is not for them perpetuates violence. Interlocking issues such as poverty, segregation, and educational inequities are issues that are forced on a population of people that lack agency to affect policy and systems that continue to oppress and marginalize.

Students state in their narratives programs and activities that give solace and "save them from the streets" such as Beyond the Ball, dance classes, art centers and after school programs which provide opportunities for youth to
Art as Social Action/Intervention

engage with each other, provide mentors and learn a skill or master an arts form-giving life meaning and purpose.

Karl Marx wrote about the power of work and realizing our worth and creativity through our work. Marx (1973) believed “what we do” is directly linked to “who we are”. Our work defines us and allows us to express ourselves creatively empowering us and giving us agency in our lives. While capitalism has taken this joy away from work, promoting alienation and individualism, community arts connects us to our creativity and connects us to society, work (the act of doing) and self.

This study was an art therapy intervention that used the power of visual art, public exhibition and memorialization to provoke, evoke and express nonverbal knowledge as a collective action for social change. This study explored the historical and political atmosphere that has created communities racked with violence, poverty, psychological alienation and low performing schools brought about by intentional policies, laws and urban and educational reform.

Conclusion

What does the practice of making, the repetitious act of wrapping achieve for those who participated in the Dolls4Peace Memorial? What is the relationship between wrapping and doll making and psychological responses to trauma and
easement? Can art exhibitions/installations be community or cultural interventions?

The heART Project, a communal art therapy program, aimed to combat poverty and inequality in a small isolated public housing community. The heART Project worked to rectify the effects of poverty and create a culture of calm in a marginalized community predisposed to violence or passivity. After the sudden death of a classmate to gun violence during a time of publicized deaths of black and brown bodies, this collective of students started making dolls to heal and process their grief and trauma. This community based participatory research project empowered students and teachers to initiate and find their own solutions to problems-becoming agents of change and enacting the therapeutic benefits of “doing” (Dickie, ).

The shared encounter of ritual and memorialization in creating the Dolls4Peace Memorial acted as a connecting factor- bringing individuals together in the cultivation of a sense of belonging. One thousand four hundred and five (and counting) dolls were made for each person mortally shot in Chicago between the years 2015 and 2017. Fifty five Chicago Public Schools and 5 universities, including one in Philadelphia and Oakland, California participated in the action. The memorial facilitated dialogue, processing fears and intentions and used doll making to support the growth of self-awareness and individuation. The creative process and public memorialization developed an outlet for repressed feelings allowed expression in a meaningful and sustainable way. Out
of the 80 testimonials, 91.5% percent stated that doll making was "healing" and/or "helped" them. Participants expressed that they felt calm and relaxed. They felt that "remembering" their loved ones by making dolls offered solace. Some expressed that they were standing up to the violence with peace and that they learned different ways to cope with negative feelings like vengeance and revenge. Characteristics of both content and form distinguish this project from traditional socially engaged art projects. This project served as exhibition as social change and protest-art as therapy, a sense of community and shared solidarity. The imagery of the dolls initially takes the viewer off guard. Doll making carries associations to childhood, little girls, security of items made and bought for comfort or whimsy. Viewers are open to communicating through the art of dolls, instead of turning away with discomfort. Thus community arts therapy approach constitutes a strategy for peacemaking, conscious building and interconnectedness that challenges the dominant social order of schools and cultural art centers/institutions by creating an alternative discourse to the traditional ideas of education, therapy and art.

The alienated, isolated and separated individual is prone to disappear into mass conformity and meaningless destruction (Rose, 2009). A community art re-imagines that isolation providing connectedness and fulfilling the innate need humans have to belong. When there is such a dark cloud of secrecy and repression around gun violence and death, structured rituals and containment became a secure place to process and reflect on feelings and thoughts in
Art as Social Action/Intervention

communal settings encouraging participants to make their own healing/peace spaces in their classrooms, parks, homes and churches.

Examining and exploring archetypes and life patterns tells us about our formative stories. How is the past (historical and generational) active in our present lives? What is the relationship? Understanding our stories hidden in our unconscious that are dictating our life patterns is important to stop the cycle of alienation, isolation, demoralization resulting in community violence and self-defeating behaviors. How have we adapted to oppression and racism? What are our conditioned responses and how can these responses be transformed to ignite collective activism and social change? Community arts and liberatory art therapy allows participants to connect to the thought forms and mental images that influence an individual’s feelings and actions but also transcends the individual by connecting that individual to others-to community. This study highlights a need to build more holistic, community-centered, arts-based therapeutic interventions within public institutions and communities to address trauma caused by gun violence, oppressive systems and alienation caused by systemic racism and generational poverty.

Community Psychology emphasizes prevention and early intervention with a focus on the strengths of communities rather than on individual or community deficits or problems (Rappaport, 1977). This project was able to build upon pre-existing resources, capacities and talents of the community, transcending artistic practice from mere catharsis to a revolutionary call to action.
References


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It is the harsh reality that many students within marginalized inner city communities are affected by gun violence. Students come to school with trauma, in need of a safe space to deal with their feelings and thoughts on death and violence. This lesson began with a group of students using collaborative art making rituals to heal from trauma caused by the death of a school member. Teacher and students continued to work as a collective to create memorials for all lives that have been lost to gun violence in Chicago in 2015 by facilitating doll-making workshops to honor victims, raise awareness, and create space for healing.

Wrap doll instruction by art therapist Barbara Fish, PhD
Goals, Objectives and Questions

Goals + Objectives:

- Students will work collectively to memorialize victims of gun violence, process their own feelings and trauma, and create space for healing and peace.
- Students will investigate the underlying conditions of violence in our city. How do systems oppress? How can we resist oppression through art?
- Students will imaginatively repurpose recycled and discarded materials to make art.

Guiding Questions:

- How has gun violence affected your life?
- How can we bring awareness to the issue of gun violence in our community?
- How can we use art to make a change in our community and help people affected by gun violence heal?
- Can you identify memorials of resistance or memorials of remembrance?

Documentation and Assessment

- Students write an intention, wishes, and fears on slips of paper, and embed the paper in the head or heart of the doll.
- Students take pictures using their mobile devices.
- Students write stories about how violence has affected their lives and share their stories and images on a blog about healing, trauma and violence.
- Communities will collaborate to create an art installation using these dolls that have been made across the city of Chicago in response to violence.
Learning Activities

Step 1: Identify students who would like to create dolls to bring awareness to the social justice issue of gun violence.

Step 2: Establish the physical space. Find a quiet safe space without interruptions for students to meet. Have students work in a circle or around a big table. Arrange materials in a location that is easy to access.

Step 3: Facilitate a check-in. Ask students to say their name, where their home is, and a name of a family member or ancestor who has died and whom they would like to honor. This activity will ground the space and frame the activity.

Step 4: Explore memorials and oppression. What memorials are in your city? Why do these memorials exist? What determines if something is worthy of being memorialized? Can you identify a memorial of resistance? What does it mean to resist? What is oppression? Have you ever felt oppressed? How is gun violence related to oppression and resistance? Students can discuss these questions with a partner and share out to the larger group. Students can tell a story about a time they felt oppressed through drawing or speaking.

Step 5: Memorial dolls. Explain that students will be making dolls for a memorial to all people who have died from gun violence within the city of Chicago in 2015. In the year 2015, 444 people were shot and killed. Each doll will represent a person. Students discuss how gun violence has affected their community.

Step 6: Fears and wishes. Students write down a fear they have about gun violence OR a wish they have around the issue of gun violence OR the intention of gun violence. Students will insert that small piece of paper into the head or the
heart of the doll. Discuss how this placement is symbolic. Students may choose to embed the paper within the doll, or attach the paper so it is visible.

**Step 7: Show students how to make the wrap doll.** Take a piece of fabric and stuff it with filling. Take another piece of fabric and tie it around the body. Wrap the doll with yarn. This is very repetitive, but is a soothing activity. Students may become quiet while working or they may talk. Allow the students to lead the conversation, but remain authentic in your active listening and dialogue.

**Step 8: Finishing the dolls.** After completing the wrapping, students can embellish dolls with beads, feathers, markers, etc.

**Step 9: Share Out.** Ask students if anyone would like to share their doll and their fear or wish with the group. Students may also arrange their dolls together and present collectively. Lead discussions about how students felt as they created their dolls and the impact of making the dolls in a collective space.

**Step 10: Teach others.** Give students the task of sharing their experience with additional community members. Students teach others how to make the dolls as a memorial for victims of gun violence. As they teach others how to create the wrap dolls, students will further explore the questions: How do systems and institutions oppress? How can we resist oppression through play, art and dialogue? How can we create safe, healing spaces in the school and throughout the community?
Appendix B: Individual Dolls for Dolls4Peace Installation
Appendix C: Dolls4Peace Memorial Poster

PLEASE JOIN US AS CHICAGO YOUTH MEMORIALIZE LIVES LOST TO GUN VIOLENCE AND CALL ON THE NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO ADDRESS TRAUMA CAUSED BY COMMUNITY VIOLENCE.

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017
3:00-5:00PM
HYDE PARK ART CENTER

ART MAKING, MUSIC, AND TESTIMONIALS
Appendix D: Dolls4Peace Memorial
Art as Social Action/Intervention
Appendix E: Dolls4Peace Map
Art as Social Action/Intervention