

HURRICANE IKE AND MY MOTHER: HOW LOSS OF
EXTENDED SELF CONTRIBUTED TO
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

by

Michelle R. Holcomb, B.S., MEd
A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
with a Major in Adult, Professional, and Community Education
May 2017

Committee Members:

Ann K. Brooks, Chair

Joellen Coryell

Jovita Ross-Gordon

Michael P. O'Malley

COPYRIGHT

by

Michelle R. Holcomb B.S., MEd

May, 2017

FAIR USE AND AUTHOR'S PERMISSION STATEMENT

Fair Use

This work is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553, section 107). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgment. Use of this material for financial gain without the author's express written permission is not allowed.

Duplication Permission

As the copyright holder of this work, I, Michelle R. Holcomb, authorize duplication of this work, in whole or in part, for educational or scholarly purposes only.

DEDICATION

to

Mom, Kirby & Mac

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the academic faculty who supported me throughout this process of discovery and knowledge. This journey changed my life, and for that, I thank you.

Dr. Ann K. Brooks for her leadership, understanding, and continual support - her genuine commitment to this process created the learning environment for me to grow.

To my committee members, Dr. Jovita Ross-Gordon, Dr. Joellen Coryell, and Dr. Michael P. O'Malley for their advice and guidance during the writing process; I am forever grateful.

A gracious acknowledgement to Texas State University, an excellent educational institution.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ABSTRACT.....	x
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
Returning to the Island.....	3
Returning to My Neighborhood.....	5
Returning to the House	6
Background of the Problem	8
Statement of the Problem.....	9
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	10
Chapter Summary	11
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	12
Adult Education Research.....	12
Learning Experiences of Individual Survivors	12
Learning Experiences of Individuals Who Assisted Survivors	13
Learning Resulting from the Experiences of Natural Disaster Survivors	14
Adult Identity Development	15
Narrative Identity Development	17
Review of Research on Adult Identity Development in the Context of Natural Disasters	19
Identity distress following Hurricane Katrina.....	19
Formation of post-disaster identities in Joplin, Missouri.....	20
Identity Development in the Context of Disasters	21
Stories from Memories	23

	The Extended Self.....	25
	Attachment to Possessions.....	26
	Place, Possessions, and the Extended Self.....	29
	Time, Place, and Space	30
	Embodied Learning in Adult Education Literature	32
	Family as a System	33
	Family as an Organized Whole.....	34
	Families and Adaptive Self-stabilization and Self-organization.....	35
	Extended Family and Families as Systems	35
	Families as Systems in the Broader Social Context.....	36
	Chapter Summary	36
III.	METHODS	38
	Research Design.....	38
	Methodological Approach	39
	Researcher's Role	43
	Research Questions	44
	Participants.....	45
	Data Collection Procedures.....	45
	Before Hurricane Ike.....	47
	After Hurricane Ike	48
	Approach to Analysis of Data.....	48
	Rigor of the Autoethnographic Research.....	51
	Trustworthiness of the Study	52
	Human Subjects Protection.....	53
	Chapter Summary	53
IV.	RESEARCH FINDINGS	55
	A Possession Becomes Part of the Extended Self	55
	Sycamore House: 1957 to 1964	55
	Sycamore House: 1964 to 1970	58
	Sycamore House: 1970 to 1976	60
	Sycamore House: 1976 to 1978	62
	Sycamore House: 1978 to 1981	63
	Sycamore House: 1981 to 1984	64
	Sycamore House: 1984 to 1988	67
	Sycamore House: 1988 to 1997	68
	Sycamore House: 1997 to 2004	69

Sycamore House: 2004 to 2008	70
Possession, Extended Self, and Natural Disaster.....	70
Sycamore House: A Possession of Power and Control	71
Sycamore House: An External Receptacle for Memories	72
Sycamore House: A Reflection of James Charles, Jr. and Bessie	73
Losing a Possession and Gaining a New Identity	75
Post-Ike: Changes in Relationships	76
Post Ike: Changes in Outlook	77
Post Ike: Change in Extended Self.....	78
Chapter Summary	80
V. DISCUSSION	81
My Contribution to the Literature.....	85
Adult Education Research.....	86
Adult Identity Development	88
Self-Reflection	89
Suggestions for Further Research	91
Chapter Summary	92
APPENDIX SECTION.....	94
REFERENCES	101

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Popo Cutting the Grass at the Sycamore House	57
2. Grandma Gardening at the Sycamore House.....	58
3. Mom and Me.....	61
4. Nanny.....	63

ABSTRACT

Natural disasters can strike anywhere at any time. As new disasters inevitably loom in the future, it is important to understand how the consequences of natural disaster loss lead to identity development. This work adds to the lack of research linking identity development and natural disaster by looking at an individual's process of identity development leading up to the traumatic event of a natural disaster. Erikson's lifespan development theory is built on by showing how an individual's reaction to a traumatic event fosters identity development.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Galveston, TX is a barrier island that has seen its share of maritime opportunists and natural disaster. It is a beach town with lush architecture and dense Victorian residences. The city once served as a mighty port to export cotton by sea and rail, and it helped to evolve Texas into an economic powerhouse. According to a feature article in *Texas Monthly*, “Galveston became the site of Texas’s first post office (in 1836), opera house (1870), and country club (1898). But Galveston’s most resonant contribution to the state’s identity is its heroic response to the Great Storm of 1900” (Draper, 2015, p. 81, 161-162). The Galveston Hurricane of 1900 still stands as the deadliest natural disaster ever to strike the United States, claiming at least 8,000 lives and costing \$3.5 million for recovery. Part of these monies was used for the erection of a seawall and elevation of the entire city, but nothing can fully stop natural disasters or the destruction that comes with them.

