

Public Abstract

First Name:Kate

Middle Name:Berneking

Last Name:Kogut

Adviser's First Name:M. Heather

Adviser's Last Name:Carver

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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THE PERSONAL AND ARTISTIC JOURNEYS IN THE WRITING OF SURVIVAL DANCE

Ways in which plays are written are simultaneously known and unknown, similar and different. The writing, in general, is guided by traditions of story and theatre. Specifically, the writing is guided by the life of the writer. Similarly, the path of healing from traumatic experiences is also known and unknown, similar and different. Therapeutic encounters are acknowledged to be helpful on a healing journey and certain stages of healing are known to be part of the process. Specific ways in which these therapies and stages are incorporated into a person's life are as individual and unique as the person herself.

Using autoethnography as both the process and the product of research, this study explores the connections between life and art and how each informs and guides the other. This dissertation offers a greater understanding of a specific playwriting process helpful both to those studying the writing process as well as artists embarking on a their own writing journeys. Similarly, the story of healing from traumatic experiences offers insights into one woman's journey to make sense and meaning from her experiences and how she used art to help accomplish her goals.