

MINDY R. CARTER. *The Teacher Monologues: Exploring the Identities and Experiences of Artist-Teachers*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense. (2014). 124 pp. \$36.00 (paperback). (ISBN 978-94-6209-738-4).

In the field of curriculum studies, there is an increasing interest in and use of a/r/tography as an arts-based research methodology. In Carter's (2014) book, *The Teacher Monologues: Exploring the Identities and Experiences of Artist-Teachers*, the author engages in autobiographical writing (as artist, teacher, researcher, and a/r/tographer) in interludes between chapters. The interludes are used "to highlight my meaning making process" (p. 99). In each chapter, the experiences and voices of four Conservatory-trained actors, now teachers and educators, are brought forward in the form of narrative monologues.

The book outlines the experiences of the four actors, now teachers, as they negotiate issues of identity. Carter argues that identity is multiple and constantly becoming. The participants write narrative monologues to work through moments of significance in their teaching. Two overarching research questions guide the book: "what are the lived experiences of individuals with Conservatory style actor training who pursue teaching?" and "did writing a monologue about a problematic educational moment help participants in their pedagogical development? How?" (p. 5). The author aims to showcase the experiences of individuals' identity negotiations, clashes, and developments to dismantle the artificial binaries, distinctions, and separations between them. Carter builds on ideas of identity conflict, role, and stress, borderlands, and crossroads. In the larger context of arts-based educational scholarship, the author places her work in the field of curriculum studies, both theoretically and methodologically. This book is a welcome addition to the field of a/r/tography, alongside seminal texts by Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, and Gouzouasis (2008), and Irwin and deCosson (2004).

In terms of the structural organization of the book, there are five chapters and five interludes, followed by the appendices (monologues). Carter explores concepts of identity, borderlands, and crossroads in the chapters, and ties in reflections of Antonin Artaud. The interludes include the author's experi-

ences and reflections as told through characters (artist, teacher, researcher, a/r/tographer); these are autobiographically scripted and are highly engaging. The interludes provide the reader time to process the chapters and to engage in reflexivity.

Chapter 3 specifically sets out to answer the first research question and focuses on the identity shift experienced by the participants. Carter introduces the concepts of borderlands, border crossers, and crossroads, arguing that while border crossers can possess a multitude of worldviews and frames of reference, a crossroads “can represent the simultaneous convergence of multiple ideas, concepts or experiences that are on their way to passing between given points from a variety of directions” (p. 78). Carter concludes that

to be a crossroads means to continually be/coming by: seeking to recognize and allow for the shifting of directions, taking the time for deep moments of reflection, being attentive to surroundings and being open to new considerations or versions of oneself. (p. 78)

The author claims a temporal feel to this identity concept, in that there is constant evolution and change over time.

In Chapter 4, the author explores identity as multiple, and does so by looking through an a/r/tographic lens. The interlude following this chapter is an account of an experience with yoga, admittedly an experience that Carter describes as “un-language-able” (p. 96), and one of connection and, yet, alienation. In Chapter 5, the author concludes with a discussion of research impact, implications, and future directions, followed by the teacher monologues (appendices). The last interlude is the artist, teacher, research, and a/r/tographer’s final thoughts and reflections.

The book itself is short, 124 pages in length, but in it, Carter discusses some large and important ideas for teacher, educators, and artists who may find their identity shifting, changing, or evolving through time and through circumstance. For readers seeking a how-to guide for a/r/tography, you will not find this within the pages of the text. This can be viewed as a shortcoming for some readers who may be looking for a guiding text. Thus, the ideal audience for this book is artist-teachers in teacher education programs, though not necessarily solely directed at actor-trained teachers, but all artist-teachers. In addition, researchers exploring the lived experiences of teachers and educators in the K-12 system and beyond would benefit from the creative prose and well-written accounts here within.

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REFERENCES

- Irwin, R. L., & deCosson, A. (Eds.) (2004). *A/r/tography: Rendering self through arts based living inquiry*. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.
- Springgay, S., Irwin, R. L., Leggo, C., & Gouzouasis, P. (Eds.) (2008). *Being with a/r/tography*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense.