Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy

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Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy

A DISSERTATION
submitted by

Giselle Ruzany

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

LESLEY UNIVERSITY
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Ph.D. in Expressive Therapies Program

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_In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree._

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I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

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I hereby accept the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee and its Chairperson.

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED: ___________________________
I want to acknowledge my ancestors from my maternal and paternal lines that survived incredible obstacles to give me the blend of resilience legacy that I am privileged to experience. I am grateful to my Falls Church City community for always welcoming me when I felt lost. I would also like to thank my family, who stood by my side as I dove into reconnecting to who I was throughout this research process. A special thank you for my mom for encouraging me when I lost steam, and for my advisor Mitchell Kossak for teaching and guiding me each step of the way.
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DIRECT LINK TO EDS:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJhlHNv58hxNkeVjMKZJov_ogtA_RMUKe

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TV EDS art-based response
KT EDS’ art-based response
SS EDS’s art-based response
RJ EDS art-based response
TP EDS art-based response
GR (researcher’s) EDS art-based response

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Subtheme 1: Disconnection

Sub-Sub Theme: Ancestral anger

Subtheme 2: Work, Arts, and Education

Sub-Sub Theme: Artist Legacy

Theme 2: Place Attachment, Home, and Culture

Subtheme 1: Migration

Sub-Sub Theme: Ancestral Home

Subtheme 2: Culture and Belonging

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ABSTRACT

Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy is a study of one's ancestral legacy with a diverse group of professional dancers who were asked to engage in an embodied inquiry. Research questions were: What is the experience of creating embodied digital storytelling when exploring one’s ancestral legacy? What can be learned from identity, sense of belonging, and resilience through this process? The study included an interview about each dancer's ancestral story, the creation of embodied digital storytelling (EDS), a final interview, and a group member checking meeting for the purpose of confirming the transcripts and findings. This meeting also served as a space to watch the EDS films and for an open group discussion where the participants expressed their thoughts of the method and shared their experience. The process of creating an EDS included the dancers creating a choreography through a movement-based gestalt dialogue with the ancestor of their choice. After that, the dancer recorded a dance in a place that supported their connection to their ancestor. The researcher then helped the dancer edit the film, and the dancer created a narrative to go with what they saw in the film. The result of this exploration of ancestral legacy through storytelling and dance resulted in the themes: transgenerational trauma and resilience; place attachment, home, and culture; embodiment with ancestral repair and ancestral support; identity through one's ancestral artifacts and name. All seven participants felt that the EDS process helped them connect to ancestors while engaging with strong emotions and unlocking their creativity. This research provides a model for art-based research using embodied digital storytelling. Furthermore, this research was conducted during the COVID 19 pandemic and had some insights in finding resilience during stressful times.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy

Understanding the effects of ancestral legacy has been a subject of study for many researchers, yet there haven’t been many studies that have approached the subject from a post-phenomenological and indigenous methodology that involves art-based research (Brown & Strega, 2005). It is well known in the field of transgenerational trauma that ancestral legacy can affect one’s biology, one’s vulnerability for trauma and a lifetime of emotional struggle (Bowers, & Yehuda, 2016). Coming from an anti-hierarchical perspective, this research allowed the participant to be the one deciding what was important when telling their ancestral story. Participants engaged in creating a dance with their ancestors which produced a bridge to an embodied inquiry into this important subject. This research took place during the collective trauma of COVID-19 which pushed the world into the digital era and a post-phenomenological world faster than the natural pace. By accepting the new reality, this research also highlights the use of film and digital communication in order to create meaningful and embodied connection.

This study holds two questions: What is the experience of creating embodied digital storytelling when exploring one’s ancestral legacy? What can be learned from identity, sense of belonging, and resilience through this process? EDS is a 2 to 4-minute video clip resulting from a participant creating choreography and a narrative from an embodied inquiry. The researcher added an art-based response and conducted a thematic analysis. The results included nonverbal and verbal data, verbal and nonverbal analysis, and a final group discussion with the participants.
Developing Embodied Digital Storytelling (EDS)

The origins of EDS as an ABR methodology began in a doctoral study course on arts apprenticeship led by Mitchell Kossak. Students were instructed to apprentice with an art form they had not studied before. The researcher, a professional dancer, began her apprenticeship in storytelling and found healing in the process. This process of retelling the story has been utilized in research done with people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Richardson, 2015), where an individual retells and rearranges their stories to make new meaning out of what happened. In the area of pedagogy, a study on the use of storytelling on expressive arts therapy’s students showed that this integration could be quite promising in facilitating healing: “The act of telling the story allows for the restoration of the individual and the collective and can lead to a re-evaluation of our existence in the context of a different narrative” (Schwartz et al., 2020, p. 318). By integrating movement and storytelling in this study, there was an integration of implicit and explicit knowledge that impacted the individual and collective sense of meaning of the story, where the history of ancestors could manifest through “place, voice and story” (p. 318).

EDS as a research methodology arose as a consequence of studying storytelling while the researcher explored movement research through dance and worked on locating herself in her first year of the low residency Expressive Arts Therapy Ph.D. program at Lesley University. This process also included creating an altered book, where collages and drawings grounded the intuitive ABR, called DNA Stories (see figure 1).

Figure 1

*Picture of Altered Book and First Page by Giselle Ruzany, 2018*

*Note: As the researcher worked in locating herself, she placed her DNA on pie charts.*

*There is a picture of the cover and contents page of the DSM V altered book in the picture below.*
The cover presents candle lights representing the researcher's lost ancestors in the Holocaust, and on the right, the DNA contents in a pie chart she holds as parts of her identity.

This search of understanding her identity took the research towards the topic of transgenerational trauma (TGT). The term transgenerational trauma (TGT) originated in 1996 to explain medical and psychological symptoms found in the offspring of Holocaust survivors (Braga et al., 2012). Several studies clarified ancestral legacy by studying TGT or resilience with survivors of collective trauma (Bezo & Maggi, 2015; Braga et al., 2012). Recent advances in neurobiology have recognized an ancestral legacy of trauma on a biological level, where parents' exposure to trauma may affect their offspring (Bowers & Yehuda, 2016). TGT could also be named and diagnosed as an insecure attachment and shown as a sense of rootlessness or lack of place attachment (Braga, 2012; Felsen, 2018). Therefore, ancestral legacy could create obstacles for one’s clarity of identity, belonging, and sense of self.

The process of studying storytelling and transgenerational trauma facilitated the researcher’s autoethnographic art-based research (ABR) called DNA Stories. The stories were
based on embodied inquiry and focused on an ancestor. In *DNA Stories*, the researcher created dances and storytelling performances on her ancestry, and as she began to combine both, and share her process online, embodied digital storytelling (EDS) emerged. The EDS process was then found within the digital storytelling field of research. Digital Storytelling (DST) has been described as a post-phenomenological approach to research, as it combines the embodied experience of living infused with technology in one’s daily life (Irwin, 2014; Vacchelli, 2018). DST has been used as an acceptable methodology of indigenous research and anti-oppressive practice and offers a guide for the researcher to be a co-participant in their research proposal (Napoli, 2019; Willox et al., 2013;).

**EDS Pilot Study**

After developing EDS through *DNA stories*, a pilot study was designed and implemented. The pilot study using EDS with two participants and the research was conducted during the doctoral program’s second year. The process of creating EDS and the pilot study was documented on [www.gestaltdance.com/en](http://www.gestaltdance.com/en). Past research using digital storytelling (DST) as a qualitative post-phenomenological research methodology provided the framework for the pilot study on EDS with ancestral legacy (Lenette, 2019; Vacchelli, 2018).

In relationship to ancestral legacy literature, research showed that second and third generations of trauma survivors could inherit a spectrum of experiences ranging from resilience to TGT (Braga et al., 2012). Research showed that TGT increased vulnerability in acquiring PTSD and psychopathology when exposed to life-threatening situations (Braga et al., 2012; Lehrner & Yehuda, 2018; Yehuda et al., 2001). Studies also showed that TGT was present in the body as somatic symptoms or implicit memory when the individual knew without being verbally told that their parents were survivors of trauma (Baum, 2013). In contrast, resilience and a sense
of belonging showed up in individuals that engaged with the arts, open communication, cultural identity, understanding of one’s historical background, and those who felt a sense of social and community support (Bezo & Maggi, 2015; Braga et al., 2012; Diamond & Shrira, 2018).

Given these factors, EDS intended to explore a method that would facilitate elements of resilience into an EDS workshop to facilitate a sense of stronger identity and a sense of belonging while exploring one’s relationship to an ancestor and creating an embodied narrative. This pilot study assumed that by facilitating these resilient elements and communicating what was present and felt within their bodies, participants who experienced TGT could gain awareness of their resiliency by noticing their ancestors’ survival (Giladi & Bell, 2013; Goodman, 2008). Furthermore, research on TGT showed that communication was crucial in healing trauma and developing resilience (Giladi & Bell, 2013). Research on TGT also showed that relying on social support through communication and trust in the community could provide conditions for resilience (Bezo & Maggi, 2015). EDS allowed the EDS maker to re-story their ancestral legacy into a story of resilience and share it on YouTube as a way to find community and collective support.

This process of storytelling as a research tool through a two to four minute film was described by Vacchelli (2018), Lenette et al. (2019), and Willox (2013), who respectively used digital storytelling to reveal the experience of immigrants, refugees, and Native Americans. In the EDS pilot, a choreography came first and worked as the base for the story. This choreography was created by investigating the body, similarly to Vacchelli (2018), who also used embodied inquiry but instead used collages. EDS was created from a premise also seen in research for trauma using yoga, where the body is involved in regulating emotions and holding untold ancestral stories (Cushing & Braum, 2018). Therefore, investigating the body could reveal
emotions that have been repressed or historical wounds (Caldwell & Johnson, 2012; LaChiusa, 2016).

Each part of the pilot study was based on a component found in past research that resulted in resiliency, well-being, sense of belonging, sense of home, cultural identity, relational healing, attachment repair, and place attachment. By choosing EDS as a methodology, the pilot study allowed participants to have a self-directed self-investigation and therefore provided a path for participant’s sense of empowerment. Although digital storytelling (DST) has been rising as a methodology to empower researched marginalized communities, the addition of an embodied inquiry created another layer to this method. By working side by side, participants co-created the EDS and learned how to use film editing as an art form and a framework for storytelling. Through this process, the researcher hoped to have created some fundamental conditions to develop trust in social environments and repair relational patterns inherited from an ancestral legacy (Bezo & Maggi, 2015). The researcher responded to each film by using different art materials before engaging with the verbal content. Figure 2 is one of the art-based responses the researcher created in response to one of the pilot’s study EDS.

**Figure 2**

*Art-Base Response to Pilot Study EDS Sculpture by Giselle Ruzany, 2019*

Note: The researcher engaged with an art-based response to each EDS before doing a thematic analysis. Here is the researcher's sculpture of one participant's hand holding a flower, representing his mother's gift of resilience that he embodied in his dance with her during the pilot study.
The themes found in the pilot study across the three EDS embodied narratives were loss, silent grief, support, healing, and identity. Felsen (2018) and Baider (2000) described how patterns of TGT could manifest later in life as an insecure attachment or a late onset of TGT. This pattern was seen as difficulty in having interdependency and relying on others later in life. In each EDS, the identity as self-reliance seemed present in all participants. One participant talked about keeping the world out, while another talked about being alone and quiet, and I, as a participant, spoke about not showing vulnerability. Attachment patterns in TGT are important elements in exploring ancestral legacy and are essential parts of this study. Through EDS, participants worked together, creating a sense of trust in each other, environment, and a healing story that held the potential to repair attachment wounds.

The process of this pilot study created a body-oriented technique to investigate different aspects of one’s ancestral legacy. A pilot study participant said, “a different approach from way different insights into something that I probably would have never come to...” This study also explored attachment to people and places when participants chose an ancestor who was a
caregiver or chose a location to make a recording that allowed repair and healing (Bogaç, 2009; Hautamäki et al., 2010). By entering into contact with a place of choice, participants were creating a relationship to the land or place, which could create an important aspect of resilience and well-being (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). A pilot participant showed repair and healing in this statement, “It did help with some forgiveness.” With all these discoveries, the research had some gaps in data. Thus, a dissertation was proposed with the goal of gathering more information about the participants’ ancestral story and the participant’s experience of going through the process of creating an EDS. Before introducing *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy*, an introduction of the researcher follows.

**The Researcher’s Ancestral Legacy**

**Figure 3**

*Picture of Collage from Altered Book by and of Giselle Ruzany and Ancestor*

*Note: Below is a picture of the researcher’s ancestor, who had Brazilian native ancestors. Together they represent the researcher’s identification as a Brazilian Native when she was a little girl.*
In describing my own personal process here, I will use the first person for this section and will return to a more objective voice (third person) for the remainder of the paper. My ancestral lineage is full of stories of violence, disruptions, and loss. My grandfather told me that his grandmother was a beautiful Brazilian woman that was caught in a lasso, kidnapped and raped, just outside of the city of Rio de Janeiro in the 1800s. He would tell me that after she gave birth to a son, she left him with the white men and returned to her tribe “Puris dos Coroados.” This boy would be kidnapped to see his mother once a year and eventually grow up to marry a woman that had a similar story with indigenous descendants from the 1500s and had many kids of his own (see figure 3). My maternal grandfather would talk to me about this story and his fear of being abandoned by his own parents, as he believed was a possibility, a threat and a knowing lineage history.
From my maternal grandmother’s side, my aunt told me a story that was dictated to her by her great grandfather. According to her, an African mixed race woman was kidnapped while walking in the streets of Angola in Africa. She was given the Portuguese name of Rosa and was sold as a slave in Brazil. Her son, the great grandfather of my aunt, dictated to her the story when she was 8 years old. Rosa’s daughters would be kept working in the house due to their lighter skin and would bear the owner’s children until the end of slavery. Girls were not given the farmer’s last name, but boys did. Therefore, my matriarchal lineage is marked by Mediterranean Sea colonialists and an African woman and her daughters who were owned by farmers in the State of Rio de Janeiro. My grandmother would find comfort in the catholic church and a way to forgive and make meaning of right and wrong. Nevertheless, my mother would reject that and become an atheist, medical doctor, and pragmatist to the injustices she saw around her. As a mix of Indigenous and African descent, my mother would work as a doctor and public health advocate her whole life trying to bring health care to the Black and Indigenous communities as well as any other population that was marginalized due to race and poverty, such as the gypsies and the disenfranchised river communities. Her work on resilience by modeling resilience is inspiring for many.

**Figure 4**

*Picture from Altered Book with Ancestral Land by Giselle Ruzany, 2018*

*Note: The collage below comes from photos of family members who visited the researcher’s paternal grandparents’ hometown. The town no longer exists; stones in a park with a carved name represent each Jewish town destroyed in World War II.*
In 1939, my paternal grandmother arrived after a 6-month trip by transatlantic ship in Rio de Janeiro, helping her older sister with her four children migrate out of Poland. They left their town in Poland just six months before the Holocaust. Her parents were killed in the same month the ship came into the port. The story that she told was that after her close escape, her parents were killed on the street resisting the Nazi regime, her two brothers would be killed in a concentration camp, her sister died giving birth without the option of going to a hospital because she was Jewish, her younger brother would survive by dressing as a Polish maid. She eventually would marry my grandfather who was also from the same town in Poland (see figure 4), and ended up going to the same synagogue in Rio de Janeiro. My paternal grandfather came from a long lineage of Rabbis, but as not the first son, he did not carry the Rabbi professional baton and left Poland to find work. He would lose almost all of his family in the Holocaust. My father would reject religion and saw Judaism from an atheist point of view. As a medical doctor, he
shocked his mother by not marrying a Jewish woman but an Afro-Indigenous Brazilian woman. His parents would then leave Rio de Janeiro and go live in Israel, following their daughter.

My body holds the trauma not only of ancestral history of displacement, slavery, and persecution in addition to being exposed to Brazilian socio-economical political strife on the side of my maternal family and being present in Israel during the Gulf War while visiting my paternal grandparents. These losses and wars would leave scars in the family. Issues of belonging, attachment to place, and people would be compromised and set up a cascade of events that one day would lead me to search for dance as a form of healing these transgenerational traumas within my own body. By looking to heal these issues, I began to study transgenerational trauma and how the body and body memory has been researched. To complicate place attachment, I was born in New York City while my parents were in medical training specialization. Both coming from a low socio-economic background in Rio de Janeiro, they reached for health as the paramount of basic need. At the end of their studies in the U.S., we returned to Brazil when I was three years-old.

With dual citizenship, I would migrate back to the USA for higher education at 23. In the United States, I would re-discover my identity in a different context. Almost 20 years later, during my doctoral studies, identity(ies) felt complex to disclose, so I began searching for answers by looking into my DNA and ancestral stories. As I studied my ancestry, I investigated my felt sense and began to create dances from an embodied inquiry. By using an embodied arts-based research, I was creating a methodology of dancing with an ancestor in a post-feminist, post-phenomenological, and indigenous digital storytelling and began to locate myself as a researcher (see figure 5).

Figure 5
Note: The researcher makes sense of her mixed heritage on the drawing below by exploring each ancestral home, creating mixed flags, and placing each DNA combination in a pie chart.

As a result, I can today write that I am a third-generation dislocated Jew from Poland, with multiple belongings, multiple cultures, and multiple stories about being mixed-raced or cabocla; American born but raised in Brazil as a Brazilian mix of Brazilian Native, Afro Brazilian, and Mediterranean Sea colonialists, raised in an LGBTQ dance community and internationally traveled from an early age. Other privileges I hold include that I have been married to an American Jewish man for more than 20 years; I am in my 50’s. I am the daughter of two medical doctors and a mother of two teenage boys. Lastly, I am able-bodied, and I have been a professional dancer since I was 16 years old when I joined the Companhia Fim de Seculo led by Renato Vieira in Rio de Janeiro and have been dancing and teaching professionally ever
since. In 1997, I began my studies in Somatic Psychology and Dance/Movement Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). I have worked in private psychotherapy practice since the year 2000, and even though I have been teaching dance and movement awareness /somatic classes for many years, I have more recently worked as an Adjunct Professor in Dance at the Corcoran School of Arts and Design since 2011 while dancing for the Maida Withers Dance Construction Company.

As I end this portion of describing my ancestral legacy and enter into this study as a co-participant, I return to the voice of the researcher and will use the acronym GR to refer to myself as one of the participants.

**Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy**

As previously explained, *DNA stories* was a storytelling project that the researcher engaged in during the first year of doctoral studies for an arts apprenticeship class to locate herself as a researcher and to find better understanding of her identity by investigating her ancestral lineage. This method became the foundation of the pilot study *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy*. This dissertation, an ABR with EDS, added two extra meetings: to learn the ancestral story the participant wanted to share and their experience of creating an EDS. The participant’s ancestral story was told before making the EDS and a discussion of the process was conducted after creating the EDS. The meetings before and after the EDS method were inspired by Seidman's (2019) phenomenological guidelines: First, the researcher meets with the participant to gather as much as possible about one’s ancestral legacy story. Ordinarily, Seidman’s procedures utilize a second interview; however, for this study, the participant explored their embodied relationship with an ancestor through creating an EDS.
Third, the participant engaged in the meaning-making of their experience through a final interview (Seidman, 2019).

This study did not involve analyzing the dance, the videos, or the stories. It did not use techniques such as the Kestenberg movement profile, body-mind-centering, or other video analysis methods. It allowed the participant to story the movements and then express their meaning-making process in a final interview (Cohen, 1994; Kestenberg, 1975). The objective of not using video or movement analysis in this study was to serve a wide range of readers that may not understand movement-specific analysis. Furthermore, the EDS narrative aimed not to see the researcher as an expert but to empower the participant to report through their own language what they saw in their movement as data for the research (Brown & Strega, 2005). The EDS method of this research will be detailed later in this paper. Furthermore, the narrative that was created from the dance in the film could stand on its own merits, which was transcribed later on in the results.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review on Ancestral Legacy

Ancestral Legacy affects many areas of one’s life, from inheriting resilience or transgenerational trauma to one’s lineage, early attachment style, place attachment, culture, and sense of belonging. In all aspects of these ancestral studies, the body is the main center of where the individual might hold implicit memory and trauma. Meanwhile, an ancestral name can influence one’s identity development and all aspects of how one perceives one’s lineage. Therefore, this section will review ancestral legacy in five different areas of research: Resilience and transgenerational trauma; early attachment styles; place attachment, home and culture; embodied trauma treatment; and identity, artifact, and name.

For each section of this literature review, the articles are organized chronologically for the reader to see the evolving questions surrounding ancestral legacy. The first category will focus on research pertaining to resilience and transgenerational trauma as an ancestral legacy. Next, early attachment and place attachment to ancestral homes will be discussed separately, showing the effects of ancestral attachment history on their descendants. All these categories affect one’s implicit memory and vulnerability to trauma, which will be then reviewed in its own section of embodied trauma treatment. Lastly, another category that is affected by all the above is one’s development of identity, one’s inheritance of ancestral artifacts, and name.

Resilience and Transgenerational Trauma

There have been various research studies pertaining to the existence of ancestral exposure to trauma and its effect in second (2G) and third (3G) generations of families as transgenerational trauma (TGT) or resilience to future traumas (Yehuda et al., 2001). Sometimes the silent conspiracy in a family can be passed down through an implicit memory that is felt
through many generations (see figure 6). Resiliency has been present when there was open communication, a nurturing environment, freedom for artistic expression, social support, cultural identity, a sense of safety and security with parents, and a sense of belonging and place attachment (Braga et al., 2012). In general, TGT studies showed that a parent's exposure to trauma could affect biology and increase one’s offspring's vulnerability for TGT (Yehuda et al., 2001). Furthermore, research looking into the debate of nature and nurture show’s that both are present, there is a genetic inheritance influence as well as the context of one’s environment, land, and neighborhood (Champagne, 2016).

**Figure 6**

*Three generations of women Art-Base Response to Pilot Study EDS by Giselle Ruzany, 2019*

Note: The researcher uses drawing and collage to express three generations of women who survived loss and trauma. The open shoulders show resilience. The facial expressions express the sadness for the ancestral past. Together the three women are united through the dressing elements of Earth, Water, and Fire. The collage above it holds a canopy of ice that begins to melt. This figure illustrates ancestral legacy’s potential to create resilience and transgenerational trauma.
Looking into the hypothesis that parents with PTSD may transfer trauma symptoms to their offspring more than parents who were exposed to trauma but did not develop the diagnosis, Yehuda et al. (2001) conducted a study with 93 Holocaust survivor offspring. Sixty participants reported having at least one parent with PTSD, and 33% reported having parents without PTSD. Surprisingly, results showed that parental trauma exposure was significantly associated with a lifetime of depression in their offspring, despite not having a parent with a diagnosis of PTSD ($x^2 = 21.73, df=1, p < 0.0005$). Yehuda et al. (2001) demonstrated that adult offspring of Holocaust survivors also showed greater prevalence of PTSD, including in this study where PTSD was reflected in offspring, by showing occurrence of PTSD ($x^2 = 10.36, df=2, p < 0.0006$) and depression ($x^2 = 17.95, df=2, p < 0.0005$), but not anxiety ($x^2 = 4.2, df=2, n.s.$). Lastly, because depression in the parental survivors was not examined, the study could not analyze if that was a factor. This study alluded to the possibility of a genetic component in these results.
where the parent’s exposure to trauma, even if not acquiring PTSD diagnosis, was carried on by the child as a vulnerability to depression and PTSD (Yehuda, Halligan, & Bierer, 2001).

The legacy of vulnerability to transgenerational trauma has been balanced by the legacy of resilience. Resilience, in trauma survivors and their offspring, is seen as a capacity to keep going with higher levels of optimism when faced with adversity or stressors by using humor and the arts, creativity, open communication, and flexibility in the face of adversities (Braga et al., 2012). Meanwhile, TGT symptoms include a lifetime of depression and PTSD symptoms, a vulnerability for psychopathology and feeling helpless, as well as the tendency to repeat maladaptive behaviors and traumatic experiences from parents, over-identification, and preoccupation with parents, reversal parenting, and loss of culture and sense of belonging (Bowers & Yehuda, 2016; Braga, 2012).

A qualitative study of TGT found resilience and trauma in the offspring of Holocaust survivors (OHS). Braga et al. (2012) studied how OHS in Brazil felt and made meaning from their parents’ memories and experiences. Through the Brazilian Jewish Institute and snowball sampling, the researchers recruited and individually interviewed 15 OHS (nmales = 7; nfemale = 8), with ages ranging from 40 to 66 years old, and education ranging from 12 to 22 years. Braga et al. (2012) found three main themes for patterns of transgenerational transmission of a traumatic experience or resilient patterns. The first theme was related to the ability or inability of the survivors to work over the collective trauma. This was seen in TGT families through “somatic symptoms and psychopathology disorders,” while resilient families showed “personal narratives, documentary records, and cultural rituals” (p. 11). The second theme was the quality of the communication from survivors to offspring. In families presenting with TGT, there was “indirect communication, fragmented discourse, and secrets,” while in resilient families, there was an
“open, loving, humorous interaction” (p. 11). The third theme was repercussions in the lives of the survivor’s offspring. These included the TGT experiences of “guilt, victimization, and submission,” while resilience could be seen in “artistic creation, humor at home, imaginary resources and social support” (p. 11). Further examination of communication patterns and overidentification with parents who were victims of trauma could clarify some of these themes.

As it happens, a year later, Giladi and Bell (2013) used a quantitative method to measure the correlation of enmeshment and lack of open family communication in descendants of Holocaust survivors with symptoms of TGT. A non-random sample of 215 Jewish American/Canadian descendants of World War II immigrants was divided into four groups: 2G ($n = 77$), 3G ($n = 52$), and two control groups ($n = 50$, $n = 36$, respectively), of similar age, that were immigrants with no Holocaust survivor relatives. Instruments included the Secondary Trauma Scale (STS), Crucible Differentiation Scale (CDS), Family Communication Scale (FCS), and a demographic questionnaire. There were significant differences between 2G and 3G and respective control groups in all scales, but no statistical difference between 2G and 3G scores. Comparing scores of all participants with multiple hierarchical regression, the null hypothesis was rejected, showing that higher CDS and FCS were associated with lower STS, $R(2, 186) = .605$, $R^2 = .37$, $\Delta R^2 = .326$, $p < .001$. Despite limitations, this study showed that family communication and differentiation were associated with the development of resilience in 2G and 3G survivors of trauma, which would be important to measure in future studies (Giladi & Bell, 2013). Considering communication as an essential part of resilience, the question remains if the act of verbalizing trauma to anyone would be enough to create a resilient outcome or if communication within one’s family and community would be necessary to achieve these results.
Going beyond resilience and looking into post-traumatic growth (PTG), Dekel et al. (2013) sought to understand if TGT and resilience affected PTG by comparing veterans from the Yom Kippur war living in Israel; some had parents who were Holocaust survivors’ parents ($n = 43$), and others had parents who were not ($n = 156$). This project was part of a more extensive study that measured participants three times after the war ended (18, 30, and 35 years). This study compared data from the second and third administrations ($N = 199$, $M_{age} = 53.4$, SD = 4.4, 100% male) of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory. A $t$-test was used to compare PTSD inventory scores with measurements taken about stressors during combat and after. There was no significant difference in levels of PTSD between the 2G or non-2G Holocaust survivors. However, results showed that even 35 years after the war, veterans who had a Holocaust family history showed lower PTG than veterans who did not (Dekel et al., 2013). ANOVA results for PTG between groups were $F(1, 133) = 4.39$, $p = .044$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Dekel et al. (2013) suggested that, although seemingly counterintuitive, resilience might block PTG. Dekel et al. (2013) speculated that veterans who were not 2G or 3G survivors of trauma could communicate openly about their trauma, successfully address PTSD in treatment, and show the presence of PTG. Dekel et al. (2013) further suggested that among the reasons for the discrepancy was a “silent conspiracy” surrounding TGT that opposed the “open verbal communication and self-disclosure about their own trauma, a key facilitator of PTG” (p. 532). Nevertheless, 2G or 3G offspring of trauma survivors might not have heard the story verbally and might only register the narrative in their body as implicit memory.

Walkerdine et al. (2013) addressed the fact that TGT is not due to repression, as 2G or 3G might not consciously know “what it is that their body knows and feels” (p. 275). The lack of safety associated with this TGT is instead characterized in terms of “imaginary” and “symbolic”
memory. In a case study, these authors analyzed a 5-hr interview conducted with a woman named Angela. Angela reported that she was not cared for or held by her parents, and presently, she had no support and was “repeating a situation where she experienced no emotional holding” (p. 283). The case study described Angela’s childhood, her visit to Jamaica when she was 23 years old, and her difficult relationship with the father of her children (Walkerdine et al., 2013). There were multiple levels of embodied knowledge, and the case study illustrated how broad historical context needed to be acknowledged in treatment in order for Angela to understand her nonverbal memory of the trauma. The authors emphasized that it is not possible to separate history from family relations, as even if a person does not consciously know what happened, it “does not mean that the body does not at some level remember what cannot be spoken” (p. 295).

So even though communication seems crucial to resilience, and implicit memory might sometimes be the only trace of one’s ancestry, collective trauma might allow what happened to public information and, therefore, part of one’s community identity. Bezo and Maggi (2015) wrote that the participants with TGT in their study were eager to speak about what happened even starting the conversation at the door of their homes. However, they reported mistrust in talking about what happened with the community. This was a qualitative study on 15 families of survivors ($n=45$) of the 1932-1933 Holodomor genocide by interviewing first ($M_{age} = 86.4$), second ($M_{age} = 57.6$), and third ($M_{age} = 30.3$) generation, survivors. In 2010, 45 semi-structured, 53-minute interviews were conducted. The theme for emotions and inner states included categories such as fear it would happen again, mistrust in others, sadness, and shame. Participants also shared states of horror, fear to protest, stress, anxiety, and poor sense of self-worth. The second theme of trauma-based coping strategies included stocking food, an overemphasis on food, accumulation of unneeded things, increased social hostility, and
participation in risky behavior. The interviews also revealed that participants felt socially indifferent in the community and that there was a lack of collective healing and identity. Although this study could have had stronger credibility if it had used triangulation, member checking, and made use of an external auditor, it demonstrated evidence of TGT but not the cause. In this study, it seemed that community healing was something that the participants felt was lacking. The 2G and 3G survivors were not supported by the social environment and felt threatened and suspicious of their neighbors (Bezo & Maggi, 2015). It seems that communication is not enough to create resiliency, and trust is essential in one’s community to overcome collective trauma. Furthermore, one could suspect that there is a biological component that is passed down from parents that experienced trauma.

Looking into TGT in a more specific duet of mother and child, Bowers and Yehuda (2016) studied if mothers with PTSD and prenatal stress could affect their babies. The study showed that the offspring of mothers with PTSD and prenatal stress were affected physically and psychologically (Bowers & Yehuda, 2016). Nevertheless, it seems that there is an association between maternal stress and a diminished circulation of cortisol level in offspring, with only 10 to 20% of cortisol of the mother passing to the fetus (Bowers & Yehuda, 2016).

In another study, biological data demonstrated DNA change when there was a separation between mother and infant in humans, rodents, and dogs (Champagne, 2016). During collective trauma and exodus of land, there is often a separation of mother and child, and Champagne exposed the risk of this type of stressor. His studies with animals suggested that when a male was exposed to stress, it influenced the mother’s investment in the offspring. Furthermore, the characteristics of a phenotype due to environment and culture were repeated and propagated across generations. Champagne (2016) advocated continuing to study the influence of the
environment on epigenetics when it comes to “resilience and psychiatric risk” (p. 1226). Champagne proposed that there is a bidirectional interaction between an organism and the environment.

Stepping away from TGT studies and their implications and taking into consideration how verbal or artistic expression of trauma seems to help one pass down resilience, a study seems to highlight the long-term effects of collective trauma and the use of arts as a resource for supporting resilience. Diamond and Shrira (2018) conducted a study that investigated engagement in the arts with aging Holocaust survivors. The participants were a convenience sample of 154 elders from a community in Israel ($M_{\text{age}} = 81.67$) with relatively good health, high economic status, and education. Diamond and Shrira theorized that the creative process could provide an opportunity to “find meaning, to mourn, to bring order into emotional chaos and to regain a sense of continuity and integration” (p. 6). The researchers defined art as a process of creativity that enhanced well-being, coping strategies, and positive adaptation in individuals who faced adversities, tolerated ambiguity, and adjusted easily to new ideas and experiences—characteristics consistent with resilience. The art-making used by the sample included visual art (32.7%), music (15.4%), writing (15.4%), dance (11.5%), drama (1.9%), and other types of art (23%). Self-report questionnaires were used to ascertain participants’ exposure to the Holocaust, engagement with art, PTSD symptoms (PTSD Checklist), psychological stress (18-item Brief Symptom Inventory), resilience (Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale), and subjective perception of age (Attitude to Aging questionnaire). Diamond and Shrira (2018) reported that adversity and creativity had a moderate statistically significant correlation with resilience and growth but concluded that further study is needed to use a more diverse socioeconomic group and investigation how specifically the artistic process connects to resilience. This study highlighted
the possibility that the arts might be a source of resilience, as they might address expression and self-investigation. However, this study did not measure other resilience factors, seen in Braga’s (2012) study, which could have deepened the results (Diamond & Shrir, 2018).

Knowing how collective trauma can become a central organizing event in one’s identity, in a recent study, Greenblatt-Kimron et al. (2021) studied the influence of event centrality and secondary traumatization on 2G and 3G. The authors stated that the repercussions of parental PTSD included psychobiological vulnerability, internalizing and behavioral problems as well as compromised hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal function. Greenblatt-Kimron et al. (2021) were coming from the premise that although transmission of trauma related to the holocaust to other generations has been debated it also has been shown to affect offspring cortisol levels which could affect one’s vulnerability when coping with life-threatening situations. In this study, Greenblatt-Kimron et al. attempted to understand if the collective trauma of Holocaust survivors was integrated into one’s identity and life story as an event centrality due to transgenerational trauma. Also, another point of interest was secondary trauma, defined as being affected by the trauma of another person without direct exposure, which was present in 2G and 3G. According to previous studies, there was a general vulnerability to 2G due to one’s biology and also due to nonverbal communication and having a parent that was numb or emotionally detached. Coming from these premises, the study sampled 92 Holocaust G1-G2 and G3 triads and 67 comparison groups, which came from countries not occupied by the Nazi regime but were of Western European descent (Greenblatt-Kimron et al. 2021). All participants could speak Hebrew and live in Israel. For this study, background measurement was taken, including medical conditions. A two-item difficult life event was asked only to G1, which included the event and second a small description. PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 and a short version of the centrality of event scale was
used for all participants, and an 18-item measure assessment symptoms from DSM-4 of secondary traumatization due to exposure was conducted to G2 and G3. Results showed a direct effect from G1 to G3 on the Holocaust survivor sample versus the comparison group. It is also important to state that Holocaust G1 showed higher PTSD than the G1 comparison sample. Furthermore, there was higher secondary traumatization to Holocaust G2 and both higher secondary traumatization and event centrality on G3. Greenblatt-Kimron et al. speculated that the higher event centrality on G3 has to do with the collective experience of the social climate at the time which had to do with events that created a pride of being part of collective memory and Israeli identity, versus shame and silence that 2G experienced. Furthermore, medical conditions seem to be repeated on G2 and therefore less successful aging among Holocaust G2. This study concluded that TGT created the identity to the event centrality and not vice-versa.

In summary, parents who survived trauma can affect children in a resilient way or, due to biological and environmental stressors, in a way that makes them vulnerable to PTSD, psychopathology, and a lifetime of depression (Braga, 2012). In TGT, there is often a lack of communication about history alongside the development of mistrust in the community, which yields feelings of guilt, fear, poor self-esteem, victimization, and submission within the family (Bezo & Maggi, 2015; Giladi & Bell, 2013). Resilience, on the other hand, shows up in humor, use of art, pride, and social support (Braga et al., 2012; Diamond et al. 2018). Lastly, it seems that just the sheer exposure to traumatic events could cause TGT in 2G and 3G (Yehuda & Halligan, 2001). Greenblatt-Kimron et al.’s (2021) study proposed that the time of the generation and what is happening to that population might affect how TGT manifests on each generation, where event centrality and identity is reinforced. Nevertheless, there is a controversy if TGT studies reliability as it could be the issue of early attachment style (Bar-On et al., 1998).
Early Attachment Styles

Many researchers and clinicians refer to the four attachment styles of secure, ambivalent anxious, disorganized, and avoidant. These styles were identified through extensive observations of interactions between mothers and children and have been theorized as possible building blocks to a person’s development and well-being. The research base is substantive enough that Van Izendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg (1997), almost two decades ago, concluded, “Intergenerational transmission of attachment should be considered an established fact” (p. 163). Nevertheless, environmental support could influence the development of secure attachment, while a lack of it could facilitate insecure attachment when disruption of the family system or loss occurs (Raby et al., 2015). According to Lehner and Yehuda (2018), “Trauma can profoundly affect parenting, especially trauma that included the loss of family members. Offspring have described overprotection by parents, but also numbness, distance, and neglect” (p. 25). Therefore, the dynamics in families with parents who are trauma survivors need to be looked at from a relational perspective (see figure 7).

Figure 7

Secure attachment collage by Giselle Ruzany, 2021

Note: A collage holds bonding and safe attachment images printed from different painters and the researcher’s family photograph. A filter was used to make it black and white.
The connection between insecure attachment and TGT was demonstrated by Bar-On et al. (1998), who took three studies on TGT and looked at them from an attachment perspective. These TGT studies (quantitative and qualitative) on Holocaust survivors (from the Netherlands, Canada, and Israel) were re-examined through the lens of attachment. The issues of “attachment, separation, and loss” are seen as concepts influencing insecure-ambivalent attachment and the “observed preoccupation” with issues about separation and parents’ well-being (p. 316). Another concept that is reinterpreted is the notion of the conspiracy silence seen from the lens of disorganized attachment and continuous cumulative contextual support. Loss and trauma studies have been correlated with “disorganized infant-mother attachment relationship,” which are both experiences common to Holocaust survivors (p. 319). The authors explained that TGT and disorganized attachment correlate because parents are a source of distress and also a source of security. Parent overprotection and exaggerated response “unintentionally transmitted disorganizing messages of imminent danger” (p. 333). Authors tried to use studies that had a
different methodology and different countries of origin in order to triangulate the common findings (Bar-On et al., 1998). One important part of the discussion is the fact that unresolved trauma and loss of an attachment figure caused parents to be emotionally dysregulated.

Similarly, Baider (2000) noticed that 2G trust in social support and resilience could be short-lived and disrupted later in life. Avoidant attachment and intrusive thoughts could be triggered by a life threat (Baider, 2000). In a study with cancer patients (Baider, 2000) who were 2G of survivors of the Holocaust, the presence of their mothers and spouses was correlated with increased distress. Participants were recruited from three hospitals in Israel, eight months to eight years after they first were diagnosed with breast cancer. Survivors of the Holocaust were defined as Jews that had been in a “concentration camp, forced labor camp, or extermination camp in Europe during World War II” (p. 905). The offspring of one or two survivors were recruited, while those whose parents were not in the Holocaust were in the control group. Researchers conducted a semi-structured interview with 106 2G participants and 102 participants in a comparison group (Baider, 2000). All participants completed three self-report questionnaires. The Brief Symptom Inventory was used to measure psychological distress, the Impact of Event Scale was used for suggesting psychological problems, and the Mental Adjustment scale was used to measure how patients were coping with cancer. The first two scales showed statistical significant difference where the Brief Symptom Inventory showed grand severity index ($M = 66$, $SD = 7.4$) higher than with comparison group ($M = 54$, $SD = 7.8$) with $t = 11.76$, $p < 0.0001$, and the Impact Event Scale in 2G had intrusion and avoidance ($M = 16.9$, $SD = 8.9$; $M = 20.6$, $SD = 10$), higher than control group ($M = 8.1$, $SD = 6.8$; $M = 8.4$, $SD = 6.6$) with $t = 8.02$, $p = <0.0001$; $t = 10.41$, $p = < 0.0001$. Authors speculated the reasons why these results were found, including
that preoccupation with being a burden and causing more distress to mothers who were survivors, caused higher avoidance of support.

The issue of enmeshment and lack of individuation seen in 2G of Holocaust survivors have been described as a possible cultural dynamic. In order to clarify this dynamic as a possible transgenerational event, Kretchmar and Jacobvitz (2002) searched to understand how boundary patterns and attachment might be being transmitted across generations. By recruiting mostly white women, from middle-class families (\(N = 55\)), researchers documented attachment observation with infants at 6, 9, 18 months. All participants were recruited through birth announcements or had a history of participating in previous research with one of the authors. Participants were 87% white, 94% married, and ranged from 21 to 41 years old (\(M = 29\)), 48% had some college and 68% had a full or part-time job. There were 24 female and 35 male infants. Kretchmar and Jacobvitz (2002) used current relationships and assessment of memories of past relationships to gauge current relationships with grandmother and infants. This study correlated mothers internalized memories of relationship strategies with their mom and if that influenced how their interaction and attachment to their own infant. This study was able to find some important correlations between the mother-child relationship when it came to boundaries and attachment transmission (Kretchmar & Jacobvitz, 2002). Nevertheless, it is important to remember that self-report can often be biased and based on mood. Most importantly, “the predicted relationships between memories of overprotection, both patterns of boundaries disturbances (disengagement and entanglement), and less optimal caregiving did not emerge” (p. 364). Authors discussed that a disengaged parent trying to look engaged could look intrusive, while being disengaged might actually show a certain healthier approach to cope with a difficult parent. On the opposite spectrum neediness through entanglement and resistant attachment
seemed similar, where there was hypervigilance on separation and resistance in reunification. The authors concluded that “helping parents to resolve both past and present issues with their own parents will assist them in establishing more optimal relationship dynamics with their own children” (p. 369).

According to Wallin (2007), our lives “revolve around intimate attachments” (p.1). The development of working models of a secure base so that an individual can go explore the world and feel safe is the base of attachment theory and how it applies to healing in psychotherapy. According to Wallin, children with a history of secure attachment show “greater self-esteem, emotional health and ego resilience, positive affect, initiative, social competence, and concentration” (p.23). Also, Wallin (2007) wrote about the flexibility of the parent allowing flexibility to the offspring which allowed improvisation to attune to the needs of the child. Important elements of a secure attachment include safety and co-regulation of emotions. Once a parent can help soothe a child, this child gains confidence in their ability to thrive without being overwhelmed by their own experiences of life. This learning of self soothing and regulation of one’s own feelings have been described through mirroring of parent and child as well as witnessing play (Wallin, 2007). Wallin describes attachment theory as a building block to understanding the multiple dimensions of the self, including the emotional self, the somatic self, and the representational self, the reflective self, and the mindful self, all selves experience and shapes one’s life.

In a longitudinal study, it became clear that attachment style is passed down as an ancestral legacy (Hautamäki et al., 2010). Thirty-two families of a mother, father, and maternal grandmother were followed during the last trimester of pregnancy. The theoretical framework supported the continuation of attachment styles when there was environmental stability
(Hautamäki et al., 2010). While discontinuity of attachment has been related to environmental change, when mothers and grandmothers with secure attachment had 100% likability their infants also had a secure attachment. Eighty-six percent of avoidant attachment continued from the dynamic of mother and grandmother. There was a continuation for secure attachment and insecure-avoidant across generations but a reversal reaction to the ambivalent attachment to disorganized attachment and vice-versa. Difficulties with external validity included homogenous culture and economical status in the sample with no diverse demographic data (Hautamäki et al., 2010).

Bradley et al. (2013) examined the family environment effect on the oxytocin receptor gene. PTSD histories, childhood family environments (CFE), resilience, positive affect measurement, and DNA saliva extracts were used as measurements in a sample of 971 African Americans (69.7% female, $M_{age} = 34.84$, $SD = 8.83$). There was an expected positive correlation found between resilience and positive CFE, as well as between positive affect and positive CFE, and a negative correlation between resilience and positive affect with “childhood maltreatment and other traumatic experiences” (p. 5). There was no evidence of a shift in genotype correlated with resilience, and only one out of three genes were less likely to correlate with resilience. It seems that genes did matter without considering the family environment and that genes seemed to be altered by parents’ experiences with trauma and possibly passed down to their offspring (Bradley et al., 2013). Therefore, the family environment could trigger TGT in the next generation.

Felsen (2018), an expert in the field, explained that intergenerational and intragenerational family interactions are essential parts of identity formation in 2G and 3G individuals. He explained that family ruptures due to sibling relational dysfunction might be
created by parents’ trauma. The transmission of historical trauma affects how siblings fulfill their obligation to “parental needs and relational expectancies” (p. 440). When one sibling felt that the other sibling caused pain to the parent, intense negative feelings were created between them. These dynamics seemed to resurface as the parents aged and became more dependent (Felsen, 2018). These conflicts and ruptures between siblings created even further family disruption in the third generation. The “mission to take care of the parents” was manifested in both siblings but from different points of view, acting as the “good child” or the “problem child” (p. 439). Felsen (2018) proposed that this rupture is a re-enactment from the traumatic loss that happened during the Holocaust, where there was no more extended family. Felsen also proposed that this late onset of TGT occurred when there was a lack of social support, which seemed to be provoked by the family ruptures, including sibling dynamics. In general, part of the difficulty of studying TGT and its treatment is that it has many components relating to the family of origin, social environment, and biology that can affect the psychological health of 2G and 3G (Felsen, 2018).

In a study on intergenerational transmission of trauma with mothers from Japan, Okawara and Paulsen (2018) proposed that memories of one’s attachment trauma would surface if guided to attend to the somatic sensation felt when irritated with one’s child. Okawara and Paulsen (2018) suggested that attachment-related trauma is held as implicit memory and, therefore, sometimes only triggered in adult life. According to the authors, when the negative effect from children triggers visceral unpleasant somatic sensations in mothers, caregivers might become irritated and feel oppressed by their child’s emotions. In these situations, the mother might ignore the feeling or respond to their child’s every demand in order to stop the unpleasant sensations (Okawara & Paulsen, 2018). The child, in turn, might respond by detaching, protesting, or entering into despair, behaviors that correlate with insecure attachment patterns of avoidant,
resistant-ambivalent, and disorganized-disoriented. The authors further speculated that this early distress could “predict a greater amygdala volume in adulthood” (Okawara & Paulsen, 2018, p. 145). Thus, dysregulation of mothers and hyperarousal of their sympathetic nervous systems is thought to underlie the intergenerational transmission of maltreatment to the child.

In Okawara and Paulsen’s (2018) study, they used three sessions of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) to target intergenerational transmission. The first session was similar in both case studies: They asked the mother to hold a body sensation of a memory of being triggered by her child and to give them a number from zero to 10 to represent their level of distress. As part of preparing for the following sessions, they asked the mother to find a safe state, remember a good moment with their child, and self-tap on each side of her arm. Through two case studies, Okawara and Paulsen (2018) described how, in the next two sessions, each mother recovered memory from childhood in which their own negative emotion was not soothed by caregivers. By recalling these events, the trauma was desensitized and stopped being reenacted with their own children. These case studies were conducted in a culture where enmeshment is considered the norm and, according to the authors, the two mothers were happily married, well-adjusted, and loved their children. These factors limit transferability and, as case studies, they lack empirical rigor. Nevertheless, the use of thick description allows for a detailed worth further exploring.

Mikulincer and Shaver (2019) explained secure attachment as confidence and optimism in times of need where the person feels lovable and competent while believing that others are supportive and responsive. After reviewing many studies, they found that people who came from secure attachment had better emotional regulation and were able to express and communicate their feelings, problem solve, and re-construct and reappraise a situation without distortion. On
the other hand, Mikulincer and Shaver (2019) explained that individuals with histories of avoidant attachment prevented noticing their own emotions by suppressing thoughts and memories or revealing emotions. Furthermore, individuals with histories of anxiety attachment perceived mostly negative emotions as congruent to attachment needs, creating and “amplifying a cycle of distress,” being hypervigilant, and at the same time holding a “counter-phobic orientation toward threatening situations or making self-defeating decisions” (p. 7). These theoretical underpinnings of attachment styles facilitate the understanding of the studies reviewed here.

A recent publication of unpublished papers from John Bowlby, the pioneer of attachment theory, illustrated his thought process on building an inner working model of one’s relationship with a caregiver (Duschinsky & White, 2020). Bowlby (1962) explained that guilt is present when there is a denial of hate and the promise of love. Because one fails to do what they promised to another, they betray their ideal self. This impossible ideal self and promise to caregiver might create the base for guilt and insecure attachment. Bowlby (1962a) explained that this process could create self-punishment tendencies: displaced anger towards self, anger towards the introjected object or parent, and third, the desire to be forgiven and atoned through punishing his or herself from a sense of guilt. These inner mechanisms are processes of disconnection from social support and support seeking. Bowlby (1962b) explained that this detachment and inner oppression comes as a defense from a traumatic loss of an attachment figure. Even though Bowlby wrote these papers in the 1960s, it is a radical shift of thinking that held its publication at bay until this year (Duschinsky & White, 2020).

Keeping attachment style legacy in mind when treating vulnerable populations with TGT might help interrupt traumatic transmission from one generation to another. The research on
attachment style clarifies the transgenerational and epigenetics aspects of parent and caregiver influence on their offspring as an ancestral legacy issue. It showed that offspring of parents with trauma might develop insecure attachment characteristics later in life when confronted with a life-threatening situation (Felsen, 2018). Attachment styles can affect one’s well-being and capacity to self-regulate, connect with others and one’s environment. When a parent is being triggered by their child, this might indicate transgenerational trauma (Okawara and Paulsen, 2018). The insecure attachment might be seen in relationships with people and places, and it might be felt in the body and in family dynamics.

**Place Attachment, Home and Culture**

In the last wave of displacement due to natural disasters, depletion of resources and wars, many migrants had to adjust to a new location in a new land, in a new home (see figure 8). The shift of one’s home can have a traumatic effect and can bring up TGT as a lack of sense of home for many generations (Bogaç, 2009). One’s ancestral decision can mean that a child is born without the support of the community, ancestral culture, religion and people that look like them can lack life satisfaction and well-being. Knowing that place attachment is connected to a sense of wellbeing, it makes sense to assist migrants in achieving a successful emplacement (Scannell & Gifford, 2017). Even though art therapy and art-based research have been around for many years, there has been a natural movement of research towards the inclusion of art and digital storytelling when studying migrants and their descendants as an outlet in expressing one’s culture and lack or sense of belonging (Anguluan-Coger, 2013; Kale, 2019). By using the arts and digital storytelling, researchers from all over the world were able to gather non-verbal information as well as the story that the participant wanted to tell, versus what the researcher
wanted to analyze (Lennete et al., 2019; Vacchelli, 2018). In this way, there is an overlap of research and research with a therapeutic side effect.

**Figure 8**

*Place Attachment Art-Base Response to Pilot Study EDS by Giselle Ruzany, 2019*

*Note: In the figure below, the researcher brings together where she was born above as a silhouette of New York City and below the silhouette of Rio de Janeiro where she grew up. The pizza tray, covered in spray paint, is a city art and an emplacement activity, giving the figure an illustration of place attachment.*

Goodman and West-Olatunji (2008) demonstrated how TGT complicates trauma treatment in a study with refugees from New Orleans, displaced from their homes following Hurricane Katrina. In a case study of using psychoeducation of TGT to support resilience, the authors wrote about protective factors, including identity, family support, and socioeconomic
The authors described work with a 41-year-old white male one year after Hurricane Katrina. By remembering the stories from his parents, who survived past floods, the man, who lived alone, was able to remember his resilient ancestral stories. He used the memory of his resilient lineage to come out of isolation and work with other co-workers to rebuild homes. Researchers speculated that TGT assessment and education focusing on ancestral coping skills and community building could help other survivors of collective trauma. This case study seems to illustrate how addressing TGT could facilitate healing trauma and achieving PTG.

When a population is dislocated due to war, or a natural disaster or terrorist attack destroys one’s home, there is a traumatic loss and a need to move to a new home. Bogaç’s (2009) research showed how just time did not seem to affect place attachment and adaptation to a new place, but that hope for the future was an important component in feeling rooted in a new environment. In his study, issues of discrimination and the potential threat of being forced out of residence caused resistance to successful resettlement for the first and second generation of migrants. Bogaç (2009) researched transgenerational place attachment in two generations of inhabitants that were originally from Paphos, Southern Cyprus, relocated to the Northern part of Cyprus. Bogaç (2009) used 60 minutes semi-structured interviews in 2006, questionnaires and drawings of home to compare place attachment of refugees with their children, who were born and grew up in the new community ($n_{\text{refugees}} = 40$, age range: 49-82; $n_{2G} = 20$; age range 18-32). For a month, Bogaç (2009) sought information on how participants felt about living in the residence and neighborhood. Two types of questionnaires were administered in 44 homes, one was an open-ended questionnaire, and the other a Likert scale. Results indicated that expectations of the future and experience of the past shaped the participants’ place attachment to current residency. Longer exposure and a clearer theme thick description might have helped
strengthen the credibility of the study. The triangulation between the Likert questionnaire, open question interview, and drawing of an ideal home was a good design and strengthen the validity of the findings (Bogaç, 2009).

Anguluan-Coger’s (2013) art-based research (ABR) dissertation explored her own ancestral Filipino cultural legacy, in search of answers while her American son struggled to adapt to college life. *Kapwa* is a term that means being weaved together in the Filipino culture was used in order to develop a methodology that involved the arts and healing for research. In this study, Anguluan-Coger (2013) began by instructing her participants on the use of oral tradition and cultural art forms including symbols from their Filipino homeland, and adopted American land. Second, individuals were encouraged to tell their own stories using indigenous art form symbols in order to achieve a sense of *Kapwa* or togetherness, where one is inseparable from the other in an intuitive collective communion. By studying indigenous Filipino epistemology, Anguluan-Coger (2013) found storytelling as a way of knowledge and empowered cultural identity, unlocking creativity and social well-being. Anguluan-Coger (2013) wrote that her participants’ first group of masks represented the feeling of oppression and the second of liberation and decolonization. The stories were told while sitting on a mat, which was also a symbol from the Filipino culture that represented the weaving of all as one internal collective. This dissertation seemed to border information on the experience of the Filipino migrant experience in the USA as well as a sense of healing through participating in the process of the study. This study offered a clear openness of our own culture, history, and bias to investigate this subject. However, its clarity and detailed description of its intention, process, and meaning-making from its findings were credible and trustworthy.
Albert-Proos’s (2015) research focused on the experience of immigrant expressive art therapists’ separation from and reconstruction of their sense of home. Albert-Proos wrote about home as a place where no one questioned their right to be there, as well as “a place of belonging that points to your history, your past, an archive of sorts that metaphorically documents a lineage, that marks you as non-alien” (Albert-Proos, 2015, p. 23). Albert-Proos continued her research by investigating the theme of home through shadow-theater, masks, filmmaking, and movement. Her main question was “How do immigrant expressive therapists conceive separation from and reconstruction of home for themselves and for their clients?” (p. 62). Through 10 semi-structured interviews and art she interviewed expressive art therapists that had at least two years of study. She found that through art, an immigrant could begin to integrate both homes and identities, as well as express the experiences of separation and reconstruction. Another of her findings demonstrated how a familiar art form and unfamiliar art form could evoke feelings of either home or estrangement respectively. Feeling at home in the arts can be something very personal as it depends on how at home one feels with different modalities. The concept of home included “physical, emotional, metaphorical states that are all connected” (Albert-Proos, 2015, p.140). This study clarified how migrant therapists working the arts helped them heal their sense of displacement as well as facilitate others to do the same.

A study showing a resilient outcome described Somali Bantu women as a group whose history went back 200 years when they were taken from Tanzania and Mozambique as slaves to Somalia (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). No longer, slaves, they remained marginalized, without political or education rights. In 1991, when the government was disintegrated, thousands walked to the south towards the Kenyan border, where eventually in refugee camps they continued their marginalized status (1991-2002). As Mozambique and Tanzania did not accept them back, the
United States granted them refugee asylum. Coughlan and Hermes (2016) interviewed 22 women now residing in New York State (2003-2005) participating in their community garden through a semi-structured questionnaire about their “attachment to place, meaning-making and emplacement” (p. 146). Coughlan and Hermes (2016) provided photos to elicit a sense of attachment to the three locations they have lived in the last two decades. Meaning-making through “emplacement” was seen through participant’s home decorations, posters of favorite places, and “the walls and ceilings were adorned with textiles or tapestries and the floors were covered with multiple carpets” (p. 146). In terms of place attachment, gardening was reported as a way to connect with memories of their farms in Somalia and the health and mental health benefits they felt from being in a “green place and gardens” (p. 146). The interviews revealed themes of forced displacement and disruption of place attachment and working in the garden as a way to stay connected to Somalia and stimulate memories of Africa, which emphasized: “the importance of placemaking to the successful negotiation of displacement” (p. 150). Because all participants were involved in the community garden project, the authors wondered if this feeling of placemaking through working in the garden might be limited to this group (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). Nevertheless, the authors disputed the claims that most ethnic displaced people suffer from “nostalgia, disorientation, and alienation,” as this study showed a different outcome (p. 152). In this study, both emplacement and connection to nature through gardening supported resilience and flexibility to adapt. These results are similar to findings of resilience on 2G of Holocaust survivors who grew up in a family that used characteristics of emplacement versus marginalization of own culture (Braga et al., 2012).

In a time of massive exodus and migration, refugees and immigrants represent a critical population that needs further attention. Aimed at understanding their experiences, Goodman et
al. (2017) used a phenomenological approach to conduct semi-structured interviews with undocumented immigrant and refugee women ($n = 19, M_{age} = 35.6$) who were recruited through social services and a nongovernmental organization. All participants met the federal poverty threshold. Interviews were conducted within the context of prolonged engagement over 6 months in the women’s communities and homes. Four themes emerged, including (a) experiences of trauma (related to socio-political context, trauma during the journey, and post immigration trauma, already in the United States); (b) structural and situational stressors (related to family separation and issues with jobs, money, and stress); (c) psychological symptomatology (including depression, PTSD and suicidology); and (d) process of resistance, resilience and coping skills dealing with internal (uncertainty) and external (environment and community) stressors (Goodman et al., 2017). There was a similarity of stressors for both undocumented immigrants and refugees, even if refugees received eight months of support from the government. Authors recommended that therapists take cultural competency training and incorporate “an understanding of systemic factors, adhering to individual and/or cultural beliefs and values, and addressing common and unique psychological outcomes” (Goodman et al., 2017, p. 319).

Looking into the validity of place attachment in relation to well-being, Scannell and Gifford’s (2017) study focused on the experiences of place attachment in relation to psychological gains by asking community members to describe places to which they felt attached. Using Mechanical Turk (MTurk) website hosted by Amazon .com, 97 Canadian residents with ages ranging from 18 to 53 years old ($n_{males} = 43, n_{females} = 49, n_{unspecified} = 5$) filled up an online questionnaire. By using an inductive approach, 13 codes were named: “memories, belonging, relaxation, positive emotions, activity support, comfort-security, personal growth,
freedom, entertainment, connection to nature, practical benefits, privacy, and aesthetics” (Scannell and Gifford, 2017, p. 256). The highest percent of responses involved memories (69%), belonging (54%), and relaxation (49%). Through memories, participants reported being able to connect with one’s past, ancestry and family history. The sense of belonging was reported through family roots and a sense of origin. Relaxation was reported through a place of stress relief. Other themes, such as positive emotions (38%), were reported less prevalent. The overall interrater agreement was 92.9%, with a kappa reliability of .090 (Scannell & Gifford, 2017).

Knowing that place attachment shows benefits such as creating memories of belonging and relaxation, it is crucial to help migrants and refugees develop place attachment as a path to feel environmental support and therefore create resilience to their experience for their offspring. Researching successful resettlement could be a path to avoiding rootlessness in TGT, and therefore understanding place attachment as an important element for resilience in vulnerable populations (see figure 9).

Figure 9

Second homeland drawing from Art from the Altered Book by Giselle Ruzany, 2019

Note: The picture below shows the researcher's process in locating herself. She drew sugar loaf, a tourist place in Rio de Janeiro; she drew her DNA in a concentric diagram and wrote "no return," in order to work in letting go of her childhood home. This process, described in other research, used drawing to understand the migrant process of creative adjustment.
Another study with migrants in London used digital storytelling (DST) as a methodology to understand the experience of their journey. Vacchelli (2018) and co-researcher Magali Peyrefitte co-participated with six migrant women that were working as volunteers, two academic researchers, and one facilitator of DST. Each participant was asked to bring an object that represented their migration to the United Kingdom. Participants also brought 15 to 30 photographs about their personal and work lives in relationship to their experience of migration. The workshop took two days: the first day was spent developing and co-creating the story and the second was spent practicing and creating the DST through iMovie. Co-participating and co-creating in the process was an important element of creating trust, by sharing one’s own stories and creating one’s own DST. Vacchelli (2018) described the different DST and how each story was different from one another, bringing up the importance of hearing each experience and need that came from different socio-economical-political situations. Nevertheless, the themes of home and belonging were the most pertinent across all stories. Another important finding of this study
was the importance of the participant’s voice. Vacchelli explained that stories are co-created and intersubjective. ABR was a useful methodology to explore one’s identity through embodied and artistic inquiry in relationship to one’s environmental and historical contexts, but it also was subjected to change through the co-creating process. Therefore, the primary communication through DST was explained within the context of co-creation and not taken as pure truths. This created some limitations; however, because the researcher was open about her process and influence on the research, there was transparency that gave the study adequate credibility.

In another DST study from a larger longitudinal one, researchers facilitated DST with women at risk from a refugee camp in Brisbane, Australia, which was created for women without a male in their family for protection and were under threat to their gender. None of the participants were fluent in English and had a translator that would interpret the voice for the DST. In order to not direct the result through interviews or using standardized questionnaires, Lenette et al. (2019) wanted to allow the participant to choose the story that they wanted to tell and share. Using digital storytelling as a methodology for “collaborative research,” the researchers hoped to understand the participant's experience without imposing their own values and culture (p.67). Lenette et al. (2019), used DST, as a visual ethnographic approach, and methodology as a tool to understand the nuances of marginalized populations and vulnerable groups in mental health research. According to Lenette, “Digital storytelling refers to ‘a creative arts process that is used to capture personal stories, using images and sound in a three to five-minute digital clip’” (p. 69). The DST project had four phases. First, participants had two in-depth interviews in their homes, where ideas for the story creation were discussed, and trust was established. “Crucial to this process was that the women were not ‘prescribed’ a particular storyline or theme to follow as a starting point” (p. 68). Second, a workshop on digital
storytelling was offered, but only two participants and one interpreter were able to attend. The third phase included selecting images and taking photos as material for the film. The fourth phase was viewing the final project and then interviewing the participants. A small group of four women was facilitated by an experienced storyteller who used a semi-structured approach and worked with them for six months (Lenette et al., 2019). A total of three stories were created (as one story was a mother and daughter duet). A thick narrative was documented of each story in this article while keeping “the narrative arc of each story” (p. 71). The authors described each story’s opening, the central theme, introduction and reason for an interpreter (also from a refugee background) and ending images (Lenette et al., 2019). Stories included the transgenerational legacy of artistic and cultural identity. No further information was given and therefore created limited results.

In a more recent wave of migrants to New Zealand, Kale (2019) researched refugee well-being and explained that:

Place-attached persons, compared to non-attached ones, demonstrated a higher sense of coherence, were more satisfied with their life overall, had a stronger bonding social capital and neighborhood ties, were more interested in their family roots, trusted people more, and were generally less egocentric… increased belonging, self-esteem, and meaning. (Kale, 2019, p. 1)

Kale (2019) wanted to familiarize female refugees from Myanmar with their new environment in order to build a multi-sensory experience to increase place-attachment, reducing “stress and anxiety and enhancing feelings of safety, autonomy, and belonging” (p. 2). Eleven hours of semi-structured interviews were conducted in the Nelson Community with the “multisensory mapping project in January and February 2019” (p. 2). Kale (2019) coded themes
that included places of need, places of pleasure, and places of everyday life, the challenges connecting to the land, and putting down roots. Both Bogaç (2009) and Kale’s (2019) use of drawings in order to reveal place attachment by noticing what the participants drew clarified the experiences of refugees and revealed important differences in the ways to connect to different places and communities.

By holding on to family identity through religion and cultural identity, one might be creating another path towards a sense of belonging. A study with immigrants in Canada looked into the relationship of religion with identity and a sense of belonging (Berry & Hou, 2019). Participants were selected only if they had a religious affiliation \((N = 8,269)\); 58% were over 12 years old when they arrived in Canada, 20% were under 12, and 22% were born in Canada but had immigrant parents. Berry and Hou (2019) aimed to examine if there was a correlation between belonging to multiple groups and life satisfaction and mental health. There was a question if grouping made a difference and if religion played a role in these patterns. In the authors’ words: “is there a way of living interculturally that is associated with better outcomes?” (p. 159). Through different measurement tools, authors correlated measurement of cultural identity, religious identity, and well-being in self-reported questionnaires (Berry & Hou, 2019).

Those who adopt the integration strategy (i.e., who have double cultural engagement) have better outcomes than those who adopt assimilation or separation (i.e., one cultural belonging) or marginalization (no cultural belonging). We found that in general, more identities are associated with better well-being outcomes. (Berry & Hou, 2019, p. 165) Berry and Hou (2019) warned that although these results point to an important finding, the results were moderate, not exceeding \(R^2 = 0.25\). Therefore, further studies might be necessary to confirm these results. By making a difference of separation, assimilation, or marginalization
from integration, the authors proposed an important shift of perspective when it comes to the well-being of immigrants and the life satisfaction “of immigrants to Canada and their descendants” (p. 168). Lastly, the authors specified that results for life satisfaction were not as significant in Islam, and since the research used religion as the only examined identity, it would be helpful to have further studies that include other identities and elements of emplacement.

Place attachment can be an important factor affecting vulnerable populations that are descendants of displacement. In order to create resilience, integration, and successful resettlement, refugees and migrants might be better off being encouraged to create multiple identities, multiple spaces of place attachment, and relationship to the land and nature, as well as the possibility for a future without the threat of being asked to leave (Bogaç, 2009; Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). Research showed that distrust and ambivalence of a place can create psychological homelessness and a sense of rootlessness in the next generation (Bogaç, 2009). The use of digital storytelling can be an important ABR methodology for identity integration when working with refugees (Vacchelli, 2018). Furthermore, storytelling can help create a coherent story of one’s ancestral legacy, which has been demonstrated as an important element in transforming trauma into resilience (Richardson, 2015). By having a digital storytelling product, one might also find a tool for the transformation of the community and collective trauma by creating a different story that can point toward healing (Lenette et al., 2019; Willox et al., 2013). This lack of community was reported in different TGT research and needs further research (Bezo & Maggi, 2015; Bogac, 2009). Storytelling might be an effective way to begin to open communication and build a community about the issues inherited from one’s ancestral legacy. Lastly, keeping one’s ancestral religion might facilitate integrating a migrant into belonging in multiple groups, including the new place of residence and its culture. Therefore,
facilitating place attachment through an artistic experiential activity could create conditions for a resilient outcome for vulnerable populations with an ancestral legacy of displacement and without a sense of home belonging, and identity.

**Embodied Trauma Treatment**

Embodied psychotherapy techniques such as Gestalt Therapy created in the 1940s, Dance/Movement Therapy in the 50s, and Somatic Psychotherapy techniques including Focusing (Gendlin, 1984), Somatic Experiencing (Peter Levine, 2015), Sensorimotor integration (Pat Ogden, 2015), family constellations created in the 90s (Hellinger, 1996; Kampenhout, 2001) and more recently coming from a neurobiology perspective Stephan Porges (2011) and van der Kolk (2014) are bringing the body to the forefront in psychotherapy and trauma treatment. Van der Kolk (2014) has advocated for the integration of the body in trauma treatment, endorsing yoga as an effective complementary treatment for PTSD and chronic PTSD (C-PTSD). Even though research on embodied techniques for trauma treatment is in its beginning stages, many researchers have accepted the following premise: “The high rates of somatic complaints among traumatized individuals indicate that a trauma is remembered in the body” (West et al., 2017, p. 174).

**Figure 10**

*Photo of Giselle Ruzany Engaged in an Embodied Dance, by Deborah Candeub*

Note: In the figure below, the researcher is in a dance performance that illustrates embodiment.
Greenberg and Malcolm (2002) studied the use of the Gestalt Therapy technique of the empty chair dialogue as an embodied technique to heal one’s relationship with parental shortcomings. Participants (\(N = 26; M_{age} = 42, \text{SD} = 8.95, \text{range} = 27 \text{ to } 68 \text{ yrs}\)) reported being maltreated and suffered relational problems throughout childhood participated in 12 to 14 weekly individual sessions (1 hr. each) using the empty chair dialogue, where present moment expression is given to emotions about things that happened in the past and needs that were not met. Each session was led individually by a therapist from a group of eight advanced doctoral students of psychology, who had a minimum of 3 years of clinical experience and a minimum of 1 year of training in the empty chair technique. Participants were then asked to sit in another chair in the role of the parent. This role reversal and full embodied emotional engagement, according to the authors, facilitated an embodied sense of resolution. According to a Chi-square analysis, there was no statistically significant difference between “groups on sex, level of education, and marital status, whereas a t test showed no significance at the .05 level on age” (p.
Ten Likert scales were developed to analyze the videotaped sessions, which were each coded by two raters from the group of doctoral students and clinical psychologists trained for the task. Greenberg and Malcolm (2002) verified the coded sessions and analyzed the data to determine which elements were present when the method worked. Based on results, the researchers separated the participants into two groups, one set of participants who showed complete resolution ($N = 13$) and the other group who were randomly selected from among those who didn’t completely resolve their unfinished business ($N = 19$); four did not complete the trial. The researchers concluded that the empty chair technique was effective only when there was a presence of embodied emotional expression for completing unfinished business with the parent.

Rae Johnson (2009) conducting two sets of 60 to 90 minutes interviews on the topic of personal experiences on embodied oppression. During the interviews one or two embodied techniques included “focusing” as described by Eugene Gendlin (1982) and boundary exercises in order to explore issues and patterns in one’s personal space. Two main themes held the focus of the researcher: embodied response to oppression and somatic impact of trauma; the body as a place of wisdom and a place for social and personal power as resistance towards oppression.

When it came to embodied response and somatic response to trauma, Johnson (2009) found three main experiences: body memory, somatic vigilance and withdrawal or alienation from the body. When it came to embodied power, participants reported using arts, dance, yoga and using education and safe forums to reclaim one’s body. Johnson (2009) concludes that although more studies linking trauma and oppression still needs to be made, the body can offer a place of hope: “Although the stories they tell offer examples of the trauma and disconnection that result from the misuse of interpersonal and social power, they also offer the promise of hope and change” (p. 14).
As seen in early attachment research, community support can play an important role in overcoming complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD). Broadening the embodied relational aspect of trauma treatment to a community, three interns, Silva et al. (2015), two dancers and one psychologist, came together to study the intersection of dance and psychology while working with 12 youth at risk in a community in Rio de Janeiro for a year. Following a phenomenological theory by Merleau-Ponty and Gestalt Therapy, and the dance foundation as defined by Helenita de Sa Earp, the group of three found important similarities in their ontology, epistemology, concept and methodology during the workshops. The researchers had a dance and a psychology supervisor and searched for understanding the experience of the participants from an interdisciplinary approach while facilitating a dance, with music and video. One of the common goals that served to create dance and therapy was that Laura Perls as a dancer and musician, often used coordination, posture and breath, voice and body awareness. In this, the idea of having a body versus being a body was illuminated through the process. Other similar findings were that the body would hold tension in the tissues of the person in the present from events that were traumatizing in the past. Through dance, there was a spontaneous expression and relief of what felt habituated coping into creative embodiment. The embodied awareness, with expression and dialogue were important affinities found in the disciplines of Gestalt and Dance.

Despite the difficulties in creating valid and trustworthy dance/movement therapy (DMT) research, over the years, there have been several studies using DMT to treat trauma. Levine and Land (2015) completed a meta-synthesis of nine qualitative studies on dance/movement therapy, a treatment for individuals with PTSD. The findings included themes of increased awareness of the body-mind connection, reclaiming trust and empowerment in the body through increased
range of movement, and creating healthier relationships with others in the group, themselves, and therapists. The authors emphasized that only one study was conducted in Israel, while the other eight were conducted in African countries where dance is a common vehicle for communication and community building, limiting transferability to other cultures (Levine & Land, 2015). The findings from this meta-analysis on dance/movement therapy also supported findings in neurobiology research, which suggested movement-based treatment to be helpful in treating trauma.

In another study, Levine and Land together with Lizano (2015) conduct 15 semi-structured interviews with dance/movement therapists in The United States who worked with women with a history of PTSD. This study intended as a first step towards understanding what are the elements present when practitioners that use Dance/Movement Therapy work with a population diagnosed with PTSD. Interviews ranged from 30 to 75 minutes in length and the material was condensed into themes on how the participants work with this population. Results included working in groups, and having a movement based warm up for assessment and facilitating participants to get in touch with their authentic self, that assisted the facilitator to see what needed to be developed. Once the therapeutic rapport was developed, participants talked about the use of metaphor, music and props, body awareness, mirroring, empowerment, trust and self-care as part of the middle of the session. The end of the session themes included processing, and integrating other therapeutic modalities such as expressive arts and verbal therapy. Researchers created a platform of interventions that could further be studied as possible important elements in effectively treating women with trauma. Nevertheless, the use of the body in treating PTSD is still elusive and needs further understanding.
Following an embodied inquiry approach, Federman et al. (2016) correlated verbal life stories and body movement expressions among 16 Holocaust survivors aged 73 to 93 ($n_{\text{male}} = 7$, $n_{\text{female}} = 9$) who were part of building the world’s first Holocaust Museum in Israel. The qualitative open and unstructured interviews were videotaped and analyzed for major themes in correlation to movement analysis. Interviewers began with open questions, such as, “Please tell me the story of your life.” And then added additional questions as the interview went on, such as, “What are the most important memories that you have from your Holocaust experience?” and, “What bodily sensations do you remember from moments of distress, relief, horror?” (p. 19). The data analysis had four stages, observing movement expressions, coding verbal content, cross checking between both, and finally organizing data. Observing movement was done from a videotape and nonverbal analysis was based on “on movement dimensions such as use of space, mobility, sensory and body arousal, flow of movement, direction, and typical body expressions” (p. 20). The verbal coding was done looking for meaning, and after the cross check the data was organized in six clusters: “activity, passivity, arousal, self-reassurance, deadlock, and suffocation (p. 16). Authors concluded that the interviews showed verbal and emotional non-verbal expressions were congruent and both told important parts of the same story. The trauma embodiment showed up after many years still present in the survivors' embodied expression as they told the story, even though each person integrated the story with the bodily expression in an individual way. One common consequence of carrying traumatic memories leads to difficulty in telling a coherent story of what happened and expressing a “sense of integrated identity” (p. 16). By paying attention not only to the content of the narrative but to nonverbal actions, in facial expressions and gestures, communication became clearer and understood. Although this research filled a gap in embodied knowledge, the expertise of movement observation created difficulty for this study to be
recreated. Nevertheless, this study is crucial in the premise of integrating the body in treating the trauma.

In the modality of another ancient, embodied method, Ashtanga yoga was studied in a mixed-method on regulating the intensity of implicit traumatic memory felt in one’s body when engaged in conscious movement. LaChiusa (2016) described Ashtanga yoga practice as it related to trauma, dreams, images, and the unconscious. By explaining implicit memory as encoded emotions and sensations, the author argued that body sensations and movement trigger traumatic memories that are stored in the body and stimulate the amygdala. The author’s hypothesis was that embodied practices could support complex trauma survivors in working through trauma and, as a result, increase their sense of body acceptance and affect regulation. The first part of the study was quantitative and served as a foundation for the qualitative part, where six participants were chosen based on their questionnaire responses. All participants chosen for the qualitative portion of this study scored moderate to severe levels of abuse or neglect on the short version of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire. In the quantitative portion (n = 31), 90% reported yoga helped with emotions and 96.8% reported it helped with body awareness tolerance, which supported the decision for a qualitative portion for the study, where participants could discuss their experience of using yoga to help with trauma. Through a thematic analysis of a 60-min, semi-structured interview with each participant, LaChiusa (2016) identified the following themes: being ‘at home’, connecting with the present moment, starting slowly, holding difficult emotions in specific sites, and healing the body to transform the psyche. These themes are important elements for creating resilience and embodiment, and the thick description showed trustworthiness, but the small sample of the quantitative part of the study limited external validity.
According to West et al. (2017), trauma in childhood can present as C-PTSD that lasts into adulthood and is resistant to trauma-processing treatments that do not emphasize self-regulation. Treatment that does not address somatic symptoms and heightened physiological states is considered to be ineffectively meeting the need for clients to be able to focus on the present moment and tolerate triggers without avoiding body awareness and therefore dissociating. In order to investigate how yoga could aid the treatment of women (N = 31) with C-PTSD, West et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative study focused on a 10-week trauma-sensitive yoga program. According to the authors, “the intention of hatha yoga (commonly referred to simply as ‘yoga’ in the Western world) is to cultivate mindfulness through a combination of physical movement, breathing exercises and intentional relaxation” (p. 175). Findings supported PTSD symptom reduction as well as themes of developing gratitude, relatedness, acceptance, centering and empowerment (West et al., 2017). There was no member checking, and participants were 74% Caucasian, which impacted both trustworthiness and transferability.

Levine (1997) pioneered Somatic Experiencing (SE), a body-centered technique that teaches clients to use body awareness of traumatic memory while regulating it with a body sensation of a pleasant or positive memory. Brom et al. (2017) studied the effectiveness of SE to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in Israel. The researchers randomly assigned 63 participants, who through initial interview and Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale, met the criteria for PTSD into two groups. The experimental and control group had 33 and 30 participants, respectively, and both groups were about 50% female. The experimental group received 15 weekly SE sessions, while the control group remained on the waitlist during the same period of time. The statistical results reflected a moderate effect, with 44.1% of experimental group participants no longer meeting the criteria for a PTSD diagnosis following
intervention; however, the effect size was large for both PTSD and depression symptoms (Cohen’s $d > 0.8$). These results were promising, considering that researchers reported the sample was exposed to local war and terrorist attacks during the course of the study, but still showed improvement (Brom et al., 2017). Further research with other populations and locations would strengthen the study’s external validity. Also, further studies to determine what part of this embodied inquiry technique is effective might yield a universal understanding of the importance of movement in trauma treatment.

Recently, there was enough research using yoga in trauma treatment to conduct a meta-analysis of 15 studies using seated or gentle yoga that included breath, meditation, and mantra repetition, 70% of participants maintained their improvements in PTSD symptoms (Cushing & Braun, 2018). Although a meta-analysis was helpful, a comparison research study might help solidify this conclusion. Nevertheless, research supports mind-body approaches to treating trauma-related disorders and trauma symptoms and might be helpful in the treatment of TGT.

Zaccari et al. (2020) researched the impact of yoga on symptoms related to cognitive function, PTSD, and cortisol levels. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered within two weeks of a 10-week yoga protocol intervention. All participants were measured with The Delis-Kaplan Executive Function System, Color-Word Interference Test, Digit Span from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, and the Trail Making Test A & B (for cognitive performance), self-report symptom questionnaires, the PTSD Checklist for DSM–5, the Beck Depression Inventory, the Multiple Sclerosis, Neuropsychological Questionnaire, the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (to measure mental health symptoms and quality of life). Twenty-seven veterans with PTSD who had trauma treatment previously were recruited from a mental health clinic and separated by gender for the sessions. Even though Cortisol levels that
were measured through saliva samples were not statistically significant, yoga did impact and improve cognitive function, PTSD symptoms including better sleep and quality of life. This research has very small samples for a good quantitative research with good validity, therefore, like many studies in the area of body and trauma treatment, it suggests the need for further research.

Beyond qualitative and quantitative research, Turner (2017) reported developing a paralyzing somatic memory that only healed after she began to investigate her ancestral connection to the Holocaust. Buonagurio (2020) reviews a literature supporting the use of dance/movement therapy to heal TGT. Other authors, such as Wolynn (2017), have described many case studies, including his own, in which healing happened through investigating embodied ancestry. Peter Levine (2015) shows through case studies the mysteries of ancestral embodied memory. Furthermore, techniques such as research on post-traumatic slave syndrome conducted by Dr. Joy DeGruy (2005) demonstrates how the body holds the memory of one's ancestors and their traumas in one's family dynamics. Some experts of dance/movement therapy have described transgenerational trauma as a dissociation of body and mind and the need to assist the client in returning to the body and the aspect of time difference in their understanding of transgenerational trauma (Baum, 2013). Baum (2013) proposed that TGT had to be acknowledged by listening to the body: “The trauma event can then be brought out consciously and with mindfulness – ideally through a psychotherapeutic process, particularly one that acknowledges the role of the body in carrying trauma” (p. 40). Plenty of publications suggest ways to incorporate dance to treat TGT (Dieterich-Hartwell, 2017; Stanek, 2015), self-reported DMT techniques used with trauma (Levine et al., 2015), case studies showing how to modify techniques for extreme levels PTSD (Gray, 2001) have been documented and are helpful
as a background for further studies. Lastly, post-traumatic slave syndrome as defined by Dr. Joy DeGruy (2005) as an embodiment of one's ancestral traumas, is another area of study that shows promise in helping advance the understanding of collective trauma. Through case studies and historical research, Dr. DeGruy shows how slavery still affects communities that continue to experience the cruelty that happened with one’s ancestors.

In summary, research has shown that embodiment of emotion helps heal issues with parents and youth at risk in a poor community (Greenberg & Malcolm, 2002; Silva et al., 2015). Despite the difficulties in creating valid and reliable research, there is enough research for a meta-analysis showing DMT in trauma treatment (Levine & Land, 2015). Oppression shows as embodied chronic trauma (Johnson, 2009). Furthermore, recent research using yoga as a complementary technique in treating yoga has shown positive results (Cushing & Braun, 2018; Lachiussa, 2016; West et al., 2017; Zaccari et al., 2020), trauma in childhood can present as C-PTSD that lasts into adulthood and is resistant to trauma-processing treatments that do not emphasize self-regulation. Furthermore, somatic experiences are shown to be effective in treating PTSD. Many leaders in the field have also reported in detail how they work through the body and trauma through case studies (Levine, 2015; Ogden, 2015). Nevertheless, further research in this area is needed.

**Identity, Artifact, and Name**

Another area that is still in its beginning stages of research is on identity development, ancestral objects, and artifacts as well as the importance of name as an ancestral legacy for the development of one’s identity and sense of belonging (see figure 11). Although proper names and last names do not mean the same for different families and cultures, it is an important part of a person’s sense of self and permission to be who they are (Dumitrascu, 2020; McAndrew, 2020;
Zulu, 2020). In the last 10 years, new research on this matter has shown how discrimination of names and loss of name can be a handicap in one’s development. Furthermore, research combining TGT and early attachment showed that both could affect one’s development of identity and resilience (Cohen et al., 2003; Willis & Cashwell, 2017). Furthermore, ancestral objects and artifacts can help place attachment for migrant women and in some communities aid ancestral embodiment and spiritual/ moral guidance (Alubafi & Kaunda, 2019; Christou & Janta, 2019). Lastly, storytelling of one’s identity often involves one’s ancestral history and shows how it can help with meaning-making and sense of self in migrants (Haraldsson & McLean, 2021).

Figure 11

Mixed Identity Picture of Collage from the Altered Book by Giselle Ruzany, 2019

Note: The researcher makes a collage with many dots behind a face covered with DNA letters and a feather floating above it. This figure represents the researcher's complexity in understanding her identity from her present context of time and place.
In a small qualitative study, Amir and Lev-Wiesel (2001) studied the effect of losing one’s identity name on one’s personality development and psychological wellbeing. The authors used a demographic data questionnaire, PTSD scale, Quality of life scale, psychological distress scale and potency scale (this one for measuring self-esteem, sense of control, perception and commitment to society as a just place). Two groups of 23 survivors from the Holocaust were chosen, a group that lost their identity and name and the other that knew their family name. “Results showed that survivors with lost identity had lower physical, psychological and social quality of life and higher somatization, depression, and anxiety scores than survivors with known identity” (p. 859). Authors discussed family disruption and trauma on 50,000 children that were given different identities to hide and survive to arrive in Israel after World War II. The authors quote one of these survivors that never met her parents and lost her name identity:
Who am I? Who are my parents? Do I look like either of them? I would give my entire current life for a moment with my parents ... just to see them once ... to hug my mother, to be kissed by her, to know my real name. I lost my childhood. Why did I have to lose my identity as well? (Amir & Lev-Wiessel, 2001, p. 859)

This research found no previous studies on the consequence of losing one’s original identity. Although previous studies had suggested that the loss of identity and feelings of self-worth could be part of a lifetime of bereavement on losing parents during the Holocaust. This study was small and other elements might have caused the symptoms of the group that lost their family identity, including attachment trauma, transgenerational trauma and the difference in quality of environmental support and resources. Identity was somewhat created by understanding one’s ancestral history and putting together a coherent story with names and places.

Another study wanted to understand if TGT affects one’s development of identity formation and tolerance for intimacy. According to Cohen et al. (2003), “Children need a supportive and nourishing environment to ensure their growth and development” (p. 611). Therefore, when it comes to identity and fear of intimacy, these authors conducted a quantitative research measure the level of PTSD and fear of intimacy in three groups: participants that were children when they survived the Holocaust that went through psychotherapy treatment ($n = 43$), or non-clinical participant that did not seek psychotherapy treatment ($n = 48$). The control group were Israeli born who did not experience the Holocaust ($n = 43$). No difference was found in fear of intimacy when it came to participants that survived Holocaust, independent of having gone through psychotherapy treatment, especially when it came to fear of abandonment. The PTSD inventory was based on a self-report scale based on the 17 PTSD symptoms in the DSM-III, while the fear of close personal relationship questionnaire was based on the five types of fear of
intimacy based on Feldman’s theory of marital intimacy which included fear of merging, fear of exposure, fear of attaching, fear of abandonment and fear of own destruction. The results of this study showed that participants who had treatment of psychotherapy seemed more vulnerable to PTSD than others, however the participants that did not have treatment showed higher PTSD symptoms than expected. This study points to the issues that the trauma of separation from parents may have created in long term traumas and therefore having a long-term effect on relational health and ability to tolerate intimacy and development of stable identity.

Willis and Cashwell (2017) conducted a study with 192 college students on predicting identity status while measuring attachment, differentiation and meaning making. Previous studies claimed that identity as a building block in a person’s development and sense of well-being. Authors reviewed different identity theories including the “two components of identity: identity exploration and identity commitment” (p. 81); which could be seen in different degrees as identity achievement (exploration and commitment are respectively both high), identity moratorium (high and low), identity foreclosure (low and high) and identity diffusion (both low). Authors reviewed many studies that showed that identity commitment can predict greater life satisfaction, positive affect, high self-esteem, meaning and satisfaction in life, well-being, as well as lower depression, lower anxiety, lower social anxiety, lower rule-breaking and social/physical aggression. Coming from these premises, researchers wanted to clarify what components allowed them to predict these outcomes. Six instruments were used: Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status II to measure identity status; Experiences in Close Relationship Scale-Short Form to measure attachment styles; Differentiation of Self-Inventory to differentiation of the self; Mood Survey to measure mood, Interpersonal Communication Inventory to measure communication as well as one’s openness and defensiveness in
interpersonal relationships; and personal Power and Possibility Scale to measure personal narratives. “The findings support the hypothesis that the predictors from attachment theory (attachment-related anxiety and avoidance), intergenerational family therapy (differentiation of self), and the identity process model (mood, communication, and personal narrative) can significantly predict identity status in emerging adulthood” (p. 87). Each predictor for each identity process was different and none was able to be a predictor for all four identities. Also, communication was not relevant as a predictor for identity achievement, moratorium, foreclose or diffusion. An important result for storytelling was that identity achievement was mostly predicted by personal narrative and mood, which according to authors, is congruent with past research. Implications for counseling treatment include focusing on developing a clear personal narrative. Furthermore, the authors recommend assisting the integration of multiple identities through existential and Gestalt approaches. Finally, attachment, differentiation and meaning making seem to be possible predictors of identity.

From an anthropological and sociological perspective, Alubafi and Kaunda (2019) studied spirituality in Cameroon Western Grassfield. Identity here was seen through the lens of a community around the passing down of ancestral objects to chosen descendants that would have the divine power to connect with the deceased past owner. Authors spoke about ancestral objects as a portal to embodying ancestors and a path to find moral actions and well-being. The African community engaged with their ancestors and the spiritual world through a material object, giving meaning and validity to the ancestral system. By inheriting an object from a king or title holder, the descendent would have the power to represent and connect with one’s ancestral spirit for the well-being of the community. Authors argue, the past research is too focused on the symbolism of the object versus the meaning making the object provides. Authors
argue that the ancestral object the community’s perception and meaning making or interpretation of reality. Interestingly, without a legitimate descendant, the object has no power. In the case of the Western Grassfield, the royal drinking horn and traditional stool gets activated only when it is used by the right person. At that point, “the legitimate king is unionised (king-stool relation) as material embodiment, expressions and representation of the presence of the ancestors, among their relatives” (p. 1). When the legitimate person embodies the object, that person also connects with the morals that the community was historically established. That way, the ancestor has “divine power to punish the living members of the descent group” (p. 3). This divine connection through an object also cannot be passed down if the deceased did not use that object. Therefore, ancestral artefacts seem to have the power to not only connect the community with their ancestors but also guide the community into social norms and moral values established before.

A study on the significance of objects in connecting women’s identity with their homeland stated: “The interrelationship between people and things as well as the affective meanings those objects may have on lives is a subject that permeates generations, genders groups” (Christou & Janta, 2019, p. 654). The authors of this study wrote about how objects may have a deep emotional connection to the migrant that connects a particular meaning of the object to their domestic lives. Many objects seem to evoke deep emotions connected to a past of a happy childhood. Through the objects, the migrant woman can create a continuity of their sense of home. These might include symbolic or nostalgic memories, with gifts, foods, photos, letters, and memorabilia: “migrants yearn to see, hear and touch their loved ones, but also crave the special foods, smells and tastes associated with family and places” (p. 656). Christou and Janta (2019) connected objects with foods and gardens and decorative objects that reminded migrants of their homeland culture and ethnicity. The authors compared objects to “re-membering work to
being/becoming/belonging in the new host society” (p. 657). In qualitative research, the authors explored what 20 migrant women carried from their homeland in-depth semi-structured interview. Participants were all from European areas and their ages ranged from 23 to 46. Objects included “Home possessions, such as libraries, lamps, coffee machines, plants and various ethnic food items, were also shown to the researcher during those interviews which took place at participants’ homes” (p. 658). An important aspect of the interview was the understanding of how a migrant re-created a sense of home through nature and gardens, but also food and drinks (such as coffee or vodka), and objects such as lamps with one’s cultural aesthetic design.

While material objects might assist in one’s identity and sense of belonging, a person’s name could also be seen as a valuable object and precious possession. In a sociological paper called “the role and function of the name in defining the personal identity and social identity to the individual convergences in modern research” discusses the importance of names in one’s identity (Dumitrascu, 2020, p. 200). According to Dumitrascu (2020), “In November 1989, the United General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child ”, which, aside from human rights, included the right to have a name (p. 200). According to the author, the right to a full name includes being part of society and its administrative and legal practices. Dumitrascu (2020) argues that names are “meaning-creating entities,” and without it, it remains unidentified and insignificant. By reviewing Piaget cognitive-developmental model, Dumitrascu compares one’s awareness of names of people and objects, to the development of object permanence through “symbolic thinking and language development” (p. 202). Dumitrascu explained that naming allows the individual to identify and differentiate as well as communicate where one belongs to or which group or places they reject. In the author’s words: “The name
represents the words that identify and create links between individuals of the same group” (Dumitrascu, 2020, p. 205). Another aspect of the name was about one’s capacity to hold one’s biography and with that one’s understanding of where they belong in their community and social cultural environment. Lastly, Dumitrascu reviewed research that has linked self-esteem and social acceptance to one’s given name. The name is attached to the individual and it helps establish one’s sense of continuity and uniqueness in relationship to other people.

Names have also been used to strip someone from their human rights and culture (Zulu, 2020). According to Zulu, having an African name was not possible during slavery in colonialist times, and to this day there is a resistance against owning an African name. According to Zulu, as recently as 2016, the name Makeda Foluke was rejected by government officials, which the Brazilian parents who were naming the child believed came from racist practices. Zulu (2020) wrote about names of many famous leaders that were not known by their original parent given name such as Rolihlahla Mandela, who was given the name Nelson on his first school day by his teacher. Zulu (2020) also wrote about the common practice of using European names as a way to strip a person of African descent from their culture and identity. Zulu (2020) argued that it has been rare to see African Americans with African names unless when one is born of a direct African descent like Barak Obama or for the ritual of taking a new name for a religious motive like Muhammad Ali and Kareen Abdul-Jabbar. Zulu (2020) reviewed names as a way to construct one’s identity and “concretize a people’s collective memory” (p. 95). Another point on naming came from who chose the names of children born slaves and how there was a push and pull of resistance or use of power. Zulu (2020) defines 17 items of possibilities to protect the right of name and acquisition and use of an African name. Zulu (2020) wrote about the many layers of trauma, marginalization and oppression that might block someone to go through the
“five stages sequence of pre-encounter, encounter immersion/immersion, internalization and internalization-commitment” in “becoming black” (p. 104). Zulu (2020) wrote that taking an African name might be confronted with internalized racism, where attitudes of racism are directed to one’s own ethnic group and family.

A recent paper on namesake of children placed the intention as a way to form bonding with fathers or to make extended family bonding beyond the mother and child unit. Another reason for naming came to maintain a certain connection to an ethnic or cultural background. The authors wrote about naming as a way to maintain the soul and virtues of deceased relatives. Other important inclinations for naming had to do with paying a tribute or memory, a religious group, integrating a child to a family or due to fashion and aesthetic taste of the time. According to the author, the use of the suffix “Jr.” had been linked to being vulnerable to abuse and mental health problems. Another curious study reviewed involved looking into the names given in a town in Massachusetts between 1640 and 1800s, where the majority of offspring were given the same name as their parents. Around 1840, individuality began to gain momentum and homage to lineage began to decline. Another study, on naming patterns between 1750 to 1925 in African American families concluded that naming had the intention to help the child to fit “into kinship network but that it was also used as a way of settling old debts or positioning for future favors from relatives” (McAndrew, 2021, p. 4). According to McAndrews, naming helped bond fathers to children and assumed providing the resources, not only for genetically linked children but adopted children as well. Therefore, naming seemed to facilitate attachment and relational bonding between family members.

Haraldsson and McLean (2021) conducted a qualitative research study about personal stories, their parents' stories and their social group with 13 participants that migrated to the US
before the age of three or had at least one parent who migrated (age range 18-52). This was a way to understand the interdependency of personal and collective especially when it came to one’s identity development and continuity. The authors reviewed different instances that culture and context influence personal continuity and meaning making that creates sense of a coherent life story. The premise is that collective continuity affected one’s mental health and sense of well-being “For example, suicide rates of First Nations youth in Canada—a community that has experienced historical genocide, forced assimilation, discrimination, and intergenerational trauma—were significantly lower in communities where traditions, historical artifacts, and language were preserved” (p. 2). The method of interview protocol included three chapters: a low point, a turning point and a wisdom event in their lives, their parents’ lives and anyone else that they knew had a similar story. The interview took two to three hours. Researchers found three types of narratives: the American immigrant story (which connected with other stories), the Origin story (which connected to country of parent’s origin, which included myths politics and history), and the American ethnic minority story, which spoke about being a racial minority and the oppression and racism that came with that, which included “the dehumanization and devaluing of the human experiences of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the U.S.” (p. 9). In general, it seems that family, peers and socialization affected which type of narrative the participant engaged with and constructed a collective continuity. Authors proposed that each narrative might have been influenced in where the participant was developmentally exploring their identity and how it lands in the collective, history and larger shared story.

Summary of Literature

In conclusion, this literature review synthesized various studies about the existence of TGT and the elements present when descendants of trauma experience resilience. In general,
there are some critical components to creating a resilient outcome for populations who have suffered collective trauma or 2G trauma survivors, who are more resistant to PTG (Dekel et al., 2013). Resilience has been present when there was open communication, a nurturing environment, freedom for artistic expression, social support, cultural identity, a sense of safety and security with parents, as well as a sense of belonging and place attachment (Braga et al., 2012). Studies suggested that art and open communication helped one develop a sense of belonging, sense of home, cultural identity, and integration of a new environment with survivors of trauma or migration (Albert-Proos, 2015; Diamond & Shrira, 2018).

Studies showed that exposure to trauma could affect biology and increase vulnerability to TGT in 2G survivors (Yehuda et al., 2001). Nature and nurture influence one’s genetic inheritance and are mediated by the context of one’s environment, land, and neighborhood (Champagne, 2016). However, historical trauma and TGT awareness might help treatment, especially with those who have C-PTSD or who have not realized the impact of displacement and cultural identity on their well-being (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2008; Walkerdine et al., 2013). Therefore, future studies correlating history of place attachment with biological markers of TGT might clarify this connection.

Another issue that is important to consider when investigating ancestral legacy is implicit memory, which can influence one’s perspective and sense of well-being, especially when exploring embodied movement such as yoga (LaChiusa, 2016). In trauma research, treatment using movement and body awareness have shown that it can decrease PTSD symptoms (Brom et al., 2017; West et al., 2017). By using embodied inquiry, one can search for the story the body is holding (Federman et al., 2016). Embodied inquiry and movement based therapy methods for
the treatment of trauma were found to be essential tools in trauma related treatment (Levine & Land, 2015).

Furthermore, avoidant and disorganized attachment styles can show up in therapy with TGT, as well as guilt, avoidance of conflict, and enmeshment (Wiseman et al., 2006). Clients with TGT and insecure attachment can be challenging and resistant to treatment and, therefore, might need therapists who are educated in how to work with TGT (Walkerdine et al., 2013). Therapists who have investigated ancestral trauma have shown that engagement with nature, storytelling, and visual arts can facilitate self-understanding and historical context of family legacy (Hartowicz, 2018).

Research showed that TGT could be seen from an attachment perspective, and transgenerational insecure attachment style might repeat without social and environmental support (Baider, 2000; Bar-On et al., 1998). When it comes to place attachment and to trusting the new environment, research has shown that different challenges might influence one’s ability to keep more than one identity and to connect with nature (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). Therefore, issues of TGT can be seen from the lens of attachment patterns in people and land and are important to keep in mind when working with vulnerable populations, including refugees (Bar-On et al., 1998; Bradley et al., 2013; Coughlan & Hermes, 2016; Scannell & Gifford, 2017).

When working with trauma, illuminating one’s ancestral history could assist in trauma treatment (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2008). Similarly, storytelling and digital storytelling served as alternatives for researching and understanding the experience of migrants and refugees, while the use of place attachment theory helped new migrants to integrate multiple identities, such as from a place of origin and new residency, and facilitate well-being (Scannell & Gifford,
The literature suggests that use of digital storytelling can be an important ABR methodology for identity integration when working with refugees (Bogaç, 2009; Vacchelli, 2018). Furthermore, storytelling can help create a coherent story of one’s ancestral legacy, which has been demonstrated to be an important element in transforming trauma to resilience (Richardson, 2015). By having a digital storytelling product, one might also find a tool for the transformation of community and collective trauma by creating a different story that can point toward healing (Lenette et al., 2019; Willox et al., 2013). This lack of community was reported in different TGT research and needed further study (Bezo & Maggi, 2015; Bogac, 2009).

Storytelling might be an effective way to begin to open communication and build a community about the issues inherited from one’s ancestral legacy.

When it comes to the treatment of TGT, it is important to be aware of implicit memory and transgenerational attachment wounds playing a role in one’s symptomology. In general, TGT treatment involves working through attachment issues, place attachment, identity, and multiple cultural belongings, creating narratives through storytelling, and incorporating body centered technique. Mental health providers could benefit from their ancestral legacy investigation as well as engagement with place-based attachment. However, there is a lack of studies that integrate the body, place attachment, digital storytelling, and attachment theory with ancestral history and cultural identity. Future research with place attachment through embodied digital storytelling methodology might provide the nurturance that could facilitate resilience.

Further studies with digital storytelling might also support identity integration of one’s ancestral legacy, and therefore foster well-being and resilience (Marsh et al., 2016). Further studies, integrating these different modalities with ancestral legacy investigation, might be useful to the treatment and prevention of TGT, C-PTSD, and psychological vulnerability. Lastly,
embodied digital storytelling with ancestral legacy might be useful in furthering understanding of experience, identity, and resilience.

In general, literature on identity development and name overlaps with studies about resilience and TGT, early attachment styles, migration and the issues of home, place attachment, culture and belonging. Lastly, identity is part of one’s body and how that body relates with others and their environment. Like an onion, ancestral legacy might begin in the womb of one’s mother, affect their attachment to one’s caregivers, one’s place attachment and sense of home. Going through all these layers, the body is on center stage, together with one’s names, artifacts and identity influencing one’s meaning making and sense of self.
CHAPTER 3

Method Philosophical Foundation

EDS is a 2-4 min. short film dance created from a felt sense in dialogue with an ancestor and an embodied narrative story that is created based on the dance. EDS with Ancestral Legacy had two objectives; to understand the experience of one’s ancestral legacy and to gather information on participants’ experience when engaging with EDS as a research methodology. The research questions and methodology originated from an embodied art-based research (ABR), where the researcher integrated dance choreography, film, embodied narrative, storytelling, and interviews. The research questions that emerged from that previous study are: What is the experience of creating embodied digital storytelling when exploring one’s ancestral legacy?

With a secondary question, explored more in-depth with pre and post interviews for this study:

What can be learned from identity, sense of belonging, and resilience through this process?

Within the framework of ABR, the research was embedded in art making and art meaning making. Furthermore, ABR was facilitated through embodied inquiry and Gestalt Therapy frameworks. From a qualitative point of view, the researcher intended to understand more about the phenomenon of ancestral legacy by using different methods to gather data and interpret the results. Triangulation was implemented by gathering data information from three sources: two interviews, Embodied Digital Storytelling (EDS), and the researcher’s art-based responses to the participant’s process.

Embodied Digital Storytelling (EDS) is an art-based research methodology (ABR) with an emphasis on embodied inquiry, that fits under post phenomenological and indigenous research methodologies (Irwin, 2014; Willox et al., 2013). Post phenomenology focus is on the fact that the human experience of our times is embedded with technology, and therefore
integrated as part of the research (Vacchelli, 2018). Furthermore, digital storytelling (DST) is a 2 to 4 minutes film that supports the act of storytelling and has been studied as an indigenous research method (Willox et al., 2013). Digital storytelling (Brown and Strega, 2005; Willox et al., 2013), has been previously named Indigenous research for its non-oppressive and decolonizing approach, where the researcher co-participates in the research process. This research also engaged with other essential tenets of Indigenous research, including having a methodology that was collaborative and is non-hierarchical, where storytelling and honoring one’s ancestral land, ancestors, and community were all part of the framework in creating the EDS. In this way, there is an integration not only of the storytelling aspect of indigenous research but also its value in equanimity, transparency, co-creation of reality as a relational and environmental integrative model. This model fits well in studying the impact of ancestral legacy where participants could be empowered to tell the story they choose. In terms of transparency, the EDS films and the art responses by the researcher are available to readers (link on page 111).

Digital Storytelling (DST), as a post-phenomenological and indigenous research approach, supports the use of the site-specific dancing, and co-participation of the researcher (Vacchelli, 2018; Willox et al., 2013). Nevertheless, EDS goes further than DST when it comes to an embodied inquiry, by using dance as the base for storytelling. Through embodied ABR, the first part of the process uses embodied inquiry and an embodied relational Gestalt framework to develop a dance choreography and perform it in an environment of choice (Brom, 2017; Ruzany, 2019). The study’s second part uses technology in the form of editing videos as a way to create meaningful stories as a post-phenomenological and indigenous approach to creating a DST. Lastly, the results analysis also had two parts, one that was ABR and another that was qualitative using all verbal material for a thematic analysis. In summary, embodied digital storytelling
explored one’s relationship to an ancestor through dance, film, and storytelling. Furthermore, there was a qualitative aspect to this study where phenomenological interviews were conducted before and after creating an EDS. Figure 12 is a diagram illustrating main building blocks in this research’s epistemology.

**Figure 12**

*Epistemology Diagram*

*Note: This research uses four theoretical frameworks in its methodology.*

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**Embodied ABR**

This research is a quintessential embodied art-based research, as both embodiment and artistic inquiry were present through the development of the methodology, proposal, execution and data analysis. Embodied ABR is a methodology where the truth is found within one’s embodied felt sense and through one’s artistic expression (Rappaport, 2013). According to
Kossak (2018), ABR is a form of research that can provide a sense of meaning that cannot be articulated through verbal language alone. When one engages with art, one must enter into the intuitive world of sensations, awareness and expression. Nevertheless, to do this with complete sincerity and authenticity is an art form on its own (Hervey, 2000). Authenticity refers to how much of the data are trustworthy, meaning, is there enough evidence that there is an honest sharing about ancestral legacy and engagement with EDS? Are the participants telling or moving from a truthful and honest expression? Authenticity occurs when creating a relationship that is collaborative, trustworthy, respectful, and relational, and therefore ethics are imperative. The participant selection is also an important step in creating a rapport that will allow trust and honesty. According to Hervey (2012) authenticity in movement is an important part of trustworthy research. Through embodied inquiry, this research hoped to facilitate honest embodied expression. Furthermore, it is also important to choose movers who can articulate their experiences verbally and in a truthful manner so that the interviews are clear and thoughtful in order to provide another source of information and meaning in this research. Recently embodied inquiry and art-based research have been finding their own voice; nevertheless, both are often spoken as part of the other.

The use of the body as the path for embodied and genuine expression began to be codified by performing art educators at the turn of the 19th century (Mayer, 2018). One of the first educators to articulate how to embody one’s emotions and movements were Èmile Jacques-Dalcroze, 1865-1950, and François Delsarte, 1811-1971 (Mayer, 2018). Their work became well known in Boston during the Transcendentalist movement. From there, the hub of movement awareness through dance moved to Berlin, Vienna, and Hamburg in the early 1900s. Between World War I and World War II, people were exploring movement and emotions through open air
theater while incorporating ritual dances from non-European culture. Influential educators were Elsa Gindler (1885-1961) and Laban (1879-1958) in dance. Gindler would influence a group of students before World War II that would eventually develop Gestalt therapy in the 1940s and Somatic Psychology in the 1980s (Oberem, 2016). Laban, who left Germany had hopes for developing an emotional/spiritual/physical/artistic method that would influence Dance/Movement therapists and who would stick to the physical/emotional movement analysis part of his work (Moraes, 2013).

Similarly, in 1869, art-based inquiry was being conducted by Flounoy, Myers and Casalent as a path to explore the unconscious in the field of psychology (Kossak, 2012). World War I would affect influential psychoanalyst Carl Jung, who documented the use of art-based inquiry in his practice and his own healing. Carl Jung’s (1875-1961) attention to the symbolism in dreams by investigating the unconscious through visualization and the arts has been a guiding principle for many expressive arts therapists (Allen, 2012). Jung was interested in the process of active imagination and the path towards bringing the unconscious to consciousness (Farah, 2016). He believed that through the arts, visualization and dreams, one could access not only one’s deep personal myths but also what he called the collective unconscious (Pallaro, 1999). Nevertheless, ABR, in its most fundamental philosophical foundation is based on the process of art making and meaning making from an intuitive and non-cognitive improvisational, creative act (Allen, 2012).

Kossak (2018) identified ABR as two processes of communication: a primary one, such as in art and dreams, a precursor to the verbal, and a secondary one that is linear, and verbal, where the language is clear and analytical. In ABR, participants engage in both levels of communication, one that is non-verbal such as dance and another that verbalizes and finds
meaning within the dance/art they create. By using embodied inquiry as the foundation for the ABR, there is a balance of internal embodied listening and meaning making narrative.

**Art-Based Research (ABR)**

Through dance and art making, the researcher looked for answers through the art process as a co-participant and through the data analysis. Similar to Potash (2013), by embracing subjectivity and engaging with an art-based response, the researcher was looking to understand one’s own process and have a more objective understanding of the EDS, “Although art may begin from the subjective, it requires a certain degree of objective distance for its meaning to be actualized” (p. 159). In the book *Art as Research: Opportunity and Challenges*, McNiff (2013) brings together an array of experts on ABR to discuss the importance, difficulties and issues that may arise with ABR. In *Using Art as Research in Learning and Teaching*, Byrne, B. & Fenner P., (2018) wrote that to engage with ABR, one will have to confront his or her own fears of inadequacies and what shows up through one’s art exploration. This fear of inadequacy and failure is probably one of the first obstacles to engage in ABR. When Pat Allen began her open studio process (OSP), she began to dialog with her paintings and images, diving into what observations or questions came up (Allen, 2013). This way, she began to find a methodology: “I knew this work did not fall into the usual categories of art, it was entirely spontaneous and beyond my control, yet at the same time extremely detailed with very specific content… Maybe it was research” (p. 17). Even though she was skeptical about what she was doing, she found meaning and a methodology that was helpful to many. This way she escaped the trap of self-absorption and found usefulness in her intimate, art dialogue. In Kossak’s (2013) words: “In art-based research, the phenomenological experience is represented through the creative act itself” (p. 22). This is exactly what Allen could not avoid even if she wanted, by diving into herself she
found a useful insight into how to work with others. Kossak (2013) stated that due to funding and academic support, many art-based students avoid ABR and stay within the “dominant paradigm” (p.24). The marginalization of art-based research seems unfounded, especially when in a postmodern world, “all research could be said to be subjective, including so-called ‘scientific’ or ‘evidence-based’ studies” (Kossak, 2013, p. 23). Therefore, by engaging with art as data for the research, as well as for the researcher’s deep understanding of the work by doing art in response to that data, there is a high potential in discovering the questions and answers that can only be found when in dialogue with art.

**Embodied Inquiry**

By allowing the body to be the foundation of authenticity and storytelling, embodied inquiry was the main process in *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy*. Embodied inquiry can be defined in many ways but mostly it is about getting information from a bottom-up approach, where the body shapes thought. Leigh, Crow & Brown, (2021), wrote that there are three important principles of embodied inquiry: what is it, why use it and how do you do it. Most authors agree that embodied inquiry has to do with listening to one’s body sensations and allowing this awareness to be embodied knowledge and expression, versus something superfluous or coincidental. This value of truth where the body does not lie is an essential part of embodied inquiry’s epistemology. The *why* goes into pre duality of mind and body by the Western philosophers such as Descartes (1596-1650), or later when it would eventually be challenged by Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) and take the body and mind back into a *philosophy of the flesh* with Lakoff and Johnson (1999). Leigh et al. (2021) wrote about how in Eastern philosophy this issue of the mind and body was not separated, but the question of movement and stillness was, and one could stay present for one’s body to be in movement or stillness.
Nevertheless, the reason for embodied inquiry is to break this loss of information that happened when there was a mind and body division in research and find the return into one system that the body is influencing and co-creating one’s experience, reality, and thoughts within one’s mind. Ignoring the body is ignoring part of the truth, part of the story, and reality itself (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) “From a biological perspective, it is eminently plausible that reason has grown out of the sensory and motor systems and that it still uses those systems or structures to develop from them” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 43). Lastly, the how as Leigh et al. (2021) wrote, might not look the same or be presented the same way, but it will instruct the research process.

Furthermore, in embodied inquiry not only the mind and the body are united; it also includes the environmental context and relational aspects of that body. When it comes to embodied inquiry in research, Caldwell and Johnson (2012) explained how the body holds historical wounds. In that way, embodied inquiry can reveal oppression, marginalization, and trauma, as well as resilience, strength, and the embodiment of healing (Caldwell & Leighton, 2018). Furthermore, according to Caldwell and Johnson (2012), historical and social oppression is experienced through the body, making embodied experience a valuable and ethical method for understanding a question compared with using an external observer or expert. These aspects of body identity will be explored not only through the work on understanding ancestry but also in the research relationship. The first interview aims to let the participants self-identify sexually, ethnically, and regarding what makes them unique, therefore, valuing participants’ embodiment and empowerment (Caldwell & Johnson, 2012). Furthermore, as Ellingson (2017) wrote, “Traumatized body-selves resist the body-mind dichotomy with embodied memories, visceral emotions, flashy responses” (p. 74). Snowber (2016) wrote on the body connection to the history of one’s environment: “The scars of the land are within our bodies” (Snowber, 2016, p. 1276). In
her book called *Embodied Inquiry*, Snowber wrote about living fully from an embodied place where the breath was free and infused with embodied experiences that could be captured into writing and artistic expression. She defined longing as a threshold space, filled with nuance and subtle messages of yearnings: “I often wonder how long the plants and flora have been waiting for someone to dance there” (Snowber, 2016, p. 1269).

Les Todres (2007) used the concept of the *felt sense* coined by Eugene Gendlin as the basis to achieve embodied inquiry research. By creating space for one to listen to one’s body, the sensation in one’s body, or felt sense, creates awareness and embodied knowledge. He described the nature of humanity as a historic and existential phenomenon, where the aesthetic experience of being human is expressed through an embodied language. In order for the polarization (or tension) of what is said and what is unsaid in one’s communication (or expression) to be understood, this phenomenon must focus on how the process of embodiment is transformed into a narrative. Todres (2007) described the interplay of one’s embodied multiplicity, where the inner and outer world are influencing one’s awareness, perception, and how all are translated from their embodied experience into language. Allowing the words to come from a felt sense requires waiting and sitting in silence and making meaning from one’s embodied experience in relationship to the world. “Embodying the language, languaging the body: each has its day in an ongoing process” (Todres, 2007, p. 34).

This felt sense is also embedded in the epistemology of Laury Rappaport (2013), who finds that by using self-inquiry, she could deeply understand her research question. In her method, engaging in a non-verbal expression form assisted transforming her felt sense as writing. After making art, she could find an authentic voice and verbalize the meaning-making process of the research. Rappaport also wrote about the moment where the writing stops, and the researcher
asks a question to the art. Another important concept that Rappaport adds to ABR is how art might create a natural transferability as it impacts the viewer through a felt sense within their own bodies as one resonates and attunes to the expressive art.

Other important figures that have written about ABR within the field of dance include Lenore Wadsworth Hervey (2000), who advocates artistic inquiry as an obvious path towards finding embodied truth, and Boydell (2011), who stated that the body could be a source of disseminating information. By using dancers to dance the data, Boydell found that results were shared not as just words but an embodied understanding of the subject: “The dancer can capture an embodied understanding, an indication of the indescribable, unknowable elements of lived experience” (Boydell, 2011, p. 5). Many dancers and choreographers such as Anna Halprin and Gabrielle Roth used concepts of Gestalt Therapy in their work. Both were influenced by Gestalt Therapy in the hub of California that emerged from the Esalen Institute in the 1970s (McKeon, 2020).

**Gestalt Dance.** This method is used in this dissertation research, *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy*, to create the choreography for the films. Coming out of the origins of embodied research from the 1900s, Gestalt Therapy was founded in the 1940s in New York City by a small study group that included Laura Perls and Fritz Perls, who were a couple that survived World War II and brought to the United States their ideas of embodied research that was happening in Germany before the war. A big influencer to Somatic psychotherapy, through Wilhelm Reich, and Gestalt Therapy was Elsa Gindler who used to teach dance in Berlin from an embodied movement experimentation method (Gregory, 2001; Smith, 1975). By promoting breath with movement and listening to one’s body and experimenting with micro adjustments, Elsa Gindler would discuss with therapists the need to include the body into the
healing of the whole person (Gregory, 2001; Johnson, 1995). Her ideas would then be distilled into concepts within Gestalt Therapy and would serve as a baseline for dancers and psychotherapists alike. This is the process in which Gestalt Therapy’s philosophical foundation would include relational embodiment, creativity and experimentation, where the therapist is an artist and psychotherapy is the act of making art: “Gestalt Therapy is really permission to be creative” (Zinker, 1977, p. 18). Furthermore, the entrance of women in psychotherapy would affect the acceptance of using the body for healing relational and personal difficulties (Perls, 1992; Satir, 1967). Laura Perls (1992), a musician and dancer, would be an important teacher to psychotherapists in New York City about the importance of environment support, embodied relational movement, and “the reorganization and re-channeling of energy” (p. 51). Embodied relational contact refers to the philosophical foundation that a person co-creates a relationship with another, through co-regulating the relational and emotional experience within each person’s body and the environment (Day, 2016). Therefore, part of bringing the body into therapy came from psychotherapists taking dance and mindful movement classes, which influenced their theories on psychology and the body (Geuter, 2010).

At the Esalen Institute, Fritz Perls, who was no longer married to Laura Perls, would be particularly influential in promoting embody inquiry and dance as important elements in the art of psychotherapy in the 1960s (Gregory, 2001). Located in Big Sur, California, and founded in 1962, Esalen Institute would become the home of many healing fields, including humanist, Zen, Buddhist, phenomenological, embodied, and artistic experimental talks and workshops. Many psychotherapists would meet and share their techniques of relational embodiment and open-mindedness. Here theater, dance, music, psychotherapy, meditation, LSD, and Marijuana could co-exist and converge into one knowledge. Gestalt Therapy was one of the many therapeutic
processes that was being developed with the ideas of including the body, the environment, Eastern Philosophies and experimental techniques to facilitate and transform a person through psychotherapy. Nevertheless, the dance and Gestalt Therapy connection is philosophical (Perls, 1992). Important dancers that were influenced by Gestalt Therapy includes Gabrielle Roth and Anna Halprin. In Esalen, Fritz Perl would ask Gabrielle Roth to become the resident teacher of dance; there, she would develop the “Wave’ of the 5Rhythms:” Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, Stillness” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabrielle_Roth). Anna Halprin would also find important Gestalt concepts within her work (Mckeon, 2020). Anna Halprin’s Gestalt influence can be recognized when dancing in relationship with her cancer, dancing in connection to nature, dancing with one another, attentive to aspects of the self, the other, and the relational and environmental space between dancers. Following that legacy, the researcher with her supervisor/mentor, Victoria Story, went to Esalen in 2012 to teach a workshop in creating dances from the concepts of the Gestalt cycle of experience in a relational embodiment experimentation. This process was documented in a chapter called Signature Movement in a book called Embodied Relational Gestalt (Clemmens, 2019).

By using Gestalt Therapy concepts such as the cycle of experience, and figure and background, the researcher has documented how she developed an embodied relational work to create embodied movements from the self, the other and the co-created field (Clemmens, 2019). This theoretical framework of embodied relational Gestalt with Signature Movement method instructs therapists how to use and facilitate the creation of a choreography by following the cycle of experience and that way allow the body to process any leftovers of an embodied relational encounters (Ruzany, 2019). By allowing a sensation to motivate the act of movement, one can find contact with an embodied expression, which creates a sense of satisfaction where
the person can then withdraw from that first figure. This phenomenon is described as the *cycle of experience*, which goes from figure/sensation, motivation/mobilization, action/movement, contact/choreography, satisfaction withdrawal and rest (Clarkson, 1989). For each cycle, the mover is invited to notice what it means to move from the self, the other’s perspective and the co-created field. “With a co-created reality, a field comes into existence...Through the moment-to-moment engagement of therapist and client each is co-creating the current field. The field momentum gathers and in turn influences what can be experienced and expressed by the subjects of the field” (Day, 2016, p. 84). Clemmens (2019) wrote about embodying one’s family members in order to understand the dynamics of a dinner table that is held within one’s body. This process is similar to the choreographic process in this research.

**Embodied Qualitative Research**

Embodied qualitative interviews took part in the first meeting and last meeting of this research in order to gather information of the participants’ ancestral story and their experience engaging in making their EDS. Although qualitative research has its origins with Paul Felix Lazars around 1925, its success and acceptance had its waves in the 60s with psychologists like Gordon Allport and Abraham Maslow and then in the 90s through an increased acceptance of qualitative research publications (L. F. Bailey, 2014; Wertz, 2014). During the 20th century, qualitative research began to offer a unique perspective and epistemology, where the approach one takes to qualitative research shapes the design and procedure of a study (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 2).

Creswell and Poth (2017) wrote that locating the researcher into the context that the research is being conducted is imperative to meaning-making. As Creswell and Poth (2017) wrote, these philosophical assumptions shape the research, and a post-feminist paradigm also
organized the interactions with the participants. As Creswell and Poth described, “the goals are to establish collaborative and non-exploitative relationships, to place the researcher within the study so as to avoid objectification and to conduct a research that is transformative” (p. 28). In this way, qualitative research supports research that intends to collaborate and be anti-hierarchical in research through digital storytelling, dance and filmmaking. This phrase summarizes well: “We conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 45). According to Creswell and Poth (2017), the terms credibility, authenticity, transferability and dependability, and confirmability were alternative concepts that were created to validate and establish trustworthiness in non-positivist research studies. To operationalize these concepts, techniques in the research design of this study were created including prolonged engagement, as well as triangulation of the data sources, methods, and investigators. From a post-modern perspective, Creswell and Poth (2017) explained that triangulation might not even be sufficient but looking at a study through a crystal or prism lens, the researcher might be able to find the right balance and use the language that fits best when working towards a validation strategy. Lastly, Creswell and Poth (2017), recommended a minimum of two strategies for achieving trustworthy research, as well as defining, from the researcher’s point of view, what these terms and techniques actually mean for them and how they are being interpreted and implemented. The embodied ABR and qualitative interviews used in this study were implemented to address some of these concerns.

Furthermore, according to Ellingson (2017), qualitative research already includes an embodied inquiry, but the body is often not included in the data. Ellingson explains that the body informs one’s experience and how one creates meaning to one’s livelihood. If a researcher does
not include the body in the research, it does not mean that the body was not influential in all the data gathered. Ellingson (2017) described “doing bodies, sensorium, embodied knowing, stick web of culture, intersubjectivity, actants and flux” (p. 11) as important aspects of an embodied qualitative research. In this research, the body is part of the story, the sensations that come from the story gives a path towards the embodied knowing and understanding one’s experience within one’s culture. Furthermore, the actants in this research included COVID-19, the isolation through zoom and technology and impact of the place they were limiting their bodies into a limited state of being. Lastly, “flux” represent the fluid aspect of one’s identity that are “continually in process and movement” (Ellingson, 2017, p. 25). By including the body and the body movements, the body reveals the depth and emotional content of the story (Felderman et al., 2016).

**Digital Storytelling**

Digital storytelling has been used as a qualitative and arts-based research method and was used as a guide to the development, proposal and conducting of this research (Lenette et al., 2019; Vachelli, 2018). More recently, with the introduction of smart phones and easy editing software, together with the wish to empower participants to decide what is important to be researched in an anti-oppressive and anti-colonizing methodology, digital storytelling has surfaced in research. According to different experts in the field, Digital Storytelling methodology fits under the umbrella of post phenomenological and indigenous research (Irwin, 2014; Napoli, 2019; Vacchelli, 2018). From a post-phenomenological point of view, our lives and experience of living are imbibed in technology. Digital storytelling (DST) addresses the present experience of interfacing with our collective experience of technology and art making. Kossak (2015) wrote, “Technology can add an important and essential dimension to the arts of expressing oneself” (p.
DST accepts the human experience as immersed in technological advancements such as smartphones, computers, social media platforms, and online social contact. DST creates a return to the simplicity and ancient wisdom of storytelling while accepting the presence of technological advances (Irwin, 2014).

Throughout time, we have told oral then written stories to solidify our cultures and share knowledge for the future. Our sense of Being-in-the-world comes through story and technology. While oral traditions continue to endure essentially unchanged, the written word began to ride the age of technology. Eventually, the oral tradition, too, became entwined with technology. (p. 40)

Furthermore, according to Willox et al. (2013), digital storytelling as a “method can preserve and promote indigenous oral wisdom, while engaging community members, developing capacities, and celebrating myriad stories, lived experiences, and life worlds” (pp. 127-128). Indigenous epistemology holds a circular process of wholeness and wellness in four quadrants: mind, body, spirit, and context (social and environmental; Cross et al., 2011).

Similarly, Kovach (2005) defined four critical elements in indigenous research that were all considered natural parts of the methodology: (a) phenomenological; (b) accepting storytelling as a legitimate way of knowing; (c) respecting and developing a relationship with participants; and, (d) facilitating reciprocity between participants and researchers. Indigenous research focuses on storytelling and the arts, community, and the search for hidden and unspoken history of embodied sense. EDS fits within the indigenous methodology, as it accepts all critical elements laid down by experts in the field (Cross et al., 2011; Kovach, 2005; Willox et al., 2013).

Indigenous research is also an anti-oppressive practice that can offer the researcher a chance to engage as a co-participant in data development, data analysis, and data conclusion (Brown &
Strega, 2005; Willox et al., 2013). In DST as a methodology, there is a collaborative process of creating the story, editing the video, and giving the participant control of the content (Lenette et al., 2019; Willox et al., 2013). According to Vacchelli (2018), the goal of embodied research is to facilitate communication, connection, and feedback while contributing to public awareness. Furthermore, the use of film shifts the research in an ABR. According to Anne Harris, “Video offers researchers new ways of doing the work of research creation and new language of understanding that work (2018, p. 437). Harris differentiated using video from other ABR as it used a multisensory and aesthetic dimension to a video as a method or ethno-cinema. Another important aspect of ethno-cinema is the fact that it is a democratic ABR research tool, where collaboration with a diverse population in diasporic locations is possible, where culture and postcolonialism and post humanistic approaches to creativity are possible (Harris, 2018).

**Method: An Art-Based Research using Embodied Digital Storytelling**

The art-based research of this project will be detailed in the procedure section of this paper. All elements of ABR were present in the development, creation, and sharing of the EDS. Therefore, EDS is an embodied ABR with emphasis on embodied inquiry, which fits under post phenomenological and indigenous research methodologies. Nevertheless, the EDS in this study used Gestalt as a philosophical foundation in creating the choreography through an embodied inquiry. In the choreography of the EDS, the researcher facilitated the dance through the relational embodied cycle of experience concepts of Gestalt Therapy (Ruzany, 2019). This happened by asking participants to move from the sensations they find in their bodies when they thought of an ancestor, and then to move as if they were their ancestor, and then to move from the relational space that was present between them and their ancestor. In this way, a person
engaged in the embodiment of different aspects of the relational memories with an ancestor stored in one’s body.

Furthermore, there is an integral part of this research, which is to understand the history of the participants and what was the experience of engaging with EDS with an ancestor. By interviewing the participants before and after creating an EDS, the researcher hoped to develop a more accurate picture of the participant’s experience, adding a phenomenological perspective to the EDS method. Seidman (2019) proposed three 90 min interviews when engaging in qualitative research: the first one to focus on one’s life history, the second one to go into detail of an experience, and third, the participant “reflects on the meaning of their experience” (p. 22). This research focused on the first and third interviews from this model. Nevertheless, the meetings were for different purposes: The first interview was to ask about the ancestral story of the participant, the second interview was substituted for creating an EDS, while the third interview focused on understanding how the participant integrated their ancestral story, and EDS into the present and how was the process of creating an EDS.

The main goal of adding a qualitative section to this research was to get to know each participant’s ancestral history, and in the final meeting understand their experience and integration on engaging with EDS. Seidman (2019) wrote, “telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process” (p. 7). By adding pre and post ABR interviews, the experience of ancestral legacy as an embodiment phenomenon facilitated understanding of the impact of an untold ancestral story. Seidman (2019) wrote: “At the heart of interviewing is an interest in other individuals’ stories because they are of worth” (p. 9). The interviews provided a verbal account of the participant’s ancestral legacy experience and engagement with ABR. Creswell and Poth’s (2017) guidelines included clarifying the researcher’s ontology: This research ontology included
that the truth comes from an embodied knowledge, that a nonverbal and visceral expression holds an implicit truth, that the creative act is a path for self-knowledge and that one’s experience shapes one’s reality. Knowing that, following is the description of the participants, procedure, and process.

**Participants**

A nonclinical sample was initially invited from the researcher’s network and through snowball sampling. Participants were chosen based on movement and performance experience and their expertise in investigating their bodily sensations. Beginning from the researcher’s own contact list and snowballing that came from that, the researcher invited participants with experience with dance, choreography, performance, and site-specific work. Participants were instructed and informed on the topic of ancestral legacy, place attachment, and embodied relational inquiry. The researcher explained how the EDS process and final product would be informed by investigating participants’ own embodied ancestral legacy. EDS was the proper methodology for this group of participants because of their site-specific and postmodern dance backgrounds, which made the procedure for the research familiar. The researcher chose participants who could creatively adapt to the values of indigenous research, where collaboration, honoring the ancestor and the ancestral land, and the story found in their body were essential components when engaging with this research process.

A total of seven adults participated in this study (including the researcher). Participants were all female, with an age range from 35 to 67 years old ($M = 48$). Participants’ years of education ranged from BA to Ph.D. candidates and were all involved in some capacity with dance and the arts. At the time the project began, each participant was in quarantine during the Covid-19 pandemic and not vaccinated. All participants reported stress over their location,
income, career, and the difficulty in having an opportunity to dance and be creative in their new reality. All participants reported displacement, disruption, or loss in their ancestral lineage. Nevertheless, all participants reported having emotional support or a therapist. Two participants lived outside of the U.S., one in India and one in Brazil, and all the other participants lived on the East Coast of the United States. Only one participant was not a mother.

Initials were used as pseudonyms for all participants. FA, SS, KT, TP were dancers that had shared the same stage with the researcher in the past but were not in regular contact with her for many years. RJ and TV were not former acquaintances. These participants were selected for their expertise in embodied inquiry, as professional dancers over 35 years old, and interested in the ABR method the researcher proposed. Their diverse history of ancestry was purposefully selected for this study. FA identified herself as Mexican American, KT identified as Jewish-American, SS identified as American, TP identified as Brazilian-American, TV identified as Afro-Caribbean American, RJ identified as Indian-American, and the researcher identified as a Brazilian Jewish American. The diversity of American identities with diverse ancestry met the inclusion criterion. In summary, participants’ criteria included being over 35 years old, being a professional dancer, having a diverse ancestry background, and having a desire to engage with an ancestor through an embodied inquiry and ABR. The researcher avoided participants that were of similar ethnicity and ancestry to have a diverse sample.

**Procedures**

All potential participants received a letter of invitation with the research intention and goals, as well as a phone call. Once potential participants showed interest in the study, the researcher sent an informed consent form with details on each phase of the project. The participant’s rights and researcher’s goals were elaborated in writing for signing. A demographic
form was filled out during one of the meetings. One participant preferred to fill in the form independently and used electronic mail without identifiers that would connect it to the study.

All meetings were conducted via zoom, which is a computer software platform for video conferences where images and sound are exchanged in real-time. Participants were invited to speak about their ancestral legacy, then engage with an ancestor through creating an embodied digital storytelling (EDS) and a final discussion of their experience. Before and after the EDS process, the zoom meetings were recorded and transcribed. Together with the embodied narration created for the EDS, transcriptions were used later for theme analysis. The open-ended interview and EDS process prioritized participants’ needs, such as the amount of time between meetings, meetings, content choices, regulating feelings, and their own process. All interactions were in English, except one that was in Portuguese. Meetings lasted from 1 to 2 hours at a time.

An important part of the process that is described next is the improvisational aspect of art-based research. As Sajnani (2013) wrote, the process with each participant included a certain openness to improvisation, which is “at the heart of the artistic process and of art-based research” (2013, p. 77). Sajnani (2013) found three important elements in ABR, which included openness to uncertainty, attuning to difference and the use of aesthetic intelligence in creating a process that does not “reduce the fullness of our explorations” (2013, p. 83). This research used all these adjustments as the research process unfolded with each participant.

Process

The process of creating the EDS included movement, video filming, and digital storytelling. The meetings were held individually, online between 6 weeks to 3 months for 5 to 8 meetings. The study plan was to meet individually for a duration of no more than 2 months, but due to COVID-19, many participants had to postpone the recording of the dance or the meetings.
Each meeting ranged from 1 to 2 hours, and they were all online. Participants had the option to keep a journal about their embodied inquiry on their ancestral legacy. The journal could include writing, visual arts, movement annotation, and photography. The journal could be used as an anchor to the process or incorporated as part of the EDS.

**The first and second meeting**

The first meeting with the participant began by going over the research informed consent and the overview of the research. Once all questions were answered, and the form was not only signed but understood, the research process began. The participant was invited to engage with an experiential exploration of the participant’s embodied responses and intentions when exploring their relationship to an ancestor. The intention of beginning with an experiential artistic exploration (e.g., collage, drawing, poetry, or listening to music) was to help the participant to become more embodied and prepare the participant for the interview. The 60-minute artistic preparation and semi-structured interviews were conducted individually.

At the next meeting, the researcher began facilitating a warm-up by moving through different body centers and exploring these centers anatomically, emotionally, and in space. Generally, the warm-up included moving from the following centers: head, scalp, eyes/ears and mouth, neck, upper torso and shoulders, lower torso and inner organs, pelvic floor, palms of hands, and bottoms of feet. After the warm-up, each participant explored movements in relationship to an ancestor. Participants created a choreography by visualizing an ancestor and investigating their felt sense to create movements from each embodied response to the emerging memory or sensation. This process of creating and refining a choreography took 2 hours. The dance was created with 6 movement prompts.


**Choreographic Process**

1- After the warm-up, the participant was asked to make a movement to honor the moment, then one for how it felt to be with the researcher's presence online and third to make a movement initiated from how they felt in the co-created relational field. This little choreography could be four small movements or how many movements the body instructed the participant to do; each movement was recorded through their own notes from the felt sense response and expression.

2- Next, the researcher asked the participant to visualize their ancestor in the room with them and notice any shifts within their body. Then the movements were created from this felt sense. Next, the movement was created from the seat of the ancestor, allowing the body to express movements as if they were their ancestor seeing themselves. Lastly, the movement was created to represent the space between the participant and the ancestor, and that was about the relational field and how the relationship felt at that moment within a felt sense within the body.

3- The researcher then asked the participant to make a movement as if all obstacles, traumas, and issues never existed and a healthy contact could happen. The participant again was asked to listen to their body and follow the impulse that made itself present. The same process was asked from the seat of the ancestor and then from the co-created field.

4- This time the researcher asked to acknowledge the obstacle, disruption, or contact disturbance that blocked this contact from happening. What was the issue that stopped and disrupted an easy connection? What was the context and the untold story for what happened? The context could have been living in another country, being from another time, traumas that were not healed, or maybe just a non-verbal sensation or feeling. By listening to one’s body, the
participant again investigated movements from the self, the ancestor’s seat, and the co-created field.

5- As part of exploring differentiation and place attachment, the researcher asked the participant to make a movement about the place and time that they lived in relationship to the ancestor, a movement of the space and time of their ancestor, and a movement about the distance in between. This could be the difference in culture, location, generational gap, political-economic differences, gender privileges, and so on.

6- To finalize, the participant was asked to make a movement of gratitude to the ancestor and de-role their presence in their space. This movement could be as long as needed until there was a sense of closure. Each step was annotated by the participant in their own notebook.

The film recording, editing, and narrating

In the next phase of creating an EDS, participants recorded the embodied choreography created previously. Each participant chose the location(s) for the recording to explore a place where one had a felt sense or sensation of place attachment. The participant could connect with the researcher via phone before or after the videotaping. Some participants that contacted the researcher before filming wanted to remember the choreography or review the intention behind the movements. Places of attachment included the kitchen, the foyer, the streets, the attic and the hallway, the gas station, and so on.

In the next meeting, the researcher assisted the participants with editing the video with images of the dance recording and other images of their choice. After the images were chosen and edited, participants developed a narration. Once the video was completed, the participant took some time to absorb the work they did by viewing it on their own time. Participants were encouraged to watch the EDS with someone they trusted. This instruction was not followed by
half of the participants. Once they were satisfied with the final product, the participant scheduled a final meeting with the researcher.

**Final meeting and member checking**

In order to gather data about the participant’s experience after creating an EDS, a final open-ended discussion followed. This final interview intended to gather information about how the participant felt from engaging in this study and creating an EDS. The researcher was looking for any reactions, comments, or changes.

Lastly, similar to the pilot study, once the analysis was completed, all participants viewed the EDS as two groups of four (including the researcher), and had an open discussion. This last meeting was also a time for member checking of the film transcription, the transcribed material, and the researcher’s art-based response. After the member checking, participants openly exchanged support and insights on their experience of being part of this research. This open exchange is presented in the discussion section of this paper and addresses what else was present in the data when looking at the films and process as a group. Thus, when writing about the member checking meeting, it also included a spontaneous open forum which will be presented during the discussion. Figure 13 summarizes the meeting prompts and questions.

**Figure 13**

*Chart of Meeting Prompts and Questions*
The study analysis had two parts, one was an art-based response to each EDS and the second was a thematic analysis of all the verbal content. The ABR analysis included making an artistic response followed by naming the art and the EDS as themes or titles of each participants’ piece. For the thematic analysis, the interviews were transcribed with the assistance of the Microsoft dictate feature. The text was edited by adding punctuation and paragraphs, and eliminating the researchers’ voice and word repetition. The transcripts were compared to the audio for accuracy before data analysis. The analysis of the study follows a phenomenological approach similar to Seidman (2019), where the researcher generates and analyses thematic connections by looking for patterns and categories in the transcribed data.

This study intended to follow a similar thematic analysis protocol of analysis used in the pilot study. After all EDS were finalized, the researcher watched and re-watched each participant’s video. As it was said previously, the process of analysis for the study involved two
steps: One step was an art-based response by the researcher and the second step was an analysis of themes presented across all three EDS's. These art projects allowed the researcher to find hidden meanings and deeper connections.

The transcripts’ analysis followed the guidelines described by Seidman (2019), where the phenomenological researcher looks at the material from a qualitative point of view, reducing the transcripts and EDS descriptions into themes from an inductive versus deductive process. In the pilot, the descriptions of the EDS were used as transcripts. The researcher transcribed the text utilizing dictation in a word document. Next, the researcher reprinted the EDS textual descriptions and highlighted them while naming themes. Next, the researcher cut out each part of all documents and placed them in envelopes with the theme written on the front. As a final step, the researcher created a word document, where each theme was written, which shifted again.

The thematic content analysis followed Seidman’s (2019) phenomenological interview analysis, where the researcher immerses in the data to find categories, then labels, and finally, themes. According to Seidman, “The reason...is to find out what their experience is and the meaning they make of it, and then to make connections among the experiences of people who share the same structure” (p. 130). Furthermore, EDS is available for the readers to access in order to keep “the unified coherence of the original story told by the original storyteller” (Lenette et al. 2019, p. 70). The EDS films can be found at the following link:

**DIRECT LINK TO EDS:**

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjhHNv58hxNkeVjMKZJov_ogtA_RMUkE
CHAPTER 4

Results

For each EDS choreography, the participant was not only creatively creating a choreography but filming it in a place that supported their choreography, adapting to the new location, choosing the outfit they were going to wear, and then, after editing the footage, creating a narrative that they saw within the film. This narrative stands on its own as a powerful poem or embodied written artistic response. Therefore, it is transcribed under each image of the collage the researcher engaged with for each film.

An ABR method seeks to understand the nonverbal aspect of a participant’s experience while adding a qualitative analysis to an open-ended discourse of the participant’s story of the ancestral lineage and a final discussion hoped to understand the subjective meaning-making of each participant without trying to test a hypothesis or generalize any findings. The data analysis had two parts: An art-based research process and a phenomenological data analysis.

The researcher made an art-based response to each EDS by making a collage from 8 prints of screenshots (see figures 14 to 20). Each collage seems to show themes within. The materials used for the art-based response by the researcher are listed below:

- Hp proketselect printer: 8 screenshots of each film: prints 2.3 x 3.4” pictures
- Cut up prints
- Staining 8x10” artboard
- Making a collage with the cut-ups
- Use of rice paper and distress ink to all the pieces.
- Use of pencil and sharpie for details
Themes began to rise from the 8 cutouts

Used art response as a cover page for each film on unlisted YouTube link.

Each collage revealed certain nonverbal wisdom from each participant’s lineage and a sense of where they were. Before the thematic analyzes, the researcher created an art-based response for each EDS. Once all ABR and thematic analysis was done, the researcher asked herself what name title would describe each EDS and her art response. A small picture of each ABR and the titles chosen from answering that question by the researcher is briefly reviewed.

**Figure 14**

*Collage Title: The desert as a temple*

*EDS Title: Bickering as love and support*

![Collage Image](image)

**Figure 15**

*Collage title: Totems doors*
Figure 16

Collage Title: Dancing with Ancestral Skeletons

EDS Title: Remembering the Spanish flu during COVID

Figure 17

Collage Title: The pristine coat

EDS Title: Ancestral artifact facilitates dialogue
Figure 17

Collage Title: A beam of light transfers the crown

EDS Title: Longing for the matriarch

Figure 19

Collage Title: Moving through and out

EDS Title: Ancestral secrets

Figure 20

Collage Title: Time accordion

EDS Title: Ancestral loss
Art-based Responses to the EDS and ABR Analysis

Below is an account of the encounter with each participant and an ABR analysis of each participant’s film and art-based response by the researcher.

FA EDS’ art-based response

The researcher met FA from Dec. 15th, 2020, to Feb. 14th, 2021. The researcher invited FA to be part of the study when the participant called her inquiring about the researcher’s experience during her doctoral studies, as FA pondered returning to school for getting another Masters or Ph.D. As part of understanding the researcher’s Ph.D. process, FA volunteered to be a participant. The meetings were easy to schedule and were only postponed once due to COVID-19 issues.

FA’s film begins with two hands coming together around another image of herself dancing. This film was created from two recordings of her dancing in an iPhone held vertically, and by placing them side by side so the film looks like twin sisters side by side. Her movements are narrated as she dances in the kitchen, interacting with the wall, kitchen towel, and window. She wears a dress from her grandmother’s sister with flowers and as she moves her arms and legs she flows with grace and articulation of her spine and arms as she flows beyond the space constriction. She shifts her language to Spanish and makes gestures that are of someone working
in the kitchen. Her movement includes her mouth that her hands gesture towards eating as she
speaks about being fed wisdom and finding a voice of empowered women. She makes a
connection of her grandmother and her great aunt and herself and her sister, who they both were
named after. She moves her arms gathering one another as she includes the busyness of the
kitchen. Here she makes a move down to the floor and speaks about dropping down into learning
about herself through her ancestor. She places the picture of her grandmother in the kitchen and
shows reverence and prayer and her movement with her hands together and kneeling. As one of
her figures dances, the other brings her arms together as if embracing the dancing sister. As the
film shifts and the dancer who is moving shifts, there is a narrative about shifting roles and
supporting each other. As the camera shifts, there is a shift in perspective in her narrative where
the bickering is understood as support for one another. The film ends as if one figure is with
arms open to the other who is on her knees with palms together brought up to her forehead in a
prayer position. Here is FA EDS transcript:

**FA EDS’ film transcript (Bickering as love and support)**

*In the kitchen, it Lights up a memory*

*The meeting of the hands reassures me of constant comfort*

*Of collecting faith*

*Falling into the arms of my sister*

*Troubled times are overcome with resilience*

*Com la massa de la Vida*

*I am being fed their wisdom*

*through our voices as women*

*we gather each other*
on a mission, I am busy, busy, busy

I drop down to look for who I am in you
and to look for who you are in me
this is the story of strong women
sisters as children
finding themselves and loving each other
both in different rhythms, they stay connected even through their separate lives
taking turns and switching roles
the love bickering from children to elders
I know it was all support for one another
owning the reflection

During the last discussion, FA felt that she could use the EDS process to connect with her ancestors and felt more agency when it came to feeling support even when apart. During the art-based response, there was a flow that surprised the researcher as a wall covered the collage in a very post-modern look and a unique aesthetic. Figure 21 shows the researcher’s art response to FA EDS (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

FA EDS’ Art Response (The Desert Temple)

Note: Art material included eight screens shot 2.3x3.4 prints further cut with scissors, rice paper, and distress ink on an 8x10 artboard.
During the interview, FA spoke about how her ancestors were Mexican, but because the border with Mexico had shifted over time, her ancestral land became part of America, nevertheless, there was a loss of culture and language. The rice paper reminds the researcher of the border of Mexico that has shifted and has become, over time, a place of hope and fear. Under the paper, one can see FA in a position of prayer and gratitude for her ancestors. If one lifts the wall's skirt below, one can notice her beautiful flowered dress representing her Mexican lineage and culture. Her hands reach out in an embrace. Most of the collage is hidden, and the rice paper is well placed without much give for picking under, almost surprisingly solid. This rice paper wall reminded the researcher of FA's journey in uncovering her culture, language, and ancestry.
as it was not communicated clearly to her. This collage has a sense of boundaries and limitations of what is possible to see and invites the viewer to be curious and look closer (see Figure 21).

**TV EDS art-based response**

The researcher met TV on Zoom for one to two hours at a time from April 4th to May 28th, 2021. TV and the researcher did not know each other before this study. TV was interested in the study after seeing the EDS done by the researcher about being mixed raced and mixed cultured. After some scheduling issues about meeting around COVID vaccines and work schedules, the meetings were interrupted only to get the recording done.

TV begins her film close to the camera and her face is not seen. She describes the space with the two doors behind as a place “in between.” She moves her legs and makes rhythmic sounds that she later, in the discussion, sees as the sound of people working as artisans. Her feet show up as a second image in a close-up to how these sounds are being made. She shifts her language to Spanish and we see her dancing with her upper body and opening her arms and reaching in different directions while the other image is still a close-up of her feet and the rhythm sounds heard coming out of it. Her chest moves and opens, like her heart is moving her arms and body. Her spines unravel and another image shows up as a close-up of her upper body revealing her face and upper body in movement. She turns and goes to the camera, an image of a photograph with her uncle shows up framing her, as she danced in the middle and began to sing, her dancing body disappears but she continues to sing while there is a close-up of the photograph of her with her uncle. Here is the transcript of the narrative of the TV EDS:

**TV EDS’ film transcript (Ancestral faith moving through)**

*I’m in the place between

A place of exchange & transition*
In between 2 doors
In between 2 alters
In between my work, my life, and my spirit
And I’m preparing
My feet & gut are talking
Clearing a path for them
Tum tiki toc toc tac
Through my belly right down to my souls
The old worn through new

“We are here,” they say “we are here”
“and so are you”
“time to move, time to do”
Chola, we nibe o (walk, we are there)
Yansa (Orisha of wind)
Maker fun Shango (Orisha of thunder, fire, the drums and dance)

Made strong, made courageous, made true, made you
Shuffling, hustling
Sangre mas fuerte porque de todos noostros (your blood is stronger because of all of us)
Pa que sepa (so you know)
Pa que sepa
In your blood you know because it knows
Because we know

“Lean into us”, they say

“Move to us, move with us”

“Open yourself so we can move through you”

Ai le con su cuerpo y con su cuerpo aprenderás (Through your body and with your body you will learn)

Who you are and meant to be

“Wepa (hey)

“Eso” (that is it)

“There she is!”

We see you now, you were here all along as we have been

“Remember us” Recuerdas

No ground can erase us

“Recuerdas” remember us

Move with us

Let us move through you

Through you we live, through us, you will know

Lloraras y lloraras (tears and tears)
Mi brujanita lloraras por la alegria si lloraras (My little witch, you will cry for joy if you cry)

Nunca por la tristeza (never for sadness)

Baila y lloraras (dance your tears)

Yansa é iba cheque che (Yansa will keep an eye on you)

After the EDS and final discussion took place, the researcher worked on the art-based response. TV really enjoyed the process, believed to have been healing and transformative, and seemed to feel a natural shift towards unblocking her creativity. This unblocking of creativity and strong emotions is present in the thematic analysis as well. Figure 22 is the collage the researcher engaged with TV EDS.

**Figure 22**

*TV EDS’ Art-based Response (Totems Doors)*

*Note: Art material included eight screens shot 2.3x3.4 prints further cut with scissors, rice paper, and distress ink on an 8x10 artboard.*
TV EDS collage shows parallel figures standing on each other's shoulders like totems or sculptures. The arms out accentuate the strong shoulders to support the figure above. Clouds are framing the totem figures with rain coming down, hydrating the scene. TV is seen right in the middle and her ancestor under a cloud outside the totems. Blue doors and grounding feet surrounded TV. Behind her, at the edge of the collage, there is a mountain of shelves with pictures and books. This collage’s background shows a pattern behind that looks like Islands, which bring up the ancestral lands. This collage is meant to have a sense of spirituality and mysticism.
KT EDS’ art-based response

The researcher met KT from March 26th to June 22nd, 2021. The meetings took place after another participant had gone through the process and shared it with her. KT then showed interest in participating, so we began the process. The meeting times shifted due to COVID-19 vaccines as well as due to Zoom fatigue and the need for the work to percolate before filming it.

KT’s film begins with the death certificate of her great aunt Lilian. In the background we see an attic; she begins walking into the space and approaches the camera before she starts to add a narrative. Looking over her left and right shoulder, she describes the space and where she is. She lifts her left foot in a balance with her head to the side and turns away from the camera. She walks back into a smaller space in her attic and pauses in front of an old typewriter before entering in a little nook in the corner of her space. It is a busy place with lots of ancestral objects that she touches and describes. She tells the story of her embodied choreography in relationship to her grandmother’s sister, who she was told died of the Spanish flu. She speaks about Lilian’s young life dancing in the park as she turns freely around herself while touching the ceiling that makes an “A” frame. As she releases her embodiment of Lilian, she turns away from the camera and speaks of her movement in parallel, giving an impression of living in parallel with Lilian, who during the interview told a story of borrowing her name as a child in place of her own name. In her EDS narrative, she speaks of a spark and looks as if she has released Lilian and maybe other feelings related to her grandmother’s loss. She brings her arms up and down and speaks of having new wings, she walks in a circle and then speaks about going home. She makes a connection with Metropolitan Avenue with her A-frame home and starts to create a big sphere with her arms and hands. She walks back to the nook and dances as the film fades away and ends.
KT’s narrative:

**KT EDS’ film transcript: (Remembering the Spanish flu during COVID)**

*I know exactly where I am
so the camera can see me in the mirror and the skeleton is behind me
it looks to me that I'm not sure where I am
but my seeing leads me to the next place
so I can type
I have entered
I'm in between two worlds
with my hand on my grandmother's bowl
my head goes to the books
and I'm thinking of Lillian
Grandma's younger sister
I was told she died of the Spanish flu
I don't know anything about her
except that she loved to dance in the park
she's young and feels free
Feels good in parallel
Then... a spark
Lillian disappears
I have wings
Going home*
Going home

Metropolitan Ave

Home

Some of us have the job of keeping memories for the others behind us

After the last discussion took place, the researcher engaged with the art-based response. The film that was uploaded was not able to keep the music she chose as background due to YouTube music permission laws and that was disappointing as well as the filter that was added taking away the colors of the film. Nevertheless, KT seemed to love the process and wanted to do other ones in the future. In the art-based response to KT EDS film the researcher tried to mix the colors and themes of the images but also kept her identity hidden. Figure 23 is the Art based collage.

Figure 23

KT EDS’ Art-based Response (Dancing with Ancestral Skeletons)

Note: Art material included eight screens shot 2.3x3.4 prints further cut with scissors, rice paper, and distress ink on an 8x10 artboard.
This collage clearly shows three themes: the skeletons, the books, and KT dancing in her attic. Behind the three themes, a triangle/pyramid of the attic that the dance was recorded is accentuated. At the bottom, there is a line of eight skeletons followed by books. KT floats above them and above the wood ceiling that holds two pieces of paper. The two pieces of paper holding writing on them seem precious/sacred. On the upper right, an image is seen with KT dancing with a skeleton reflected in the mirror. Above that, we see a picture of her that has her face cut off. This picture makes the researcher think of KT’s grandmother who lost her younger sister during the Spanish flu. Her picture at the mid-upper left corner seeing the long roll of books, has a sense of an intellectual road. At the left corner, there is a collection of KT’s grandmother’s bowls and teapots, which seem precious artifacts in her lineage. These artifacts are part of the
thematic analysis. There is a collage of soft paper at the bottom, middle, and upper part of the collage that reminds the researcher of parallel lives or living parallel to one’s ancestors. This collage has a sense of intellectual legacy and ancestral memory.

**SS EDS’s art-based response**

The researcher met SS from Dec. 20th to Feb. 7th, 2021. The meetings were very straightforward and quick. A bit of pushback happened when asked about obstacles within the relationship, but once re-worded as “any issues of disconnection with the ancestor” the choreography, filming, and editing ran smoothly.

SS’s film begins with her moving on the side of the road as a car passes, and as more cars rush by, she speaks about the rush in life. She speaks from the voice of her grandmother and then shifts to speak from her movement as she narrates being in her grandmother’s home and her gas station business. She describes lots of objects as she wraps the woolen coat of her paternal grandmother around her. The film takes place in three settings: the first one is by the side of the road, the second is in front of a gas pump, and the third one is in an old building foyer. She tells the story of her coat and dances with clear arms and legs as the coat adapts. The film returns one more time to the side of the road and we see her moving in both places, as the camera moves she breaks the narrative to talk about her son holding the camera as she goes to the floor and talks about how making a mistake bigger can be a solution. She spreads on her side on the floor and speaks about her grandmother as she stands and passes through a ballet movement with ease and goes back to a pedestrian walk. She wraps her coat and walks past the camera. We then see both the side of the road and the gas station one last time as she speaks about how life goes fast, she moves her arms, slashing the space in front of her with great speed. The film ends abruptly,
illustrating the theme of things moving fast and passing by as the cars of the road at the beginning of the film. Here is SS EDS transcript:

**SS EDS’ film transcript (Ancestral artifact facilitates dialogue)**

You’re moving too fast

it's fine right here

stay right here

but there you go running again

never time to stop and visit

what is it you do anyway?

I stepped back I turn I sit

I go to the window of the bathroom with the shell-shaped soaps and watch cars whiz past on the two-lane highway

I'm right here

the smell of coal, gas pumps, old wood furniture, TV on, newspaper clippings, 1950s kitchen table, large mostly empty storefront sometimes yielding a small game or toy with a handwritten price tag still on it

I was given her brown woolen coat by my father

it's heavy and looks brand new

the tag inside it reeds Lehman’s Allentown

I love the way it feels when I move

or raps tight around me

what year was it bought I wonder

from what event
how did she keep it so pristine?

my movement is too fast

gone to get the camera in a way that frames it just right though

sometimes amplifying a problem can be a solution

making it more of something, not just a little off

I wonder what she might think of this dance

I feel my strong legs

I wrapped my coat tight

behind the house is a field wild and lush contrasting to the highway in front

things move too fast in general

Once the final discussion took place the work took a pause before the researcher re-engaged with it for an art-based response. SS seemed to be surprised that she liked the result of her EDS and that there was a story in the film after all. Her skepticism about the process gave her a surprising new level of understanding of her body and the paradigm of her relational body. The collage had many detailed scissors work, use of paper and ink. Figure 24 is the Art based response.

**Figure 24**

*SS EDS’ Art-Based Response (The Pristine Coat)*
The result is a collage with a sense of harsh weather; the movement of the ink shows wind and rain. The trees are in winter, and the participant is wearing her ancestor’s coat. The themes also include a highway at the bottom, windows in the middle, and trees on top. There are pictures from a gas station and fire truck on the right side, which reminds me of the potential for fire. This collage gives me a sensation of grit, strength, resilience, and purpose. As if the road is clear, the windows show perspective, and the trees in the winter show the passage of time. This collage has a sense of endurance and being capable.
RJ EDS art-based response

The researcher met RJ from April 11th to June 22nd, 2021. The researcher had only been briefly introduced to RJ before but thought of her as an expert on the embodiment of multiple identities and cultures. Due to time differences and schedules, the meetings were in the early mornings for the researcher and late afternoon for the participant in India. The longer pause before meetings took place once RJ went to the United States to visit family. The editing of the film was done in India, and the narrative and final discussion happened in the United States.

RJ’s film begins with her upper body facing the camera, she has her eyes closed and she moves her arms up and down through the center of her body. A second image comes in and is more of a close-up of her rubbing her hands on her face; she brings her hands together, while her image further back makes a sphere with her arms and hands. Her first picture looks like she enters in a hug, while the back picture has her arms crossed until she releases her whole body down. As that image disappears from the camera, another image comes that is also close up. Both close-up images reach towards the camera as we hear her breath and tears. The longing to be together is spoken and felt. These images fade away from an indoor room into an outdoor image of her sitting on an Indian Cot and with a beautiful dress and veil. The wind blows on her veil and we hear her embodiment of her grandmother, who feels present, accepting, calm and centered. The image of her close-up comes into the frame of the film, creating a connection between both images. As she speaks, “I am you and you are me,” the image outside dissipates and goes back to the close-up indoors. She holds her head with her arms, and she rests her elbow on her knee, which is up, with her foot touching the seat. There is reaching, holding, and connecting. The film ends with her hands up and in a serene and peaceful rest. Here is RJ EDS transcript:
RJ EDS’ film transcript (Longing for the matriarch)

Reaching up and out, down from my center,
touching feeling
whole intertwined
wanting to be held
hold me, hold me close
Lying, swaying,
Free as a child
Releasing
Wanting to express, reach out
thank you for being here
Being in my life

Come, my child,
I’m the matriarch, this is my throne
I hear you, tell me, tell me
Kuchh Khaaya? (did you eat anything?)

Thinking of you, feeling you, you live in my memories
I am you, you are me

Come, yes come, come
You hold me, I’ve been longing for that
I see you right there with me
I feel whole

Once the final discussion took place, the researcher began to engage with the art-based response. RJ preferred the film without her voice but only the caption, as the silence was missed and the narration felt boring to her. Nevertheless, the experience of creating the choreography, filming it and editing it was all cherished parts of the process, and experience. The art-based response had many layers of cutting, making a collage and then covering part of the collage with rice paper (see Figure 25).

Figure 25

RJ EDS’ Art-based Response (A beam of Light Transfer the Crown)

Note: Art material included eight screens shot 2.3x3.4 prints further cut with scissors, rice paper, and distress ink on an 8x10 artboard.
This collage is very tridimensional, and it has three levels of rice paper in a diagonal. The first layer is a large one covered by other two pieces placed on top of it in a parallel layer, and then, a third layer has a double thin unstained rice paper. This rice paper collage in a diagonal reminded me of a beam of light. It made me think of the clarity within this participant’s understanding of her ancestry and the clarity of the film within it, where part of it was taken from the footage during the choreographic process with the researcher on zoom where she was wearing brown in a dark room and in the middle of the film it has her own recording of it with bright colors in the sun. If I peel back the cover, I see many leaves and her face with mostly her eyes closed, but one picture in which she looks right at the camera. In three images, she is wearing an Indian hair cover. All pictures show joy. The bottom of the picture has parts of an
India cot. This collage gives me a sensation of peace, but the rice paper above it shows fragility. There is a sense of privacy and sacredness, where the faces and collage are covered.

**TP EDS art-based response**

The researcher met TP from May 28th to June 4th, 2021. TP showed interest in the work when the researcher presented her pilot study in Brazil. Since the work was being done all online due to COVID, it was an opportunity to have an American-born participant that lives in Brazil. The process brought strong emotions that came as nausea, which subsided over time until there was a sense of embodiment of peace within herself and the EDS.

TP’s film begins with a lot of energy and jumps, and it settles into arms crossed, TP speaks about the difference between what she feels and what she sees in her body as she watches herself move. She dances outside using a mask between two large vases with brushes. After a circle around the space, she settles in the middle and a second image appears that makes circles behind her with the jumps she did before. She wears an interesting pink shirt with a unique cut and a ring from her grandmother. Later she speaks of the connection with her as she worked as a seamstress. TP talks about preparing the space and body for new discoveries as she opens her arms and invites the grandmother to dance with her and make new discoveries. As she dances with abandon, she begins to speak about her grandmother never having protection and TP wanting to provide that. Her movements are full-bodied, using the torso, arms, and legs to explore the space. The film is complex with lots of different angles and always with a double image as if she is dancing with another TP. She speaks of time, of the past and present while moving in these two figures. As she gestures her arms and measures her body and then gestures strongly outwards, she uses the metaphor of sewing and how measurements do not work so perfectly in real life. The two images begin to create a polarity of gentle and vulnerable
movement with a strong and confronting image in the front. She is able to make that connection as part of her grandmother, as she hid her vulnerability and showed up to others as a difficult person. She begins to open her arms and reach, grasp and pull, as she speaks about both of them looking for connection. As the movement of confrontation moves from the image in front to the one on the back, she speaks about shifting her perspective and finding a celebration of acceptance. She shifts into acknowledging her belief that people are like stardust, and the film shifts to have a perspective on a diagonal to the wall behind the vases as she gestures with her fingertips, letting the dust pass through. There is a small image behind the other as she acknowledges her late father as someone that held an untold story from her grandmother. She taps her heart in a form that might look like pain or like comforting a baby. She speaks of the impact of holding secrets as shameful and dark. Her movements now become more expressive as she pulls one hand from the other in an arc and speaks of ripping the covers that hide stories. She finishes the film in a rhythmic and soothing double step back and forward and finishes by speaking of a repair with her paternal grandmother, as the second image disappears, and a photograph of her young grandmother appears next to her. Here is TP EDS transcript:

**TP EDS’ film transcript (Ancestral secrets)**

*O que eu vejo e o que eu sinto são coisas diferentes (what I see and what I feel are diferente things)*

*Eu sou um terreno sendo preparado para novas descobertas (I am a land, preparing for new discoveries).*

*Eu te convido a dançar e descobri também (I invite you to dance and to also discover)*

*Eu desejo te proteger (I wish to protect you)*

*Eu sei que você não teve proteção (I know you did not have protection)*
E a gente vai costurar os tempos (together we will sew time)

Tempos rasgados, história rasgada (ripped time, ripped history)

Hoje está se costurando com ontem (today is being sewed with yesterday)

Na costura tem moldes, modelos manequins medidas (in sewing, there is molds, models and measurements)

Tudo muito certinho pra cai bem ajustado (everything perfectly cut, to fit well tailored)

Mas na vida real não existe molde certo (but in real life, there no perfect fit)

As medidas não servem para nada (the measurements serve for nothing)

Percebi na frente, uma atitude de confronto, de afronta (noticed in front, an attitude of confrontation and insult)

E no fundo um desamparo, uma fragilidade, uma suavidade. (And deep inside, a vulnerability and gentleness)

Eu vejo nós duas abrindo espaço (I see both of us opening a space)

E buscando conexão, fazendo contato (Looking for connection and making contact)

Quando a gente muda a perspectiva (when we change our perspective)

Coisas que incomodavam, diminuem (things that were annoying...minimize)

Isso abre o espaço para uma celebração (this, open a space for celebration)

Pra uma aceitação (for acceptance)

Nessa costura do tempo, eu recebo e ofereço poeira de estrelas (sewing time, I receive and offer star dust).

Entre a gente eu vejo e eu sou um pouco meu pai (between us I see and am a bit my father)
e aqui eu lamento pelo meu pai (and here a mourn for my father)

Pelis histórias escondidas (for the secret stories)

Pelo que não floresceu (For what did not bloom)

porque teve que ficar escuro (because it had to stay in the darkness)

coberto, escondido como uma coisa feia (covered, hidden, like something ugly)

Assim como as vezes temos que costurar (just like sometimes we need to sew)

outras vezes temos que rasgar cobertura, os véus (other times we have to rip away the cover, the veils)

quando sua história foi revelada (When your story was revealed)

todos nós ganhamos (we all gained)

Entre a gente nada se perdeu (between us, nothing was lost)

continuo sendo sua neta (I continue to be your granddaughter)

o tecido foi cerzido, foi recosturado (the fabric was mended, was repaired)

mas agora ficamos re-unidas (and now we stay re-united)

After the last discussion of the process, the researcher engaged with her art-based response. Her sense was that the result was aesthetically and emotionally satisfying but that the filter might have taken some of the expression and colors. She felt a big shift in her creative motivation and, during member check, spoke about making a part II. Figure 27 is the art based response.

**Figure 26**

*TP EDS’ Art-based Response (Moving Through and Out)*

*Note: Art material included eight screens shot 2.3x3.4 prints further cut with scissors, and distress ink on an 8x10 artboard.*
This collage's first prominent theme is the COVID mask. There are also pots of bushes framing the picture and creating a hallway in a diagonal. TP appears many times with very expressive gestures that show strong emotions of reaching, offering, opening, as well as closing, and crouching. The sepia tint makes it looks old, and it complements the plant vases by creating brushes of branches rising from the ground. This collage has a lot of movement and evokes dynamic shifts within the viewer. Each chosen image created a feeling of dance; although these are photograph pictures, the collage shows the movement well and gives a sense of dance and beauty.
GR (researcher’s) EDS art-based response

Before the researcher (GR, as a co-participant and co-researcher) began the meetings with her participants, she wanted to go through the process herself to understand her own experience as she engaged with creating an EDS. Since for the pilot, she used her maternal lineage, this time GR used her paternal grandmother as her ancestor. GR’s film takes place in a hallway between two stairs; as she danced looking over the railing and constricted between it and the wall, she looked like she could have been in a ship. This place evoked a memory of her grandmother’s story, and visiting that crucial moment; she left her land to lose her family to the Holocaust genocide. The collage made for GR’s own EDS shows mainly two themes; the clock represented 16 times in little drips at the bottom of the collage, and the stair’s grate, which rice paper imitates with an accordion pattern. The figure of GR dancing shows up repeatedly. Six of these pictures seem to be related to the clock and time at the bottom of the collage. The story talks about how timing did not allow the researcher to grow up with her grandmother, so it reminded her of that. Here is the transcript:

GR EDS’ film transcript (Ancestral loss)

I am a fragment of you

A small part that continues

I humbly invite you for a dance with me

I chose this space: in between

For our dance

The hallway between the stairs

Looking down the stairs

I see the street outside
When I see that street
It reminds me
Of your story
Telling me about your parents’ death
In Poland
You left them behind to help your sister
Travel to Brazil
With her four children
Being stuck on that ship
Wondering about your life
Your future
This must have been quite difficult
I wish I could have grown up near you
To hear about your stories
But when I was born you were already in Israel
And I was raised in Rio
It must've been really hard
To have been in these different cultures
With different languages
Different values
Different dances
It seems like nobody really liked you
Everyone seems to be ashamed of you
They would say:

Well...

Your grandmother was a difficult person

But I see how that is how you kept your fight

Your rhythm

Your demands... Your order

You kept going

You would tell me about my pink glasses

Not paying attention

To the dangers of this world

I look down to the street one more time

And I send a prayer to your parents

To our family

I am alone now

And I clear the space

To honor my frustration

Honor your love

And good wishes

Thank you

As part of understanding the researcher's own EDS, an art-based response also took place. The collage shows the researcher interacting with the stair’s crate, as well as floating above it. While the pictures at the bottom look like they are reaching up, the figures placed in the middle seem to show figures lower to the ground and up above; the pictures look full of strength,
pulling up, pushing back, and fighting. This collage reminded the researcher of her grandmother's strength and resilience within herself. The collage seems like the movements are reversed; instead of strength being near the Earth and the body lifting and reaching up above, GR is squeezing into the middle like an accordion (see Figure 28).

**Figure 27**

*GR EDS’ Art-based Response (Time Accordion)*

*Note: Art material included eight screens shot 2.3x3.4 prints further cut with scissors, rice paper, and distress ink on an 8x10 artboard.*
Thematic Analysis

Using a phenomenological qualitative systematic analysis, the researcher used 50 pages of transcribed material that included the two recorded open-ended interviews and the embodied narrative placed in the embodied digital storytelling with the six participants. The researcher transcribed the data with the help of the Microsoft word document dictate feature and omitted the researchers’ voice and too many repetitions of word or speech patterns like “you know,” “like,” “yeah,” and so on. The researcher went over the transcribed material many times and separated the paragraphs into themes while adding punctuation for clarity. The transcribed material was then printed, and the researcher wrote themes in the margin of the paper. The papers were then cut and placed into thematic material that became themes or subthemes. The researcher then placed these pieces of paper in envelopes and took one piece of paper from the envelope at a time, and re-wrote the participant’s quote within the categories found. In order to make sense of the themes, the researcher used Mindmap, which is a mapping software to gives a visual sense of the data. Below is a picture of the manual thematic analysis of the 70 pages and the mind map.

Figure 28

Picture of pieces of paper cut from the transcribed document into themes and mind map

Note: The first picture shows the beginning of the thematic analysis and the end of the thematic organization of theme, subthemes, and sub-sub-themes as it stands now, after many rearrangements.
Themes

The research initial questions were “What is the experience of ancestral legacy through creating an embodied digital storytelling? What can be learned from this process?” Once the research was underway, the researcher focused on the methodology and participants’ needs. As the researcher analyzed the themes, she at first looked at the data without concern to the question itself, but as the transcribed texts, the themes related to one’s ancestral story or process of the study. After rewriting multiple times, using a mind map to organize the themes, the titles of the ABR and EDS became clear, and it was affected once again with the verbal part of the analysis and when the themes were once more re-arranged. The results are five main themes with two subthemes and at least one to two sub sub themes:

Table 1
Thematic Analysis Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Sub-subtheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TGT and resilience</td>
<td>Disconnection</td>
<td>Ancestral anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work, arts and education</td>
<td>Artist legacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place attachment, home and culture</td>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>Ancestral home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture and belonging</td>
<td>Beliefs and religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embodiment</td>
<td>Ancestral embodiment</td>
<td>Ancestral repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relational embodiment</td>
<td>Ancestral support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, artifact, name</td>
<td>Loss and longing</td>
<td>Artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Ancestral name</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDS Method</td>
<td>Strong Emotions</td>
<td>Unblocking creativity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1: TGT and Resilience

Participants ancestral legacy included TGT and resilience, which will be further explored in the subthemes. In TGT, results will continue in the subtheme of disconnection. In general, TGT showed up as burdens that needed to be transformed, and seemed related to unhealed
traumas that were still held by participants as disconnections TV said, “My ancestors carry a lot of traumas for themselves… you get to a point where it can’t all be trauma work, there has to be a joy for you, to be able to be resilient and continue.” There was also a more visible trauma of having an ancestor persecuted, which was still felt many generations later. As KT stated, “My grandfather, my mother’s father…was an engineer, they fired him cause he was Jewish.” This statement carries the emotion of this event still felt in the participant’s tone of voice. TGT will be presented as the sub themes of disconnection and ancestral anger, and resilience is presented as the sub theme of work, art, and education with artistic legacy respectively.

Subtheme 1: Disconnection

As part of disconnection in TGT, many participants noticed how ancestral trauma disconnected them from a relational flow, “My mom never dealt with what happened… She could just get stuck there...She never went through therapy and through that self-care” (FA). There was also a disconnection due to values of a different time, where being stuck in time did not allow an understanding of the younger generation, “They lived in a different sort of socioeconomic bracket than what I was being raised in. I was being raised as very sort upper middle class and they were very working class people from another generation…they were just a product of a different time… For me, as somebody of my generation I didn’t always feel super connected with what my great aunts, for example, were up to” (SS). In her EDS, SS shows the disconnection in her embodied narrative, “There you go running again, never time to stop and visit” (SS). Some behaviors that included ancestors having multiple families or being estranged created an intergenerational resentment, “They are not part of the family I want to stay in touch” (KT). There was also a disconnection when ancestors wanted their descendants to behave in a more conservative way than they did, maybe trying to avoid a repetition of trauma, without
owning own wrongdoings, “She expected me to behave socially in a way she did not” (TP). The disconnection also expected that the next generation could do better or fit better into the new land and new contemporary time. In GR’s EDS, the grandmother cannot connect with GR’s lack of concern, which she speaks in her EDS: “You would tell me about my pink glasses, Not paying attention to the dangers of this world” (GR). Another type of disconnection came through estrangement that came in many ancestral stories and may be considered a loss or transgenerational trauma: “My mom was estranged from her family, for most of my childhood… later in life that I had learned about her Cuban heritage…wait, wait what do you mean?... that’s just extra complicated” (TV). This statement illustrates the loss and longing to know one’s ancestral land.

**Sub-Sub Theme: Ancestral anger**

Almost all participants talked about a disconnection due to particular ancestral anger that showed up in their ancestor’s personality and belief system. A common theme when it came to disconnection was anger and difficult temperament. One participant talked about her grandmother, “She had a difficult temperament” (TP). Later with more specific language: “My grandmother had some things that were aggressive, a certain violence” (TP). There was an acknowledgment of a difference between needs and emotions, “My dad’s side of the family - that there is like a lot of anger issues” (RJ). And then a bit later: “Except for the temper ...they didn’t have a lot of needs” (RJ). Most participants talked about their ancestral resilience or demonstrated the shift in their EDS. In GR’s EDS it comes out as an understanding of her grandmother’s difficult temperament as resilience, “But I see how that is how you kept your fight, your rhythm, your demands, your order. You kept going” (GR). Sometimes the anger showed within an untold traumatic story, “My grandfather died when my mom was in her 20's. I
think it’s for the best. My mom said he was a terrible man. She hated him” (FA). Sometimes the anger was perpetuated indirectly in the new generation, one participant was aware of the repetition, “Ugly enough traumas that I had from my family and the abuse of their addictions, my father’s addiction, in particular, I had cultivated coping mechanisms that attracted certain types of artist mentors that took advantage of me, instead of supporting me. And I really was traumatized by all that and left me often feeling like I’m not good enough” (VT). TGT seems to be present through disconnection and through difficult temperaments, as it was stated on GR’s EDS: “It seems like nobody really liked you. Everyone seems to be ashamed of you. They would say: ‘Well..., Your grandmother was a difficult person’” (GR). Lastly, a disconnection came because of an older generation that had hate towards a group, and the participant could not reconcile due to that difference in perspective and tolerance, “They were part of a generation that also, like, there was some racism, you know” (SS). These disconnections were all related to past generational differences, due to traumas and socio-economical, cultural and historical collective stories of trauma.

Subtheme 2: Work, Arts, and Education

Aspects of work, arts, and education in one’s lineage were often discussed as a place of resilience. An important aspect of resilience seemed to come from ancestral work ethics, and education, “My mother’s side of the family became educated… Jewish camp people… they turned around to help the youth” (KT). A participant showed particular joy in how her dance created a sound with her feet that reminded her of people working in artisanal work. “It sounds artisanal… It’s like the sound of work, people working… like the work of your soul dancing” (TV)! One participant talked about how as a dancer she had the influence of having an ancestor that was connected with their body; “A really important part of my family lineage is
athleticism… just love of athleticism and coaching people and the body’’ (SS). There was a certain pride or recognition of one’s ancestral choices making one’s life easier; “I feel very lucky to have had very brave parents, they both had strength…. “I guess that drive to know - that was passed down to us. So, I feel very lucky and also lucky that I’ve never had to suffer like they have…lucky thing about my parent’s and how they provided for me … they created safety” (FA). This awareness shows up in her EDS; “Troubled times are overcome with resilience, com la massa de lavida …On a mission I am busy, busy, busy” (FA). A couple of participants talked about how education took their family out of poverty by having their parents succeed with studies abroad; “She would miss meals for him. And he turned out to become a man with super good character, always studying, working, he was tutoring at 15 so he could make some money to help pay for the house… He got a scholarship to study outside of Brazil, he studied in the United States, in France” (TP). Resilience showed up as a sub theme of one’s ancestor’s work, art, and education. In this statement one can see the connection of resilience as following one’s parent’s example, “My dad had these three goals and he achieved all of them on his own” (FA) and later she said, “We got our work ethic definitely from them, also from my dad side, but you know also from them” (FA).

Sub-Sub Theme: Artist Legacy

All participants were professional dancers, and many gave credit for having a family that valued the arts: “Mona had a huge influence on all of us to get involved in the arts because she was an artist …She was a painter and was always paying for music lessons and just very involved in our lives” (FA). Since the arts have been correlated to resilience, it is no wonder that these thoughts were interconnected; “Mom’s side was like they were all into the arts, so there was music and dance all the time, like my mom’s uncle knew how to play 10 different
instruments, and we would have weddings” (RJ). There was also a sense that arts could not flourish to success due to tragic and traumatic circumstances; “All my uncles, not so much my aunts, but all my uncles were these amazing artists. And they had very tragic lives” (TV). Lastly, arts and education were linked; “My grandmother was one of the first to get a college degree and master’s degree...she danced, there was this kind of female maternal line mover people...My grandmother taught physical education until 1937 and helped and she was part of starting the dance department in 1930...they did all the dancing” (KT).

**Theme 2: Place Attachment, Home, and Culture**

This theme of place attachment will be further explored within the sub themes of *migration* and *culture and belief*. In the spectrum of resilience and transgenerational trauma, sometimes offspring of mixed migrants would feel lost, “I don’t even relate to necessarily other Latinex people necessarily, because even if I relate to them, they’re not dealing with the intersections of the Caribbean...that is complicated” (TV). A participant realized why her grandmother who had Italian parents never shared that culture with her; “She lost her parents very young, therefore if the parents hadn’t died, maybe she would have been more Italian, she had two traumas, one of displacement and one of loss of her parents” (TP). A participant talked fondly about her maternal ancestral home and how from her paternal side; she talked about how hard it was to take her grandfather into her home in the United States; “You all have kept me in this Golden cage... which means you have all the amenities and luxuries here in the US, you know like TV and internet and this and that, and whatever and it’s comfortable living but it’s still a cage for me because it is not India, it’s not home” (RJ). Place attachment to ancestral home is further presented in the subthemes of migration and ancestral home below.
Subtheme 1: Migration

Similar to the literature on displacement, issues due to migration include loss of culture, family, and sense of belonging. Sometimes, a similar family migration story would facilitate connection. A participant talks about bonding with other migrants, “All kids of immigrant parents have very similar sort of experiences in some ways … every dad had the same story… they had $8 dollars in their pocket type of thing you know” (RJ). Having grandparents living in another country could create a longing for the times where one could get to know their family: “She was very close to me…and used to visit us in the United States all the time” (RJ). Participants noticed how ancestral land disconnection created an extra obstacle to get to know one’s ancestral land: “My father hates the island… he doesn’t really have a connection to the island…I have a lot of questions and curiosity about the Islands” (TV). Sometimes the participants did not feel connected to the place they grew up, were born or lived. In GR’s EDS it shows up in these words, “It reminds me of your story, telling me about your parent’s death in Poland.” Place attachment felt disrupted in GR’s dance in a hallway, where when creating the narrative showed up as the transatlantic her grandmother embarked as she left Poland just before World War II: “Being stuck on that ship.” Most participants talked about the issue of losing connection to one’s ancestral land and feeling an embodied longing to connect with it, sometimes through the arts like music or areas of an ancestral land. “Ireland makes me feel more emotional, but I absolutely feel a connection in terms of the land to all this place but especially coastal Ireland, coastal Scotland, that type of thing” (SS). Sometimes, the migration story was held with wonder as in this participant’s statement: “My mother told us that her mother’s side has Spanish in them, that they came from Spain a long time ago and eventually moved to Texas which was still Mexico at that time, I guess. The border crossed them so to speak…we are
Jewish from her mother’s side” (FA). A participant talked about a longing within her body about the ancestral cultural home: “There was also in my body you know a sort of this heritage, this Jewish heritage that I didn’t know anything about the super orthodox you know… had to do with the old country had to do with grief, you know exile” (KT).

Sub-Sub Theme: Ancestral Home

Participants talked about home as part of their identity. Ancestral home also showed up as part of someone’s identity that a participant longed for, rejected, or felt attached to. For example, one participant talked about her ancestral home with longing on her statement “New York is my heart…” (KT) and in her EDS: “Going home, going home, Metropolitan Ave., home” (KT). One participant connected her ancestor with her home by describing her surroundings, including smell, sound, and artifacts of the time in her EDS: “Smell of coal, gas pumps, old furniture, TV on, newspaper clippings, 1950’s kitchen table, large mostly empty storefront sometimes yielding a small game or toy with a handwritten price tag still on it” (SS). Some participants talked about living for a period in their ancestral home or going to stay in their grandparents' home during vacation or as an alternative home. Here a participant makes sense of her ancestral home: “a historical site. This is her house! How can nobody want it? But I guess it’s only meaningful to us” (FA). Another participant noticed her attachment to an ancestral home even if not claimed as her identity growing up: “That was very much from this Irish and Scottish lineage, so the English side was kind of like a party… Ireland definitely felt emotionally like home” (SS).

Subtheme 2: Culture and Belonging

A participant wondered about reclaiming her ancestral culture “I think all my siblings have this identity crisis, …because we were never really told as a kid what our identity is…. My father is so proud to be an American citizen. You know he didn’t really want to have anything
else to do with Mexico. And I don’t think my mother ever had the chance to embrace her Mexican roots… so now we are trying to bring that back out” (FA). Another aspect of ancestral culture was one of being belonging to different cultures through traveling. “My great aunt took my mom to Spain and England and just showed her there’s a whole other world out there” (FA). Culture and belonging also surrounded the themes of food, and play, “We’d run out and bring food, and it was something really beautiful to me at the time. We also went up to the terrace and they had monkeys and peacocks, but we’ll also be kite flying” (RJ). Culture also was present through the arts, “everyone comes up and they perform dances, and sometimes you get musicians and all this stuff and that just went on to like two or three in the morning, and everyone’s dancing. I was young…but it was so much fun” (RJ). In GR’s EDS she spoke about the shifts in cultures her grandmother lived through as a way to understand her ancestor; “It must've been really hard, to have been in these different cultures, With different languages, Different values, Different dances” (GR).

**Sub-Sub Theme: Beliefs and Religion**

One participant talked about how her uncle introduced her to her religion and how it was a place she could access for resilience and placed some of that belief in her embodied narrative in the EDS, “Open yourself so we can move through you…Yansa will keep an eye on you” (TV). She explained later about how her religion was introduced to her by her ancestor: “He is who brought me to my religious practice… he became my first guide… I think my uncle had just in a weird way I think he knew me better than anyone else” (TV). Another participant placed her personal spiritual belief within her EDS; “sewing time, I receive and offer stardust” (TP). She explained it in our discussion “it does not exist a beginning and an end, time is infinite… I think of the idea of infinite” (TP). Another participant explained her ancestral belief and code of honor
“She always wanted to stay close to God and help others” (FA). During her EDS FA narrated: “The meeting of the hands reassures me of constant comfort. I’m collecting faith, falling into the arms of my sister” (FA). A similar understanding of resilience within ancestral religion shows up here; “They were extremely religions…we are vegetarian, so like, since I was young because the whole tenet of our religion is ‘live and let live’” (RJ). In a way, even the lack of religion and belief in not looking into the past was present in one participant, which seemed to address the strength and resilience in the way to move forward from ancestral mistakes: “I feel like that orientation of mine to not dwell or think about what happened is an orientation that’s very cellurally derived from that family history… I can’t change what happened in the past, sure it was a mistake but dwelling on it is not gonna make anything different right” (SS)?

**Theme 3: Embodiment**

The theme of embodied inquiry showed up through all EDS. In an EDS, the embodiment is part of the preparation to dance with ancestors: “My feet & gut are talking, clearing a path for them” (TV). An important part of entering into ancestral embodiment was the act of preparing one’s body and space. Embodiment included preparing one’s body for the dance in the embodied narratives of the EDS: “In between my work, my life and my spirit, I’m preparing… We are here, and so are you, time to move and time to do” (TV), and in another EDS, “I am a land, preparing for new discoveries. I invite you to dance and to also discover” (TP). In one of the EDS’s, another participant also speaks of a parallel world: “I have entered, I’m between two worlds” (KT). The researcher’s EDS also held this preparation for embodiment, “I humbly invite you for a dance with me, I chose this space in between for our dance. The hallway between the stair” (GR).
Subtheme 1: Ancestral Embodiment

Embodying an ancestor provided a sensation of feeling complete, “I see myself in her, in a way that I’d never known… so it is my truth, it is just mine” (RJ). In the EDS, she says, “I feel whole” (RJ). Also, embodiment could feel like a release of burden and lightness to the body, “Then, a spark, Lilian disappears, I have wings (KT). Another participant talked about finding a connection to the story that came from an embodiment narrative: “I think the surprise was that sort of there was a story there at all… oh yeah this is a story…because my story about my grandmother is very limited to me. We didn’t see her that much you know we didn’t actually and so it was a really nice way to sort of kind of create a little bit more of a cohesive picture of my relationship this woven into my memory, my DNA you know, just all of that kind of stuff” (SS).

Sub-Sub Theme: Ancestral Repair

Ancestral repair was present in the EDS as a form of connecting through time, “together we will sew time… today is being sewed with yesterday …when we change our perspective, things that were annoying…diminish” (TP). Later TP speaks in her EDS about the repair through the metaphor of sewing: “The fabric was mended, was repaired” (TP). Another way that repair was facilitated was through the gestalt dialog in the choreography: “The part that really shifted things was like, what would he tell you? I never thought it that way…I think that is what feels healing and like it, it is like in some ways it has open up so many doors” (TV). One participant seems to suspend judgment and enjoy her ancestry, “Now I am kind of accepting it like you know that is part of me and that’s how I understand my past and you know I’m proud of where I come from and who I am and whatever there’s the negative sides to everything but there’s just something very important and beautiful to that” (RJ). One participant found repair in missing her grandmother’s funeral, “When my grandmother passed away, I was out of the country and I
remember I felt really bad not being there for my mom...this is a kind of a way, you know, not to apologize for it, but to just keep her close...I could honor them in such a simple way...that was a beautiful surprise” (FA). FA also talked about the repair the EDS had in her, by bringing her closer to her grandmother and great aunt: “It brought me a lot closer to the sisters” (FA). One participant shows in her embodied narrative repairing the disconnection and finding strength, “Made strong, made courageous, made true, made you. Shuffling, hustling. Sangre mas fuerte porque de todos noostro (your blood is stronger because of all of us” (TV). In GR’s EDS, she realizes the trauma in her body as it was told by her grandmother: “The hallway between the stairs, looking down the stairs, I see the street outside, When I see that street, It reminds me, of your story, Telling me about your parents death” (GR). Lastly, healing seems to be present through images of repairing mistakes, and misunderstandings, through acceptance of ancestor’s limitations of time and temperament. In GR’s EDS, she realizes the uncertain moment in her grandmother’s loss of land and family: “Being stuck on that ship, Wondering about your life, Your future” (GR). These statements gave context to her difficult temperament later in the story. Lastly, a participant who narrates in her EDS how part of repairing is owning one’s mistakes and changing one’s perspective: “My son moves the camera in a way that frames it just right through. Sometimes amplifying a problem can be a solution. Making it more of something not just a little off” (SS.). In SS’s EDS, the repair seems to have in the phrasing that at first sounded like a personal critique and later became accepted as just a fact: “Behind the house is a field wild and lush contrasting to the highway in front things move too fast in general” (SS).

Subtheme 2: Relational Embodiment

In one EDS, a participant is clear about what relational embodiment looks like when she says, “I drop down to look for who I am in you, and to look for who you are in me” (FA). One
participant found that relational embodiment while moved freely and spoke: “She’s young and feels free, feels good in parallel” (KT). One participant talked about comparing her right and left side of her body with her maternal and paternal lineage as she was taught by a body worker; “my left side of my body, she said, connects more to the father side, which I actually felt very rooted and very grounded” (SS). Many participants talked about how they felt a different understanding of their identity as they embodied them in the EDS process: “Embodying her for me was like again a very interesting experience, especially to see, as well as to do it… “I did not know that those memories were in my body in a particular way you know I didn’t know that identity” (RJ). And on her EDS: “Thinking of you, feeling you, you live in my memories. I am you, you are me” (RJ). Another participant noticed her father in the EDS with her grandmother, and felt within her his presence: “between us I see and am a bit my father” (TP). As part of the choreography prompt, there was a natural narrative in the EDS films about getting the body and the space ready for the work.

**Sub-Sub Theme: Ancestral Support**

The embodied narrative shows clearly how healing through support showed up: “We gather each other, Finding themselves and loving each other, both in different rhythms they stay connected even through their separate lives, taking turns and switching roles, The love bickering form children to elder, I know it was all support for one another” (FA). Here in her ancestral story: “I don’t remember when she retired, but she was very involved in our lives and always helping my mom with the three of us” (FA). In the last interview, the ancestral support shows in this statement: “I think they would be supportive no matter what, yeah that definitely helps feel more unconditional” (FA). There was also healing of loss by finding ancestral support in one’s dance, “I was like, my uncle is still, like, in my life, like, bringing me to places, like, when I’m
ready he’s like, I see you, when you get over yourself I’ll hook you up into a space that I prepared for you, so this is really dope” (TV). This participant felt her ancestral support in these words during her EDS: “We see you, you were here all along as we have been” (TV). Ancestral support seemed to be present by recognizing one’s ancestral connection, here is RJ’s maternal grandmother on her EDS: “Come my child, I am matriarch, this is my throne, I hear, tell me, tell me” (RJ) and then in her voice, “Thank you for being here, being in my life” (RJ). In another direction the support might come from keeping the ancestors’ memories, “Some of us have the job of keeping memories for the others behind us” (KT).

**Theme 4: Identity, Artifact, and Names**

All participants, in one way or another, talked about their identity. Some participants longed to know the story of the migrant ancestral lineage, sometimes the story was lost and became a place of search and curiosity about one’s ancestral identity, “My brother recently did the 23 and me ancestral thing … so we learned a lot about the regions that we come from in Mexico and in Europe, I just want to continue researching. That's also very fascinating” (FA). In the GR’s EDS it shows up right at the beginning with these words “I am a fragment of you. A small part that continues.” Another participant spoke about her surprise of finding an ancestral identity within herself: “I did not know I identified with her like that” (RJ).

**Subtheme 1: Loss and Longing**

All participants seem to long to connect to their ancestor as a way to strengthen their identity and what they lost, never had, or no longer had. In GR’s EDS, she speaks of this longing; “I wish I could have grown up near you, to hear about your stories. But when I was born you were already in Israel, And I was raised in Rio” (GR). Another participant laments no longer having the same home where her ancestors lived, “It illuminates what I don’t have, you
know, especially Metropolitan Avenue…the past is so with me” (KT). In this, this participant spoke of Spanish with a longing: “Her father didn’t allow my grandmother to speak Spanish and of course they didn’t allow the kids to speak Spanish” (FA). This longing to connect with an ancestor that lived in another country shows in this embodied narrative on RJ’s EDS: “You hold me, I’ve been longing for that. I see you right there with me…Wanting to be held, hold me, hold me close” (RJ). Sometimes the longing was related to an untold story, and the desire to know the story behind the decision to live in one’s homeland. Here is a participant speaking to this question, “I’m very curious about you know what my great grandmother was doing in Ireland and what precipitated that move…what was my grandfather doing like as a 12-year-old, he was driving teams of horses to Boston… What was his mother doing?” (SS). In TP EDS, a more obvious untold story: “Here a mourn for my father, for the secret stories” (TP). Another participant shares the grief of loss, “My uncle died when I was in College… he died at 40 with a heart attack… I think he was the one I was closest to… he was always nice to me.” A participant talked about longing for her art through her body: “It has been really hard to connect back to the joy of dance, or like soul dance…I lost my artistry… I’ve been in this journey and reconnecting with my body” (TV).

Sub-Sub Theme: Artifacts

Another critical part of one’s ancestor identity was through artifacts that often represented their time and culture, such as a winter coat, a flowered dress, a teapot, or even a photograph. One participant used a ring from her grandmother but also found something to wear that had a sense of fashion, “It was clothes with an original design, and I thought that Italy has a thing with fashion, with clothes, with fashion designers…my grandmother was just a tailor, but there is something there” (TP). When it came to ancestral belongings, there was an attachment to
who these objects belonged to and how it was important to keep them, “I am surrounded by my family stuff, because it means something to me, you know, it’s not like garbage” (KT). Another way that belonging came into play easily was through the resilience of artifacts, “I was given her brown woolen coat by my father. It’s heavy and looks brand new. The tag inside reads Lehman’s Allentown. I love the way it feels when I move or wraps tight around me. What year was it bought I wonder…How did she keep it so pristine?” (SS). SS also painted a certain picture of her ancestor’s home: “I go to the window of the bathroom with shell shaped soaps and watch the cars whiz past on the two-lane highway” (SS). These objects seem to take the space of a transitional object such as it is described in object relation theory. There was a sense of continuity that these artifacts belonged to an ancestor and therefore had more value “I am very sure I have my great grandfather’s sewing machine” (KT). Sometimes an object such as a cloth or sari was an important part of one’s ancestral culture, “Especially my mom’s side of the family, they were with their heads covered, and the elders, the older woman, their saris came down to here” (RJ).

Subtheme 2: Ancestral Name

Names were a way to identify religion, who you were as a person, or whom you were inspired in being. When it came to identity, names seem to connect a person to their ancestor even if they did no longer have the same last name, there was a certain sense of legacy loyalty with cherishing the ancestral name: “There is her last name, I have a connection, when I see her name somewhere” (TP) or being given the first name: “My grandmother, who I am named after, my mom’s mom, …her sister was named…, and that’s my sister’s name” (FA). Another participant borrowed the name of her grandmother’s younger sister for a while “my grandmother; she loved Lilian, her younger sister… I used to call myself Lilian and walked
around saying my name is Lilian” (KT). Her name is spoken in the EDS, which later KT speaks of how much she identified with her even now when she is no longer as young as when Lilian died. Another way that name showed up was as a way to identify oneself as part of a group or religion. For example, this participant’s ancestral last name had changed to represent being a part of religion: “J., which is my surname because J is a religion, and it was a way to bring people of our religion together to show unity” (RJ).

Sub-Sub Theme: Women

All participants were women and some of them found strength in that maternal line; “I am being fed their wisdom, through our voices as women… This is the story of strong women” (FA). Again, coming from a resilient and feminist strength observation a participant said; “I think a lot of these Jewish women at the turn of the century did all the work, and the men were, you know, sitting on their butt” (KT). A participant talked about how as a child she did not comprehend the shadow of gender roles: “they were all made into this really beautiful and fun interesting thing but for me at that age not understanding some of the also subjugation of women” (RJ). This participant also talked about the power of embodying the matriarch of the family, sitting in her throne and feeling the love. She was also aware of how later in her life she looked into women in India no longer from the lens of a child: the oppression women lived in India from a different lens than when she was a child: “When I used to come to India so much of the traditions and that that were really mystical for me, they were all made into this really beautiful and fun interesting thing but me at that age not understanding some of the also subjugation of women and other things that were …it’s still very beautiful like it’s still nothing that no one can take that beauty away from it, from me and me having embodied it in that way and in capturing it through movement… again my favorite is when that wind just blows” (RJ). In
GR’s narrative, it shows up as being a woman meant to be helpful to the family: “You left them (her parents) behind to help your sister, travel to Brazil with her four children.” TP, another participant, noticed how her grandmother put a nice strong front and behaved ahead of her times even though she could see that deeper in her she was vulnerable and needed protection. In her EDS she narrates: “Noticed in front, an attitude of confrontation and insult, and deep inside, a vulnerability and gentleness” (TP), later in the discussion she said, “Even for today’s standards, if we think about it, she was a woman ahead of her times” (TP). Therefore, participants showed how in that relational embodiment, they felt an ancestral embodiment of being a woman with resilience and strength.

**Theme 5: EDS Method Process**

During the last interview, after creating the EDS, many participants gave positive feedback about the process. One participant talked about the balance between practical and emotional aspect of the method, “Always inside of a practical methodology that allowed a rich and diverse set of emotions and a co-creation. I thought it was awesome” (TP). Another participant talked about how the process helped her get in touch with her body from a different paradigm, “I really liked it, it was a process very different from my own…it felt very personal, and it made me feel more connected to my body in a different way… there are so many worlds to uncover… it was a very interesting process” (SS). Many participants talked about how it felt like a beautiful process, “It was really nice to research in a natural way, in a very organic way, I felt really, it just felt a bit like a beautiful process to go through” (FA). One participant talked about the desire to not call it therapy, even though it felt therapeutic, “Can we exist in a way that this work doesn’t necessarily get defined in that way/ yes its therapeutic, I mean” (KT). Many participants said they felt the process helped them feel less conscious, “Your process just help
me get out of my head a little bit” (TV). One participant, even though she did not feel she liked her voice in the final EDS, still seemed to have gotten something from it, “I think the making of it was just a great experience…didn’t expect any of that was totally unexpected, that felt very intrinsic it felt very deep and emotional… interesting and beautiful” (RJ).

Sub Theme: Strong Emotions

An important aspect of this study was the emotional embodiment that came once the choreography was being made. While telling the story, all participants seemed quite collected, but the choreographic process brought up strong feelings. One participant felt so emotional that later she thought that the informed consent saying they could stop at any time made sense as she almost felt that she may have stopped. She said, “I remember you putting in the contract that you know the participant could drop out whenever they wanted and when I first read that I didn’t really…I was thinking why… then the day we did the choreography when I started getting kind of emotional, I was like OH!” (FA). Another aspect of the work was that one is working with memories that sometimes did not even actually happen, but still brought strong emotions. For example, a participant that was working with someone she never met said, “There is sadness in memory, … cause it’s either gone or even if things are still happy that memory is gone because it’s a memory. And now I have this movie as part of my memory. Thus, even though it brought strong emotions, it also brought gratitude” (KT). One participant said: “This is something I’m going to cherish like I feel I’m left with just this beautiful moment… something so cherished and something so beautiful to explore and share and investigate… just grateful for that” (RJ). One participant was surprised about her feeling of nausea when she created the dance with her grandmother, and how that began to dissolve and bring her to a place of peace: “A narrative brought me lots of emotions since the first meeting…thoughts and feelings, memories and the
sensation of nausea. The first time I did not believe in this nausea, and then it came stronger. Still, every time I revisited, I felt it dissolving” (TP).

**Sub-Sub Theme: Unblocking Creativity**

Another interesting part of the process was how many participants felt that the study helped them unblock their creativity. For example, here is a participant talking about her art making after the EDS: “I think spending time with my uncle just opened up some places that I shut up…now…all I want to do is art, so I’ve been doing that, I’ve been making a lot of art. Like a lot of thinking about it, making it, producing it, and thinking about it, some more doing artwork, versus busywork for my job” (TV). Another participant talked about feeling unblocked to create more: “I thought it gave me a desire to do more creative things, like dancing, this sensation of peace with myself too, reinforces it” (TP). Many participants felt that they could keep doing this work with all their ancestors, “let’s do another one, let’s do like all that with everybody, yes that is what I feel like. It’s just a process that you can keep and do another one” (KT).
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy was a study that provided results in two areas: The experience of creating embodied digital storytelling when exploring one’s ancestral legacy and how that showed up in terms of identity, sense of belonging, and resilience through this process. In this discussion section, the experience of the methodology will be discussed first, then the experience of ancestral legacy will be supported by the literature. This section will discuss the thematic analysis results through reflection on the literature. Next, a member checking meeting will be presented, including an open exchange of the research participants. After that, the following sections will focus on the limitation, credibility, and future research recommendations for this study. Before discussing the results, there will be a brief description of implicit memory as explored in this study through embodied inquiry, where the environment affected one’s identity and sense of self and belonging.

Implicit Memory

In general, the EDS became a new memory, created through an embodied experience of one’s implicit memory. Implicit memory was explored through movement and embodied inquiry, a somatic technique developed for trauma treatment and Gestalt Therapy (Ogden et al.2006, Ruzany, 2019). It did not matter if the repair was of an ancestral trauma, an ancestral displacement of home or a disconnection of ancestral identity and attachment, EDS seemed to repair one’s connection to their ancestor. Just like a dream that feels real enough that a person wakes up with a feeling that the dream actually happened, the EDS created a memory with an ancestor that felt real and special. In other words, each EDS, in a way, formed a new embodied memory with an ancestor that one can return to, just like any other memory. In the words of a
participant: “We didn't see her that much, you know, we didn't actually, and so it was a really
good way to sort of kind of create a little bit more of a cohesive picture of my relationship which
is woven into my memory, my DNA” (SS). Through a gestalt lens and embodied art-based
research, the participant could connect with their implicit memory of their ancestor. Here is the
same participant talking about the process: “It felt very personal, and it made me feel more
connected to my body in a different way, also like you know… is kind of a good reminder of the
layers to peel back” (SS). Every film with an ancestor created a new memory as one embodied
the feelings that surfaced in the present moment while evoking a dance with their ancestor. It is
not important if the ancestor also created memories from a different realm or a different layer of
the Universe; the dancer kept an embodied experience of connection, an imaginary resource of
support, and repair. Here SS speaks of that relational work: “Actually, that was another surprise.
It is that I liked it, as you know we often talk about talking while dancing and sometimes it's like
- you know - but this works, I mean that's what it is about, it's about having that relationship in
it” (SS). Similar to different trauma-informed embodied techniques, the experience of creating
EDS facilitates a shift from a relational disconnection to one of contact, repairing unfinished
business and facilitating a process of further connection. Many participants wanted to do many
more films as the process was enriching and created a path within themselves, they did not know
they had access to. Here is SS speaking of this: “It's a story I would not have discovered were it
not for this process, …also because my stories about my grandmother are very limited to me”
(SS). Therefore, EDS gave participants access to their nonverbal implicit memory. By creating
an embodied narrative in digital storytelling, participants created a new healing memory where
connection and repair with their ancestors were possible.
If the dance created a connection to the implicit memory within one’s body, the environment participants created with their film addressed the importance of the external world, and the acknowledgement of one’s ancestral time and space, which differed from the participant’s own time and space. Studies suggested that attachment to place and people can be passed down. The main source of a positive ancestral legacy on this aspect of attachment styles is community support and the hope of opportunities for emotional and professional growth (Bogaç, 2009; Hautamäki et al., 2010). Attachment to people and place was explored in this study when participants chose an ancestor they wanted to connect with and repair an attachment that might not have happened. And then, they chose a location to make a recording that allowed repair and healing. By entering into contact with a place of choice, participants were creating a relationship to the land or place, which could create an important aspect of resilience and well-being (Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). *Place attachment* can be an important factor affecting vulnerable populations that are descendants of displacement and their descendants. In order to create resilience, integration, and successful resettlement, refugees might be better off being encouraged to create multiple identities, multiple spaces of place attachment, and relationship to the land and nature, as well as the possibility for a future without the threat of being asked to leave (Berry & Hou, 2019; Bogaç, 2009; Coughlan & Hermes, 2016). Research showed that distrust and ambivalence of a place could create psychological homelessness in the next generation (Bogaç, 2009). Lastly, ancestral legacy of displacement might be carried over many generations through internalized oppression and distrust in the socio-political and economic system (DeGruy, 2005). Therefore, facilitating place attachment through a multi-sensory experiential activity could create conditions for a resilient outcome for vulnerable populations with an ancestral legacy of displacement. This might be an important element for future research,
where identity is found in one’s ancestral resilience and creative adjustment to new spaces, new time, and new culture.

**Methodology**

The process of digital storytelling as a research methodology with the side effect of healing through a two to four minutes film was well described by Vacchelli (2018), Lenette et al. (2019), and Willox (2013), who respectively used digital storytelling to reveal the experience of immigrants, refugees, and Native Americans. In this current research study, the researcher conducted a similar approach but used choreography as the base for the storytelling in creating an embodied ABR approach. This ABR also included interviewing the participant to tell their ancestor’s story; facilitating an embodied inquiry into the participants’ ancestral legacy; allowing the participant to use embodied narrative as a meaning-making process; as well as having a chance to share their artistic film with others and get community support for their history, relational dance, and identity. The final group discussion meeting after the EDS and the results were finished served two purposes: First it allowed the participant to give some feedback on the method used and share their experience, and secondly it served as a member checking process.

If quantitative and qualitative research has helped shine light on parts of the impact of ancestral legacy on their descendants, embodied art-based research helped create a broader understanding of the many aspects of this topic. Therefore, past studies connected to other fields of study, including research focused on trauma, developmental and environmental psychology, reported side by side with studies in the fields of anthropology and sociology. And so, the four results related to ancestral legacy in *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy* included *TGT and resilience* (Theme 1); *place attachment, ancestral home, and culture* (Theme 2), including stories of their ancestral *migration, beliefs, and religion*; the *embodiment* (Theme 3)
of one’s ancestor and their relational repair and support; and one’s understanding of their identity through their ancestor, artifacts and name (Theme 4). Therefore, this study illuminated how ancestral legacy affected a diverse group in a multidimensional gestalt that included many fields of study.

By using an embodied qualitative aspect of this research, participants were able to tell their ancestral story they wanted to tell, then create a narrative in a post phenomenological EDS and later discuss their experience through a final interview and a group member checking, where there was a spontaneous exchange. In the final discussion, results on the experience of the participant Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy included strong emotions, creative flow from the process, and through ancestral embodiment, found a connection, support, and repair. During the member checking group exchange, participants expressed that they appreciated the participant-centered, anti-oppressive, and decolonizing research approach. Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy had a participant-centered format and was a decolonizing alternative, as it held a co-created process through creating the EDS, using storytelling, and a phenomenological final discussion. This anti-oppressive methodology allowed the participant to tell the story they wanted, the story their bodies held, and the narrative that they chose to perceive in their dance. This research created a supportive community of dancers from diverse ancestral backgrounds, who expressed wanting to continue to meet and continue to work together. This aspect will be discussed further in the member checking meeting portion of this paper. This last interview, added before the member checking meeting, was an important addition to the pilot study in gathering more information about the participants’ experience through the research process, including a sense of memory making with an ancestor.
The Pandemic Context

Relationally, this study created a sense of connection in a time of isolation. COVID-19, before a vaccine was available, created a collective trauma of fear towards health in one’s family and friends, as well as isolating one another from the possibility of sharing the grief of losses with others. One participant said: “I couldn’t see him, because of COVID, I couldn’t go to his funeral or anything. He was my last living grandparent” (RJ). In work with refugees and TGT, the use of ancestral stories assisted survivors in embracing a story of resilience versus helplessness (Goodman et al., 2017). Goodman and West-Olatunji’s (2008) study showed that remembering one’s ancestral history could help one remember one’s ancestral coping skills versus just the traumas and losses. This current study related to Goodman and West-Olatunji’s (2008), where both showed that by remembering ancestral stories of survival, there was an identification of those survivor skills and strengths versus a sense of victim and helplessness.

COVID-19 also affected the part of the method that related to choosing the place of attachment to film the dance: “I was supposed to go home at the beginning of January to the …, to go to my cousin’s engagement party, and I was like, this is perfect, I can do it either at my grandmother’s house, which is also still standing, or my great aunt’s house. And then COVID got a bit worse here and there, so I had to cancel my trip… I definitely wanted to be there… that would have been perfect, I will go back one day, and I’ll do the same dance again” (FA). Another issue of doing the research during a pandemic was respecting the participant’s time and needs. Many participants had to postpone and re-schedule meetings. Here is one participant speaking about her own process during this time: “because of COVID and because of everything else going on, cause of Zoom, it was almost too much you know, to do it quickly, so it was really great to have this kind of like ‘a little dream’ going on, running along” (KT).
Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, where many were suffering from lack of motivation and creativity, where a sense of purpose was suspended, this study seemed to allow a respite and an unblocking of creativity into an immediate burst of creative freedom and desire to do more EDS processes. One participant reported in the final interview that after she completed her EDS, she began doing art every day. Her artistic identity felt stronger than before participating on this study, and her trust in the artistic process returned. This result was also seen in the discussion of this study, where participants felt more creative and interested in continuing their artwork. Through the research process and embodied inquiry, TV felt transformed: “I think spending time with my uncle just opened up some places in myself that I shut up…all I wanna do is art, so I've been doing that, I've been making a lot of art” (TV). It would be interesting to see if this unblocking of creativity is a natural side effect of an ABR in future studies. Furthermore, trusting the artistic process in a trauma-informed approach allowed the participant to trust themselves as researchers versus art critique with harsh words for self-judgment. One participant said, “I thought it gave me a desire to do more creative things, like dancing, this sensation of peace with myself too, reinforces it” (TP). Many participants talked about surprisingly liking the result and not feeling judgment towards the self through introjects or retroflection and enjoyed their artistic product in the form of the EDS and gave the participants the confidence to engage in other artistic projects of their own that felt difficult to engage with before.

**Ancestral Legacy**

There have been many studies on the impact of ancestral legacy on their descendants. Quantitative and qualitative studies in the past focused on *transgenerational trauma* and *resilience*; transgenerational secure and insecure attachment; successful emplacement and *place attachment* through generations; or factors of ancestral legacy on *identity* formation. These
focused studies provided important pieces of the puzzle in how ancestral legacy affects their descendants. On the other hand, this study found data not only in the qualitative part of it but could also collect the results by observing the ABR portion of the research. Although all themes are found in all EDS films, the titles given to the EDS and art response could illustrate certain particular themes described in the qualitative thematic analysis. All EDS films touched on the elements of an ancestral story of TGT and resilience, place attachment, embodiment as well as identity. Nevertheless, the ABR titles hold a visceral perspective on the themes and will be introduced below.

**Theme 1: Transgenerational Trauma and Resilience**

On the theme of transgenerational trauma and resilience (Theme 1), three EDS below illustrate the transgenerational ancestral legacy, including the subtheme and sub-sub theme of story of disconnection through ancestral anger; plus resilience felt through ancestral work ethics, arts, and education and the impact of having an artistic ancestral legacy:

KT EDS: Remembering the Spanish flu during COVID (ABR: Dancing with ancestral skeletons)
GR EDS: Ancestral loss (ABR: Time accordion)
TP EDS: Ancestral secrets (ABR: Moving through and out)

These three EDS told stories of loss and disconnection; a trauma was felt within the body from an untold story, a secret that was not exposed, as no one else could know but through this dance. The embodied narrative that came from the dance could stand on its own as an embodied narrative that exposes TGT. Through embodied inquiry, the dancers found the experience of their ancestors inside the dance and had a better understanding of the losses, traumas, and silence. This embodied sense connects with past studies that show that history and family relations are inseparable and unconsciously remembered at some level in the body (Walkerdine
et al., 2013). Furthermore, many scholars recommended dance as a method to support the healing of transgenerational trauma and as a form to access implicit memory (Baum, 2013; Buonagurio, 2020), but it seems to have its first practical example in the results of the current study.

Several studies clarify the question of an ancestral legacy by studying the presence of transgenerational trauma (TGT) or resilience on survivors of collective trauma (Bezo & Maggi, 2015; Braga, 2012). TGT and resilience research started mainly in Western Europe due to the Holocaust, later with the Holodrome, the mass migration in Europe, and later in other continents (Braga, 2012). In this research, all participants came from a mix of cultures and ancestry—the mix of cultures created in all participants a sense of affinity to another culture beyond being American citizens. Nevertheless, many participants talked about not being told about their ancestral history, culture, and land and therefore longed to belong to their ancestral lineage. An important element of TGT is a silent conspiracy in 2G and 3G, where the descendants carry the traumatic history nonverbally and manifest through somatic symptoms without knowing cognitively what happened to their ancestors. One participant talked about her family secrets, and untold story with this statement: “There was also in my body you know a sort of this heritage, this Jewish heritage that I didn’t know anything about, the super orthodox …had to do with the old country had to do with grief, you know exile” (KT). This implicit memory and grief about the loss of history, culture, and connection to one’s ancestral land seem important to note, especially in the current mass migration of our times. Therefore, it is important to further understand TGT and resilience.

Braga’s (2012) qualitative research with Holocaust survivors, first set of themes were “somatic symptoms and psychopathology disorders” in participants with TGT and “personal
narratives, documentary records and cultural rituals” with resilient ones (p. 11). In this study, participants reported that somatic symptoms shifted into a new personal narrative as a new memory. Most participants shifted from a place of discomfort and avoidance to one of curiosity and artistic flow. One particular participant felt quite nauseous. Although she was quite surprised, thinking it was a coincidence, she later confirmed it only appeared while creating the dance with her ancestor. “The first time I did not believe in this nausea, and then it came stronger. Still, every time I revisited, I felt it dissolving…always inside of a practical methodology that allowed a rich and diverse set of emotions and a co-creation. I thought it was awesome” (TP). Once the dance was created, edited, and narrated, nausea subsided into a place of movement and tolerable intensity. This research shows that these resilient aspects of ancestral legacy could be facilitated and assist in repairing aspects present in TGT, such as silence in loss, into a new narrative of resilience.

Making the EDS connected with the resilience aspects of Braga’s (2012) study where “open, loving, humorous interaction” and “artistic creation, humor at home, imaginary resources and social support” were present (p. 11). There was a lot of laughter in the making of the EDS process, although there were also many tears. The process facilitated the creation of one's ancestor embodiment and the felt sense of their support, love, and ancestral homes. FA talked about holding this guilt of not being able to be present at her grandmother’s funeral because she was out of the country and felt that she felt some closure by doing this research: “When my grandmother passed away, I was out of the country and I remember I felt really bad not being there for my mom…this is a kind of a way, you know, not to apologize for it, but to just keep her close…I could honor them in such a simple way…that was a beautiful surprise” (FA). This
statement shows how this artistic creation assisted her in feeling the loving ancestral support and resilience again and letting go of a burden of guilt.

Continuing to understand resilience in ancestral legacy, in Dekel et al. ’s (2013) study, “open verbal communication and self-disclosure about their own trauma, (is) a key facilitator of PTG” (p. 532). Many participants were grateful to talk about their ancestral history and what happened in their connection and disconnection from the ancestor they chose. TV and KT were the participants that mostly showed their EDS to friends and colleagues before their final interview and member checking meeting. They were also the ones that were the most frustrated with the filter that masked their identity. It seems that open communication comes with being ready to be seen and heard in all aspects of one’s identity. Here is an obvious protest: “It’s like you asked of me to do all this work to express myself and now you want me to hide after I did all this work to expose myself…when you have people in positions of power defining what it means for someone else to be safe you create these adverse problematic situations where people are actually unsafe” (TV). In this statement, confidentiality did not help safety, but on the contrary, it supported the open communication that Dekel reported.

The literature on TGT and resilience showed that a parent’s exposure to trauma could affect the offspring in a physical way and therefore felt in one’s own body (Yehuda et al., 2001). By knowing that, the chances that our bodies hold ancestral consequences are high. Creating a dance dialogue with the ancestor gave a surprising new perspective of an ancestor’s harshness, temperament, and anger as something to judge, to understand, sometimes transforming a disconnection and fear one saw in an ancestor's intention for support. “I understand that she always had the necessity to defend herself, and I was always protected” (“eu entendo que ela sempre tem precisado se defender né e eu não eu sempre fui protegida;” TP). This statement
showed her differentiation from her grandmother’s circumstances and, therefore, behavior. By acknowledging the story of one’s ancestor, there was a possibility of finding the resilience within the same story, re-storying through a verbal channel, versus just a felt sense within one’s body through somatic symptoms.

On the same topic of verbal narrative, Giladi and Bell (2013) found that open family communication was important, but differentiation was also associated with resilience in 2G and 3G. One participant illustrated how these two elements of communication and differentiation showed up in *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy*. KT talked about growing up wanting to be like Lilian, her grandmother’s sister, who died young, and how much she felt like her, always young, but then as she looked at the film, she realized how she was also similar to her elder grandmother. Here is what she said at the beginning of the discussion: “I think I chose somebody who is exactly like me, so is a lot of these movements that I did or are recognizable to me, and also I think that you know for whatever pluses and minuses and in my life, I'm an adolescent…. there's this other dance that is in me, that's really about an old woman actually and now and now that I am her age (her grandmother), she was probably about 67 … And now I have this movie as part of my memory, let’s do another one, let's do like all that with everybody, yes that is what I feel like” (KT). KT moves from her grandmother’s loss of her younger sister and identification with Lilian into a new desire to dance now about her grandmother. Just like KT, there was differentiation and reconnection in all participants. By acknowledging the place, time, and traumas of an ancestor, participants could develop a better understanding of why they felt certain discomfort or disconnected from certain aspects of one’s ancestral legacy. FA, TP, SS, and GR’s EDS all spoke to this new understanding and differentiation of one’s ancestral trauma due to their situation of time, place.
Theme 2: Place Attachment, Home, and Culture

On the theme of place attachment, home, and culture (Theme 2), two EDS’s illustrate their stories of ancestral migration by using language from their ancestral home, as well as culture and sense of belonging though their ancestral belief and religion.

FA EDS: Bickering as love and support (ABR: The desert as a temple),
TV EDS: Ancestral faith moving through (ABR: Totem doors)

These two EDS’s included Spanish speaking and had movements connected to the participants’ religion and faith, as well as ancestral culture, and sense of belonging. The ancestral home included faith, culture, and language from their ancestral home before their ancestral migration. The narrative on these EDS’s included parts spoken in Spanish and showed poems that illustrated multiple belongings, multiple languages, and connecting beyond one’s American identity to one’s ancestral land. The dance illustrated the ancestral disruption and how it facilitated overcoming it by connecting with their ancestral resilience through the arts. This artistic inquiry relates to the study done by Diamond and Shrira (2018) with Holocaust survivors, where the arts correlated to resilience in participants that engaged in artistic expression and self-investigation.

An important aspect of this study was acknowledging the field and environment that the ancestors and participants called their ancestral home. Research on TGT and attachment theory, showed that environmental support could disrupt passing down insecure attachment (Bezo et al., 2015; Hautamäki et al., 2010). Research with refugees has shown that environmental support can create place attachment and a sense of belonging (Bogaç, 2009; Vacchelli, 2018). Environmental support could create trust in the community and new residency as well as help the development of secure attachment within families (Hautamäki et al., 2010). By finding support, the
participants also shifted their preoccupation and found a feeling of support in the environment around them and in the reliant aspect of their ancestral legacy (Lehner & Yehuda, 2018). The participants (including RJ, FA, TV, KT, GR) explained this well regarding land and culture, place and time, and values. *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy* facilitated a sense of belonging and ancestral cultural *identity* that in past studies have shown to be essential in one’s well-being when working with ancestral displacement (Kale, 2019; Lenette, 2019; Scannel et al., 2017; Vacchelli, 2018).

In the middle of COVID 19, a participant lost her grandfather, and by being away from family in the U.S., there was a sense of grief, disconnection, and loss. RJ moved to India and brought her grandfather home to India. “‘You all have kept me in this Golden cage,’ … which means you have all the amenities and luxuries here in the US, you know, like TV and internet and this and that, and whatever, and it’s comfortable living, but it’s still a cage for me because it is not India, it’s not home” (RJ). Nevertheless, during RJ’s EDS, there was a sense of “Longing for the matriarch,” and in the researcher’s collage “A beam of light transfers the crown,” which indicated that there was a sense of a transfer of title or transfer of strength and centrality. Through the EDS, there was a natural recognition of her own power and strength and a deeper acceptance of her own crown and multiple belongings as a strong woman of her home, wherever she was. Therefore, as past research has demonstrated, the use of environment and location when creating the EDS was an essential aspect of creating the possibility of emplacement in descendants of *migration*.

Exploring place attachment from a culturally informed perspective, Anguluan-Coger (2013), who worked with Filipino migrants in America in an ABR study, showed how her study empowered the participants to accept their cultural identity, unblocking creativity, and increase
social and well-being. In Albert-Proos’ (2015) research study, participants embodied their ancestral home through acknowledging the distance of one’s ancestral home and re-construction of one’s present place attachment. Coughlan and Hermes’ (2016) study where migrants engaged with gardening showed “the importance of placemaking to the successful negotiation of displacement” (p. 150). All these studies show how procedural activity and the arts can provide a path for place attachment. Similarly, in this research, by acknowledging one’s environment and place, participants took the opportunity to use cultural cues in place, clothes, and ancestral language to integrate them into a dance and their story. In other words, through EDS, participants felt that they were engaging in negotiating one’s time and place with their ancestor through the art-making of choreography, choice of language in the embodied narrative, clothes, and the place they chose for filming. Here are the words of a participant as she reconciled not being able to honor her ancestor’s home: “a historical site. This is her house! How can nobody want it? But I guess it’s only meaningful to us” (FA). In her, EDS FA used the procedural movements of cooking as she danced in the kitchen. The negotiation of time and place with dancing with an ancestor also highlighted the loss of the ancestral home and the re-construction of their present home with the image of their ancestor’s support. Another participant said: “It illuminates what I don’t have, you know, especially Metropolitan Avenue…the past is so with me.” (KT). This shows place attachment and the longing for its culture, ancestral home, and a sense of belonging.

**Theme 3: Embodiment**

Different times hold different collective oppression and collective traumas. In this study, all participants were invited to embody their ancestor. In Rae Johnson’s (2009) research, her qualitative analysis showed that the body responded to oppression in two ways: on one side, the body could hold vigilance, withdrawal, alienation, or it could be a place of resistance and
empowerment. SS talked about not being able to talk with her ancestors due to different values that felt oppressive. Engaging in embodied storytelling through the EDS films gave a natural artistic response where an empowered body could tell a personal embodied expression from a place of strength. In the art response called “desert as a temple,” the researcher found a visceral response to the EDS film she called “bickering as love and support.” By shifting one’s perspective, one could transform what could have been a tough traumatic life into post-traumatic growth. In the interview, FA spoke about TGT: “My grandfather died when my mom was in her 20's. I think it’s for the best. My mom said he was a terrible man. She hated him.” (FA). Then in her EDS, her embodied narrative shifted into ancestral resilience: “Troubled times are overcome with resilience. Com la massa de la Vida. I am being fed their wisdom” (FA’s EDS). This research showed that perspective could assist a participant in holding both ancestral legacy and resilience with a sense of connection and ancestral support versus disconnection manifested through vigilance, withdrawal, alienation.

Another important connection of *embodiment* as a tool in treating trauma has been made in the field of Gestalt Therapy. Greenberg and Malcolm (2002) studied the exact element of the empty chair work when working with a parent who created the conditions of trauma treatment. Greenberg and Malcolm (2002) found that embodied emotional expression made a difference in the healing process. This is an important finding, as it connects to the process of choreographing in the EDS. All participants had to dive into this authentic and embodied expression in order to create the embodied dance. EDS, in a way, provoked the authenticity of this study beyond the initial interview. From this emotional authenticity and relational embodied connection, a participant said: “felt very intrinsic, it felt very deep and emotional... I did not know I identified with her like that... interesting and beautiful” (RJ). Silva et al. (2015) researched this use of
dance in combination with Gestalt. In this study, dance and Gestalt were integrated into one discipline and showed their compatibility and strength when working with youth at risk. By using embodied awareness and expression, there was a shift from habituated coping to a creative embodiment. Therefore, the Gestalt Therapy foundation to create choreography with an ancestor seems to fit with past research, where participants felt a shift into creative embodiment. The detailing of how to use Gestalt Therapy to choreography described in this study is hopefully transparent enough to allow others to re-create the dance by making a movement at a time in an embodied inquiry choreographic process.

Many other studies showed the importance of body and mind connection when working with trauma (Brom et al., 2017; Cushing & Braun, 2018; Federman et al., 2016; La Chiusa, 2016; Levine & Land, 2015; West, 2017). Participants used this mindful embodiment to create a dance with an ancestor and then an embodied narrative in this study. All participants were working with healing attachment disruption with people and place, due to loss and disconnection. When the embodied narrative was created, the participants engaged in storytelling from a felt sense of what the dance was non-verbally saying, re-connecting the unspoken story of the body into consciousness. Most participants were surprised about the wisdom and depth of the embodied story that surfaced when intentionally dancing with an ancestor. “I think the surprise was that sort of there was a story there at all, … now it's sort of like one (a story) I have, because it lives in this dance and that is a super lovely thing you know” (SS). This connection might allude to a method that embraces implicit memory and facilitates the mover in recognizing the ancestral story through verbalizing their own movements.
In this study, identity was illustrated by embodying artifacts and Names (Themes 4). Two EDS’s had a dialogue with the ancestor through an object and place:

SS EDS: Ancestral artifact facilitates dialogue (ABR: The pristine coat)

RJ EDS: Longing for the matriarch (ABR: A beam of light transfer the crown)

Both EDS’s used artifacts to facilitate the dialogue. While SS used a coat as her object of transmission, RJ had a Sari over her head that, when the wind blew it made her embodiment physically felt. This connection to their ancestor through an object allowed both participants to connect with their ancestors and their own identity. This dialogue with their ancestor was illustrated in the EDS narrative. This embodiment through the artifact and the dialogue has been studied separately in a study with Alubafi and Kaunda (2019); and Greenberg and Malcolm (2002), respectively. In this study the subthemes of loss and longing seemed to repair through ancestral embodiment and the dialogue that came from the choreography and film. The subtheme of name and women came out more in the first interview and member checking meeting, especially in relationship to one’s ancestors, EDS and the matriarch narrative.

In terms of identity and storytelling, this ABR research resonated with Haraldsson and McLean’s (2021) study, where stories of migration, ancestral land stories, and being a minority in the new country were developed. In this ABR, the ancestral stories were told in the first interview; participants talked about the ancestral migration and their own curiosity of how to integrate the many belongings to different lands due to ancestry, migration, and origin of birth. “All kids of immigrant parents have very similar sorts of experiences in some ways … every dad had the same story… they had $8 dollars in their pocket type of thing you know.” (RJ). In RJ’s storytelling, she hits all the points described by Haraldsson and McLean (2021) as identity
development, including understanding one’s ancestral history and, therefore, the stories of migration and being a minority in the new land intertwined with memories of her ancestral land.

Willis and Cashwell’s (2017) study showed two main components in identity development: identity exploration and identity commitment. It seems that secure attachment influenced an individual to have high scores in both exploration and commitment, and it predicted life satisfaction and well-being as an identity achievement. Interestingly, having TGT, differentiation, and communication/personal narrative could also predict one’s identity development. By creating a new narrative through EDS, there was a natural exploration of one’s identity and a commitment to one's own identity in relationship to their ancestor. The title “Totems’ doors” on TV’s art response collage speaks of these spiritual sculptures representing ancestral histories and people. TV’s EDS Title “Ancestral faith moving through” both connect in a thematic node. A sense of guidance and accepted destiny seemed present with “The totem’s door,” where she could connect with her ancestors through the arts: “Open yourself so we can move through you…Yansa will keep an eye on you” (TV). During the first interview, she said, “He is who brought me to my religious practice… he became my first guide… I think my uncle had just in a weird way I think he knew me better than anyone else.” (TV). This statement shows a certain acknowledgment of being seen and feeling securely attached to her uncle in relationship to understanding her own identity. TV’s religion and her spiritual connection with the ancestor she danced with was a powerful learning experience on her spiritual and artistic identity.

One unexpected result was the importance of names. Research has shown that names help one develop identity and a sense of belonging (Amir & Lev-Wiesel, 2001; Dumitrascu, 2020; McAndrews, 2021; Zulu, 2020). Most participants had been influenced by their names and the story that the names carried by sometimes wanting to embody that: “my grandmother; she
loved Lilian, her younger sister… I used to call myself Lilian and walked around saying my name is Lilian" (KT). As KT danced and reflected on the EDS, it became apparent how her gray aunt affected her grandmother, who was very close to her and how she felt the pull to take her place, even her name, when she was a child. Through the dance, her body moved without weight bringing light into such dark times. This sense of lightness seems like an *embodiment* of the joy of life through dance back in the Spanish flu and, therefore, in this EDS project during COVID. Furthermore, SS, TP RJ, FA, and GR all chose grandmothers to dance with. This choice might have come from a need to *repair* a connection with an ancestor that held a different historical perspective as a woman in a time of a pandemic and politically uncertain times. One participant spoke in her EDS, “ Noticed in front, an attitude of confrontation and insult, and deep inside, a vulnerability and gentleness” (TP). In the theme of strong women, TP said, “Even for today’s standards, if we think about it, she was a woman ahead of her times” (TP). This statement shows a shift in the understanding of the perception of the grandmother’s demeanor. Most participants talked about the theme of strong *women* and their *women* ancestors’ resilience coming through them. Another interesting part when discussing *women’s* ancestry is that the surname of *women* did not pass down, creating a *disconnection* from that lineage. Previous research pointed out how using the father’s name was a way to facilitate the father’s connection to his offspring (McAndrew, 2021).

Another interesting aspect of this research had to do with ancestral *objects* or *artifacts*. Recent research on ancestral objects and their reflection on belonging to a culture, belief system, and lineage showed that these artifacts actually play an important role in one’s sense of *identity* (Christou & Janta, 2019; Alubafi & Kaunda, 2019). This research of *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy* brought forth many *artifacts* that included a coat, dresses,
rings, clothing, fashion, food, plants, photographs, certificates, and saris. All these objects brought forth the memory of an ancestor and the embodied connection to them through the transitional object. This is a modern recreation of rituals that have been studied in more ancient rituals. In SS’s work, the dance and dialogue with the ancestor were possible through the artifact of “The pristine coat,” which was the researcher’s collage title in response to her EDS. The researcher titled SS’s EDS as “Ancestral artifact facilitates dialogue.” There was an easier embodiment of the ancestor by having the coat, and a dialogue that never happened during her grandmother's lifetime became possible. In her EDS, SS said, “I was given her brown woolen coat by my father. It’s heavy and looks brand new. The tag inside reads Lehman’s Allentown. I love the way it feels when I move or wrap it tight around me. What year was it bought I wonder…How did she keep it so pristine?” (SS). And about her ancestral home: “I go to the window of the bathroom with shell shaped soaps and watch the cars whiz past on the two-lane highway” (SS). These artifacts seem to show a path to hold the ancestral strength and resilience. Lastly, some participants even considered the EDS as another artifact or documentary record and cultural ritual they could own now as part of their heritage legacy.

In summary, results of this study connected to different fields of research, including transgenerational trauma and resilience, place attachment, embodied trauma treatment, and studies on identity and artifacts. During member checking, participants connected in various points of themes and sub-themes during their exchange at the end of the meeting. Members discussed the feeling of ancestral disconnection, where ancestors had an angry tone, as well as resilience through the ancestral ethics of work, arts, and education. All participants told stories of ancestral migration and ancestral home as well as ancestral culture and belonging through faith and belief systems. Other sub-themes that came through the EDS methodology included
ancestral embodiment and repair, as well as relational embodiment and a sense of ancestral support. Also, an artifact and one’s ancestral name could channel a sense of ancestral connection or loss and longing. Lastly, this work had a post-feminist framework, as all participants were women. Only one participant was not a mom, and only one participant chose a male ancestor. These results might have been different if there were more diverse gender identities. In this historical time of COVID-19, and a post-feminist “Me Too” movement where many women are using social media to talk about gender abuse, might also have influenced the choice in dancing with a female ancestor.

**Member Checking Meeting**

The member checking was done in two small groups and included confirming the transcripts and findings, and a group exchange, where the group watched the films and spoke to what resonated with them and whatever else was present.

The first group was the international group where FA connected with the group just off the plane from Mexico, where she was visiting for the previous three weeks, RJ was in India, TP was in Brazil. After introductions, each participant spoke a little about their experience creating the EDS. FA spoke about how she often focused on her father’s lineage, and that it was interesting to focus on her mother’s side and how it made both sides of her lineage feel special: “When we were doing the choreography section, it was a very powerful moment so I am very grateful to be a part of this project because ... you know both sides are special in their own way” (FA). RJ talked about how interesting it was to embody her grandmother and feel how she felt about her grandmother from within: “I thought it was beautiful! My ancestor ... was my great maternal grandmother who I have only seen ... in India and so the process was so beautiful and so interesting to me of how I embodied her and took on her sort of persona that I saw her. I think
it just made me realize how much I hold of my ancestry and especially of her and how much that means to me” (RJ). TP spoke about finding a loving connection and some healing with her ancestor: “It touched me physically in a way I couldn't imagine to work with my ancestor. It moved me in a way I didn't expect, and I think it was somehow healing and somehow it rebuilt a love connection with my ancestor” (TP). These statements were shared before the viewing of the EDS that happened next.

After introductions and looking through the transcripts, we saw first RJ’s EDS. After the viewing as a group, RJ said: “It was very moving for me to watch” (RJ). In response to the RJ’s EDS, FA quoted RJ: “I am the matriarch, and this is your throne” something like that, that was beautiful, that was extremely powerful” (FA). TP then spoke about the theme of the matriarch being important: “it's very beautiful, we can see this power coming from the ancestor and passing through, going to the kid child” (TP). After the feedback, RJ said: “There was a particular way I was sitting, and it did. I felt like I was like the queen of the castle. I found that to be so interesting that that's how I see her or saw her...when I sat there and then there was one point where the veil actually sort of blows in the wind, it just happens naturally you know, it felt like this is my space. I own this space, and you know so it just made me realize how maybe I saw her” (RJ). This realization points to the resilient aspect of reconnecting with her ancestor, where empowerment and support were evident in her EDS.

After each film was presented and the open discussion happened, the participants were invited to make a movement to honor the moment and clean the palate of their bodies to experience the next EDS. During the member-checking meeting, participants showed a sense of strength, support, and admiration among the participants’ capacity to express a certain resistance and resilience to the troubles in life.
After watching TP’s film, TP talked about how her feelings had changed since the last time she saw it, and she thought it was because she was recovering from COVID, she said: “It's funny I felt almost tired watching it, I think it's very intense, I don't know why I think it's strong for me and intense, that's the word for me, it's not something that is finished, I think it will continue somehow, it's not the end I don't know what it means but it's a feeling” (TP). RJ spoke of the analogy of sewing in TP’s movement: “I was so enraptured in it because first of all this analogy of the sewing and the end, with the movement, I thought it really hit the point... I see this thread that was going through you know these generations of this thread and how it's coming through the movement, and there's a bit of a struggle, but then there's a release and all of these tensions I could almost see like thread in a cloth and so I thought it was beautiful...I could tell that there was tensions at different points but it was also resolution at the same time, that's what I saw” (RJ). FA spoke about the analogy of the “tailor” and “in real life nothing is a perfect fit” and then “I think you were wearing a mask which added a whole other layer to it” (FA). In response to that, TP said she was recovering from COVID and that even though she had mild symptoms, it might have moved her more seeing her EDS now: “Maybe someday if something comes from inside, I'll make a Part 2...I didn't feel this way the other time I saw it and maybe it's because I don't know about some months passed... I felt different now watching it again… she survived (the Spanish Flu) and we are surviving COVID so maybe this is the issue that comes out in this piece” (TP). Even though this study was not about collective trauma, there was a component about it that all participants lived, and they all connected that experience with their ancestor one way or another, but in this member check, it created a shift to how TP felt before getting COVID and watching it afterward.
After a movement transition and watching FA’s EDS, FA spoke about her experience seeing her EDS, again, “it's really nice seeing it after so long, it is busy, but I feel like those women were like nonstop, it's like nonstop in the kitchen and around the house and making us feel guilty for something and you know just always something ... I just spent like three weeks in Mexico with my sister and my sister is named after our grandaunt and I'm named after our grandmother and there were times in Mexico and we were kind of you know bickering, but in the end, it's just like love and support for one another...It is nice to find a connection between my sister and I and those two sisters” (FA). In response to FA’s EDS, TP said, “Seeing all these three, it's so beautiful, so strong feminine presence in all three, but I think the elements in FA, “the massa,” the food to nourish the kids and family, it’s a beautiful analogy with the cooking and making something for them, making them strong, making them grow, very feminine” (TP). This related to the theme of women, which in this group, they were all grandmothers. Here is RJ speaking of that, “you know it reminded me also of the women in my family and so I felt I could relate with just always making sure everything is being done. But there was one part that really stuck out for me, and I don't remember exactly how you said it, but there was something about times being difficult and I'm being fed their wisdom...I actually felt that, because we were just talking about COVID with TP ... you were just literally talking about how your grandmother survived the Spanish flu...it all kind of came together. So, I found that to be really interesting how our stories also are intertwined” (RJ).

After all three videos were shown, the researcher showed her own and was given an appreciation for her movement choices and film editing. After that, the researcher showed the results and listened to any specific edits that the participants felt necessary; for example, instead of “I am your matriarch,” it would be edited as “I am the matriarch,” and so on.
After that, we had a final conversation, where members expressed their gratitude to each other and the researcher as well as shared final words such as “It was inspiring (TP),” or “It was an interesting time to do it, during COVID, and yeah just realizing that you can reach your ancestors through a whole other way so thank you, congratulations” (FA). RJ asked about the methodology, and the researcher responded with these words: “a very important part of the process was to know your story and learn what you wanted to tell me about your ancestral story, what the body wanted to say, and then what would you think of it now” (GR). Goodbyes were warm and had a feeling of new possibilities. There was gratitude that the process taught them how to embody and connect with others who were not physically present. The participant-centered pace, the shift from sadness and loss to an ancestral connection, created a sense to all the participants that there was a process one could engage that brought connection even when apart.

The second group of participants met later at night, and they were all on the East Coast of the United States of America, including the researcher. This created another cohesive group for the last discussion. The discussion was facilitated similarly with introductions, transcript viewing, EDS watching, and feedback followed by each EDS. Last, the researcher shared the art-based response and the transcribed embodied narrative for any edits or comments.

The first EDS film shown was KT’s. SS spoke of the place and narrative being relevant and revealing: “It was beautiful and I loved that it was in your attic. I love that there was this foreground and background thing going on and how you used that space in the storytelling, it was just really lovely and I loved the text in the movement, I mean it just was so enjoyable to hear the words in that way...I just really felt like I got something of KT and I got something of this ancestor. I don't know it was very distilled and had connection with the movement and I
really enjoyed all that” (SS). After that, TV spoke of the space and movements: “the movement was very playful when you're spinning around on the ceiling, the space that you chose was very interesting, um 'cause often times like an attic is a place of memories where memories are stored, we revisit the attic to get the things to remember, so it also felt like this space was also speaking to that” (TV). Lastly, KT spoke: “I don't know what was released, but I think there was a lot regained, because I've been carrying around with that memory of a narrative, it's a memory of a narrative from my grandmother 'cause I never knew Lillian. ... I built this dance, which I think is really Lillian, in one sentence, which is she loved to dance in the park and to me that's like wow you know we don't even know the beginning of how memory and transmission; you know there's just so much and I think that was the deep rich work that I think that GR offered here is the depth of ancestry and what that means” (KT).

The second film shown was SS’s EDS. KT appreciatively spoke of the filter, even though she did not like it when it came to her own and others: “there's something you know about the blur that makes you know puts it into a time capsule...I mean, it's like having something of someone who's gone (KT). Then, TV spoke of how SS’s grandmother’s coat worked as a telephone, which relates to articles on artifacts as ancestral conduits: “You were in conversation in yourself with her and this coat was the conduit it was the phone ...I felt like you know she was so alive...you're moving in all these places like this conversation of her, probably not wanting to be in all these different places to have conversations with you, and she would have much preferred that you were not outside, and you were somewhere sitting down to be talking to her, but that's not how you get there, so it was very lovely, but also very playful” (TV). Lastly, SS spoke about her new connection with her grandmother that came from a curious place: “I didn't feel like I had that much in connection with her except for my genealogy and so dancing this
dance with that coat, really did, I don't know, I just really felt, I mean you know for a bland word connected … like it really was a conversation it was like the conversation I never got to have with her before she passed. What I mean, I'm just going: hey you're my grandmother, and we might not live the same lifestyle but hi! Let's connect! And so that's what was so special about this dance … I was um seeing her again and just in a very nonjudgmental space, actually, in a very curious space, stepping into a dance with her and something that was meaningful to me and something that we share which is you know DNA the body” (SS).

After the showing of TV’s EDS, her culture came through and was celebrated by both SS and KT: “that was really beautiful ... just felt like there was that lineage of talking about dance and dancing together in the lineage ...we just got to connect with the rhythms and seeing your torso move” (SS). “This is another transmission of you know the gods and the goddesses and the spirits … it was also all in there ...I just sort of feel like there are forms that carry you, you just have to be carried by it” (KT). This transmission of rhythms was also spoken of as the resilience aspect of ancestral legacy. In this following statement, TV responds to the feedback and describes TGT, resilience, and using the EDS as a process of healing and gratitude: “There is a lot of tragedy in my both lines, in both my maternal paternal line… the beautiful moments were always around art ... anytime I was at a family event we, he would take me to teach me to dance salsa ...I think the heaviness comes from the trauma, that's blood memory and trauma passed down … they might not have lived a pristine life but they also lived the life that they were they were supposed to live ...I never got to thank him for essentially saving my life because this tradition saved my life and the messages I couldn't hear him tell me, he was able to use this tradition to give me those messages and put my life back on track, so and that is what the whole dance was about” (TV).
After watching the researcher’s EDS, KT noticed how people were using the embodied narrative in the EDS and how people were choosing the spaces for the filming of the choreography: “So rather than having a conversation with the ancestry you're addressing the ancestor, it's like a direct thing and there you are in the hallway and it's like the two Jews chose these narrow spaces” (KT). Similarly, TV noticed similar perspectives: “There are these different ways to engage... as a method, there potentially may be something to be said about why someone chooses the particular form of engagement...how they deal with their faith or how they deal with the unknown or how they deal with resilience” (TV). In a similar fashion, SS realized how much her own EDS was a revelation of her own identity: “Having been away from my video for a while, watching mine again, was like, oh wow, that says a lot about me and you know how I'm approaching this memory, and I don't know, it was actually really interesting to see that also the reflections of self, in this as well, insight into the ancestor through us, but us through us” (SS). In response to the content of the researcher's EDS, TV spoke about the TGT of ancestral migration: “It was nice to hear someone articulate it, the feelings as a first generation person in a land ... and imagining how people who made it possible for you to be in this place, what they had to traverse or their relationship to the land or the space that they inhabited” (TV).

KT also spoke of the issue of COVID, “this crazy time we've been into, to have to do this somehow was pretty magical in a way, like it was very helpful to me to be doing this through this time actually, I mean I didn't plan it that way, but it was really somehow” (KT). And in response, SS said: “It's true, I think about just the fact that we couldn't see so many people in person, and yet how much we learned about how we can connect just in our own experience and memories in our bodies, yeah helpful” (SS).
While sharing the transcribed embodied narrative within each EDS, the poems stood on their own. Here is a comment while seeing KT’s own words printed separately from the EDS: “I had no rewrites on that, it just came out like boom ...it's about writing from the moving that is so powerful” (KT). Another response, from seeing the researcher’s art-based response, a participant said: “I don't know, like I am looking into an emptiness, yeah and then there's this interesting fullness behind, like this shadow of a story, this is really interesting” (SS). This candid discussion was an important aspect of creating safety around the research. In general, this member checking final group meeting helped reinforce the themes found by the researcher as well as create a sense of artistic community and support that is key in the healing process of TGT. By validating each other’s work, there was a sense of belonging and community healing.

**Limitations**

EDS is a new methodology, and digital storytelling is still in the early stages of development and acceptance. Although it is imperative to include the body in research, the nonverbal experience is a personal and subjective truth. Another limitation is that movement and storytelling are valued by many minority groups but not firmly understood or supported by the dominant culture in academic research and journals. Therefore, an effort towards inclusiveness and multicultural awareness might be imperative in the process of making meaning and understanding the use of ABR and EDS. Another limiting factor is the need to have access to technology, including iPhone or compatible cameras, editing software, access to a computer, internet, and social media.

Although most aspects of this research have a methodology that has been previously used, the combination of embodied ABR, post phenomenological and indigenous digital
storytelling, and embodied qualitative phenomenological research was unique to this study. Therefore, this created both a strength and limitation of this study, as future researchers wanting to use this method should be familiar with storytelling, embodied inquiry, and filmmaking. Furthermore, the arc of each story created for the EDS was based on the structure of the choreography: it acknowledged the present, the wish of connection and flow, dancing the disruption or loss, and the differentiation of time and place of the ancestor and the dancer. This story arc is an important part of this research as a story can be cut/edited in many ways. For example, after a story presents an obstacle, the story finds a way towards a revealing meaning for the participant. Knowing about storytelling in expressive arts has been researched as an important element of meaning-making and healing (Schwartz et al., 2020; Speiser & Kuhn, 2017). In this research study, storytelling was guided into a positive ending, where gratitude was the final dance move, creating a certain container for a story about resilience and healing. Therefore, attention to all aspects of the EDS process is an important aspect of this research; nevertheless, past research has shown that even parts of this approach had shown credibility and is an alternative to a positivist approach to knowledge (Lenette, 2019; Vacchelli, 2018; Willox, 2013).

There are other limitations to this study that are important to discuss. First of all, this research was based on a post phenomenological philosophical foundation that assumes that the participant would have access to technology including iPhone or compatible cameras, editing software, a computer, internet, and social media. Furthermore, since meetings were all online and during the COVID 19 pandemic, there were some limitations on how much could be exchanged compared to a face-to-face meeting. For example, during the pilot study that was done before COVID, meetings were face-to-face, and each participant was able to use their own computer.
and learn how to make their own editing, while in this dissertation, the researcher took the technical role and worked through the editing software as the participant directed what they wanted in the EDS. This influenced the aesthetic and made it extra collaborative when it came to the final EDS film. Most of the time, this collaboration was minimum, like placing the voice over the recorded film and adding a couple of pictures. Sometimes, it involved sharing techniques such as overlay so that the footage could all be used but kept under 4 minutes. Nevertheless, the researcher never added or cut any parts that were not asked by the participant and took the film editing part as a technician versus a film director. It helped that the researcher had worked with film editors in the past and experienced both intrusive technicians and supportive ones. This personal experience helped the researcher be extra self-reflective in keeping herself and her opinions as much as possible out of the way; bracketing her own opinions. Nevertheless, this situation created a limitation on having a purer participant film editing experience, including a learning curve.

Credibility

In terms of ethics, this research had a collaborative design and created a humanistic process between the researcher and participant as well as the participant and their ancestor. Here is TV speaking to this humanistic perspective: “What was powerful about your framing of this process and the invitation…. It’s a very humanistic way to relate” (TV). By approaching the process as an invitation to share their wisdom within their bodies about their ancestor, is important in that it promotes resilience. Furthermore, the researcher kept her own self-investigation through her own EDS, art-making, and field notes. Lastly, as part of an ethical choice, the researcher used a filter for all EDS films in order to provide confidentiality and protect the identity of the participants. Nevertheless, similar to Indigenous research, many
participants felt that this confidentiality choice, which was to fulfill the review board of human subject guidelines, was bordering on non-ethical.

As mentioned before, many participants asked the researcher to not use a filter, sometimes bargaining like in this participant’s statement: “The filter makes the film lose a lot. I like it more without it. This filter? What is the reason? To make it not visible or recognizable? It loses a lot, I have a mask, so it favors a certain anonymity” (TP). In another statement, “Sometimes the participant thought that it was impossible to make her unrecognizable, so there was no point in using a filter: “I don’t care if you do a sharp version of me” (KT). And yet, “This filter… things almost look like they’re disappearing or a little vague” (FA). Nevertheless, this research was protected as well by using a pseudonymous and password-protected computer to keep any data confidential. Future research should consider the edge of protecting participants’ confidentiality and empowering them to have a choice and voice in how the data should be distributed and viewed.

Several steps were taken to improve credibility of the results, including authenticity, triangulation, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. Authenticity refers to how much of the data are trustworthy, and if there is enough evidence that there was an honest sharing about ancestral legacy and engagement with EDS. Participants told their stories and created dances from an emotional place where there was truthful and honest expression. This strong emotion became a theme in the method section of the results. Authenticity also occurs when creating in a collaborative, trustworthy, respectful, and relational relationship, and therefore ethical. This was seen through participants being grateful to the researcher for respecting their own timing when it came to working around COVID-related stressors and feeling ready to film their choreography. Furthermore, participant selection was important in creating a rapport that
allowed trust and honesty. According to Hervey (2012), authenticity in movement is an important part of trustworthy research. Through embodied inquiry, this research study facilitated honest embodied expression by having dancers that were experts in embodied inquiry and could articulate their experiences verbally and in a truthful manner.

**Triangulation**

Poth and Creswell (2018) recommended a minimum of two strategies for achieving trustworthy research; in this case, ABR and qualitative interviewing methods were used and created the conditions for triangulation and a prism viewing on the experience of *Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy* by gathering data information from the two interviews, the EDS, and the researcher’s art-based responses to the participant’s process. There were results that came from a thematic analysis, the embodied narrative created from the embodied inquiry in the EDS, and the researcher’s art responses. Thus, the researcher used multiple methods to achieve triangulation, including qualitative interviewing, embodied ABR, and indigenous and post-phenomenological digital storytelling research frameworks.

EDS results were further triangulated using qualitative analysis of all the verbal data collected during the first and last meeting. The researcher’s art-based response seems to complement and give a deeper meaning to the EDS. Thus, together, the EDS and art-based response could be presented in its pure form as just art, dance, embodied narrative, and film. Furthermore, the embodied narrative transcribed in this study stands on its own as a beautiful embodied poem, a process engaged in embodied inquiry through writing (Snowber, 2016). All the EDS films could impact the viewer without any further analysis (Boydell, 2011). The embodied ABR illustrated the results without further history intake, and one can feel the content from a visceral and embodied perspective. Nevertheless, by using storytelling for the first
interview, this research study also fits under the umbrella of post-phenomenological indigenous research (Wilcox et al., 2013). By adding a qualitative aspect to the research and thematic analysis, a triangulation of data was possible, getting data from the EDS itself, the researcher’s art response, and qualitative thematic analysis, all pointing to the same themes and confirmation of a verbal translation of the process and results. Because body check-in, art-making and viewing were present in all meetings, the thematic analysis can then fit under the umbrella of embodied qualitative research (Ellingson, 2017). Therefore, the results were thick in content and brought different perspectives to the analysis, creating a prism to the result analysis.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is the extent to which the study represents accurate data versus researcher bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Once the analysis was done, the researcher engaged in member checking the data and questioned the findings through an open forum. The researcher engaged in art responses for self-investigation, maintaining a reflective journal, and writing a thick description of the process. This research study attempted to be clear on each step taken so that others can repeat the research and get consistency in future studies. The researcher kept process logs of what happened and what decision-making and personal processes arose with that in mind. The researcher had the objective of keeping some objectivity throughout the process and engaged with any biases, assumptions, and personal agendas when needed.

**Bias**

There are many ways the researcher is biased: The collaborative interaction between researcher and participant has influenced the content of this study, as the researcher asked follow-up questions that were towards understanding the ancestral story, the artistic process of EDS, and the experience of participating in creating it. As a professional post-modern dancer and
Gestalt therapist, her background gives her the theoretical belief in embodied inquiry and site-specific work where the environment and time context affect the individual's perception. As a co-participant and collaborator, the researcher may have influenced the aesthetic aspect of the EDS as a more experienced digital storyteller and video editor. Her background also influenced her belief that professional dancers would be safe, knowledgeable, and empowered embodied experts for her study. Participants came from diverse diasporas, with various stories, as Mexican American, Jewish-American, American, Brazilian-American, Afro-Caribbean American, Indian-American, and the researcher identified as a Brazilian Jewish American. These participants’ interest spoke of wanting to be part of the research due to the researcher’s mixed identity and expertise in dance. All participants were professional dancers and reported that their ancestors came from a different country and had some sort of family disruption, loss, or disruption in their ancestral lineage. Lastly, the researcher's artistic background may have influenced her choice to use ABR as the most appropriate methodology for this research.

**Dependability**

When it comes to dependability, the researcher searched for consistency of results over time, engaging in different ways with the data to see if the groupings changed or if she was missing any motif. At first, the results mirrored the pilot study, but slowly those themes became subthemes in bigger thematic material. Also, unlike the pilot study, this research allowed prolonged engagement. A trusting relationship was developed between the researcher and each participant, and more information was gathered about the participant's ancestral story and experience in creating the EDS. Research meetings took an average of two months, with two-hour meetings eight times. Furthermore, choosing participants who were interested in gathering the data and engaging in member checking increased dependability to the study, as participants...
confirmed their experience over time. One participant who was recovering from COVID felt a strong emotion return when she watched her EDS film; she wondered if another layer of self-understanding was uncovered because of her connection to her grandmother who also had survived a pandemic.

The EDS films are available to the reader in an unlisted YouTube link for a limited amount of time as there is an unknown component of the longevity of this platform. Nevertheless, through the researcher’s thematic findings, the participants’ and researcher’s artistic creations, and the transcribed embodied narrative from the EDS, all three presented data sources can be analyzed by the reader in this document. By adding qualitative interviewing to this study, the researcher gathered more information for crafting a participant’s profile and understanding the experience of creating the EDS. These interviews hopefully increased transferability to the readers. At the same time, the EDS and art-based responses demonstrated the human experience and transferability of the visceral and vivid experiences of engaging with ancestral legacy.

Nevertheless, this facilitation of the embodied inquiry is essential for this research and, therefore, important to acknowledge as an important limitation to the study of embodied inquiry. Other researchers who want to facilitate it must learn about embodied inquiry, storytelling, and digital storytelling as a research methodology.

**Future Research**

Interestingly, most participants wanted to continue the work of EDS with other ancestors and showed interest in co-facilitating workshops in the future. Here is KT explaining that: “It’s just like a process that you can keep and do another one, undo another and then have a whole night of films” (KT). This co-creative process is an important part of this research as it accepted
the participants as experts of their own process and by the end of the study and experts of the EDS process itself. Another important part of this choreographic process with these particular participants was the introduction of the Gestalt Therapy model of being able to use one’s own body to be in the space of another person. A participant illustrated that when she said: “Powerful about your framing of this process and the invitation. Like for me, the part that really shifted things was like what he would tell you. I never thought about it that way” (TV). This method using Gestalt Therapy and dance as an ABR through an embodied digital storytelling provided the participant the opportunity to not only share their expertise in their experience of dancing with an ancestor and their experience of their ancestral story but also a process that they could transform their connection to their ancestor as one of resilience and empowerment. Future studies might see if participants can achieve this embodied inquiry and easy access to dancing through a felt sense without a dance background.

Future research using the arts and embodied techniques where historical context and cultural identity are used for addressing ancestral legacies of trauma could be a promising healing tool for refugees of war, poverty, family fragmentation, and victims of discrimination. Further research could investigate if the arts and mindful movement workshops could support relational repair of not only one’s present life but the ancestral legacy inheritance of destruction, slavery, discrimination, colonization, and war. Lastly, research on how to make visible the unconscious repetitive patterns of trauma could be essential to communities welcoming these vulnerable populations. Finding ancestral support through EDS could be further investigated by continuing the study with others interested in healing their lineage. Future research with second and third generations of survivors of trauma and displacement might illuminate how embodied digital storytelling with ancestral legacy might assist participants to find healing in one’s lineage.
Conclusion

Each EDS demonstrated that it could be a tool used to express and convey emotion and gain insight. The artistic responses to the EDS as part of data analysis were an essential tool to the research as it facilitated empathy and understanding and hopefully helped the reader get a visceral immersion into the participant’s experience (M. Kossak, personal communication, March 5th, 2020). Understanding the experience of embodied exploration of TGT by giving voice to the stories held in the body as implicit memory is an important area in the research of TGT and embodied trauma treatment. In this study, EDS was an effective tool to research TGT embodied experiences and was a method that facilitated participants to access resiliency and healing. With that, future use of EDS as an ABR methodology could provide further validation to this study.

In summary, this research gathered findings on Embodied Digital Storytelling with Ancestral Legacy in the time of Covid-19, when all communications were forced to be online. This study also shared the experience of participants when engaging with ancestral legacy through EDS as a methodology, which seem to create repair in one’s connection to their ancestors as well as a creative flow. By using ABR, results included many fields of study including TGT and resilience, place attachment, embodied centered trauma treatment, and identity through ancestral artifacts and name. The topic of ancestral legacy during a collective trauma was healing and helpful for participants, as demonstrated in results and member checking meeting. Qualitative interviews helped create a bridge to the reader unfamiliar with ABR and triangulate the results. Using dancers as experts in embodied inquiry in this study helped clarify the mechanisms of implicit memory of transgenerational untold stories and how through
embodied inquiry and creating the EDS, shifted their understanding of their ancestral connection and sense of belonging. Finally, the use of ABR, film, voice, storytelling, and dance created an opportunity to see expressive arts therapy in a multidisciplinary exploration of the self in relationship to ancestral legacy. This methodology could continue to explore the untold stories present in one’s body related to collective trauma and oppression in future studies. Furthermore, this methodology could help gather information in other populations dealing with collective traumas and ancestral burden and how one’s ancestral legacy could aid participants in finding resilience within themselves.
APPENDIX A
SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW GUIDELINE
Embodied Digital Storytelling on Ancestral Legacy
Facilitated by Giselle Ruzany

Semi-structure interview:

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<td>Ancestral lineage:</td>
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1- Tell me about your ancestral history.
2- Where do you locate yourself in a demographic framework?
3- What are the challenges or losses and successes or good planted seeds you see in your ancestral legacy?
4- Describe your bodily sensations when you remember your ancestral struggles/strengths.
5- Describe how you would want your relational embodied awareness to be when remembering your ancestry.
6- What ancestral support are you aware of?
7- Describe your ancestral migration history and place on the Earth you feel connected to due to your ancestral lineage.
8- Describe what are some resilient traits or a story of survival/resilience you inherited from your ancestry.
9- Do you have any untold ancestral stories that you would like to explore with this project?
APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT
Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in the research project titled *Embodied Digital Storytelling (EDS) on Ancestral Legacy*. There will be two interviews and an artistic project. EDS is a 2 to 4-minute video clip resulting from a participant creating choreography and a narrative from an embodied inquiry. Embodied inquiry, here, pertains to the use of a body sensation to inform each movement, described by many experts as a path for healing past traumas and unfinished businesses (Levine, 1997). In this study, the choreography will be recorded at a place attached to each participant’s relationship to the ancestor. Each participant will edit their recording and will be invited to add images of their choice. Participants will create an EDS to assist the communication of one’s ancestral legacy. This process of retelling the story is grounded in the research on storytelling done for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Richardson, 2015), where an individual retells and rearranges their story to make new meaning out of what happened. Research on TGT has shown that communication is crucial in healing trauma and developing resilience (Giladi & Bell, 2013). Furthermore, research on TGT has shown that relying on social support through communication and trust in the community could provide conditions for resilience (Bezo & Maggi, 2015). The EDS stories will be available on the researcher’s website *embodied narratives*, where the pilot study for this research can be viewed.

This study is aimed to achieve two objectives; helping to create a process to explore ancestral legacy in a safe and healing way; second, using art-based research to reveal the hidden and non-cognitive meaning and understanding of ancestral legacy through embodied digital storytelling (EDS). This study hopes to provide a framework for using both movement and storytelling as a way to verbalize intrinsic body memory expressed through embodied movement inquiry.

Participation in this research poses that you will create a dance through embody inquiry on your ancestral legacy, which will be recorded into a digital storytelling and could have a filter of your choice for confidentiality. If any problem in connection to the research arises, you can contact the researcher Giselle Ruzany at 703 395 7070 and gruzany@lesley.edu The process of creating the EDS will include movement, filming, and digital storytelling.

All meetings will be held online. The participant will be asked to engage in an ABR short experience (e.g., collage, drawing, poetry) and semi-structured interviews before engaging with creating an EDS (Appendix A). The study will take place by meeting once or twice a week for a maximum of 2 hours per meeting. Participants will be asked to keep a journal about their embodied inquiry on ancestral legacy. The journal could use writing, visual arts, and/or movement annotation, and photography. The journal might be used only as an anchor to the process, or it might be incorporated in the final video clip and part of the digital storytelling.

After a semi-structured interview, participants will be creating an EDS, the researcher will facilitate a warm-up. Participants will create a choreography by visualizing an ancestor, and they will investigate their felt sense and create movements from each embodied response to the emerging memory or sensation. After that, they will video record the embodied choreography created in the first week. Each
participant will choose the location for the recording as part of exploring a place where one can have a felt sense or sensation of place-attachment. In the third week, the researcher will teach and assist the participants with editing the video with images of the dance recording and other images of their choice. During the editing process, participants will be developing a narration. In the fourth phase, data will be finalized as an EDS final product, and an open-ended interview will follow.

Data collected will be coded with a pseudonym; the participant’s identity will never be revealed by the researcher, and only the researcher will have access to the data collected. Participants will have control of the content in the final EDS. At the end of the editing of the storytelling participants can choose a filter to mask your identity. In addition, participation is completely voluntary, and can refuse, change mind, and decide to drop out at any time. The researcher may present the outcomes of this study for academic purposes (i.e., articles, teaching, conference presentations, etc.)

If you are injured during the course of the study and as a direct result of this study, you should contact the investigator at the number or e-mail address provided. Although compensation is not available, Lesley University will assist you in obtaining medical treatment, including first aid, emergency treatment, and follow-up care as needed. Your insurance carrier should be billed for the cost of such treatment. If your insurance carrier denies coverage, Lesley University is under no obligation to pay for the treatment but may do so at its discretion. By providing financial or other assistance, neither Lesley University nor the researchers are stating that they are legally responsible for the injury (IRB, 2019).

You have the right to remain anonymous. If you elect to remain anonymous, I will keep your records private and confidential to the extent allowed by law. I will use numerical identifiers rather than your name on study records. Your name and other facts that might identify you will not appear when and if I present this study or publish its results. If for some reason you do not wish to remain anonymous, you may specifically authorize the use of material that would identify you as a subject in the research. I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep (IRB, 2019).

I am 21 years of age or older. My consent to participate has been given of my own free will and that I understand all that is stated above. I will receive a copy of this consent form. Please note that you may change your mind at any time.

Participant’s signature  Date

Researcher’s signature  Date

There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Chairpersons at irb@lesley.edu
Consent to Use and/or Display Art

CONSENT BETWEEN: _____________________ and _____________________.

Researcher’s Name        Artist/Participant’s Name

I, ________________________, agree to allow ________________________.

Artist/participant’s name        Researcher’s Name

to use and/or display and/or photograph my artwork, for the following purpose(s):

☐ Reproduction and/or inclusion within the research currently being completed by the expressive arts therapy doctoral student.

☐ Reproduction and/or presentation at a professional conference.

☐ Reproduction, presentation, and/or inclusion within academic assignments including but not limited to a doctoral work, currently being completed by the expressive arts therapy doctoral student.

It is my understanding that neither my name, nor any identifying information will be revealed in any presentation or display of my artwork, unless waived below.

☐ I DO          ☐ I DO NOT       wish to remain anonymous.

This consent to use or display my artwork may be revoked by me at any time by informing the researcher. I also understand I’ll receive a copy of this consent form for my personal records.

Signed _______________________________ Date __________________

I agree to keep your artwork safe, whether an original or reproduction, to the best of my ability and to notify you immediately of any loss or damage while your art is in my possession. I agree to return your artwork immediately if you decide to withdraw your consent at any time. I agree to safeguard your confidentiality.

Signed _______________________________ Date __________________

Researcher’s Signature
REFERENCES


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