Galvestonians must endure a legacy of weathering even the most brutal and catastrophic storms. A storm in 1915 flooded the downtown and killed 11. In 1943, 19 residents perished due to a hurricane because “authorities feared that an evacuation would allow Nazi gunboats in the Gulf [of Mexico] to advance onto American soil” (Draper, 2015, p.162). Hurricane Audrey inundated downtown Galveston with six feet of water in 1957. The journalism career of Dan Rather was boosted in 1961 with a live broadcast from Galveston, featuring Hurricane Carla, and showing the very first radar image of a hurricane. Two category 5 hurricanes threatened the Island: Alicia hit in 1983, and Rita missed in 2005. In 2008, there was Hurricane Ike. And, although “there had been a vicious succession of storms since that first one, and in its own way, 2008’s Hurricane

Ike was especially brutal, in that it all but destroyed the city a second time” (Draper, 2015, p.78).

My family and I are Galvestonians. I grew up on the Island in an extended family consisting of my mom, my grandma, my Popo (grandpa), and my Nanny (great-grandma). 7018 Sycamore Drive: one short street in a neighborhood called Gulf Village, and the place I called home until I left for college. Even then, I kept coming back for one reason or another. It never was anything spectacular on the outside. It was not from the Victorian era and it did not have lush architecture. Most of its days it even lacked curb appeal. However, the façade of a house is much like the cover of a book sometimes; the outward appearance has nothing to do with the inside.

My grandparents bought the house in 1957: a one-story ranch-style house with white matching pillars on the porch, decorative shutters adorning the front windows, and a solid wood door. The alabaster accents were to showcase the adobe colored brick that stretched around all four sides. It was prime suburban property in the late 1950s, with a single car garage, a T-shaped front yard lamppost, and custom metal guttering. My Popo made the 7018 sign that hung above the walkway, and later in the 1960s after Hurricane Carla blew through, they added matching white metal roll-up storm blinds to every window. To the passerby, it seemed a well-constructed place resonating beauty, health, and prosperity.

That house held over two decades of memories for me, as did the rest of Galveston. The Island and that house formed the place that established my childhood. I believed this place could never be taken away from me, no matter where I roamed in my adult life.

Then someone said, “Let there be Ike...” Hurricane Ike struck Galveston Island on September 13, 2008. Surge levels were estimated to be up to 18 feet on the Bay side, with inland winds gusting at 110 mph (FEMA, 2008; Robbie Berg National Hurricane Center, 2009). The storm grew to over 275 miles in diameter (FEMA, 2008), and although nearly a million people along the Gulf Coast (Mount, 2008; Zucchini, 2008) were ordered to evacuate, many stayed (Drye, 2008). Luckily, my mom, who still lived on the island, was able to drive to Austin with her three dogs and an overnight bag containing what she considered the bare necessities. I can only imagine what the drive was like for her. At that time, I wished only for her safety, the safety of others on the island, and for Ike to leave something—anything—behind. In the aftermath, my response to Hurricane Ike led me in both personal and academic directions. This dissertation is exemplary of academia but has served as my self-education tool for personal growth as well.

Returning to the Island

As we drove over the causeway, 16 days after the hurricane had hit, the destruction I saw could not be the remains of my hometown. Boats, cabin cruisers, sailboats, and other varied water vessels lined the sides of Interstate Highway 45, apparently thrown from the water into the roadway. Only recently had they been moved to the side shoulders so that island residents could finally return to their houses. City officials had opened the bridge two days before our return, but my mother and I had waited to make the drive from Austin to Galveston until we believed that the traffic would not be at a total standstill. Rumors spread rapidly via email and cell phones that all cars would be stopped, driver’s licenses checked, and security would be tight. When I

realized we were only going 40 mph, it was not because of the non-existent checkpoints or stray debris on the highway. It was shock; the devastating awe of seeing the marina so casually tossed miles inland. This was not the Galveston where I grew up, where my graduating class held their twenty-year reunion less than a month earlier, where I gave birth to my first son, nor where my mom called home for over five decades.

Trucks with large debris were parked every block or so, and the billboards that once highlighted tourist attractions were bare, some even blown to the ground. Fishing piers were washed away on Ofits Bayou, where paddlewheel cruises from the famous Moody Gardens once ventured. A 20-foot sailboat called *The Destiny* settled itself on the sidewalk outside of the bait and tackle shop where we used to purchase shrimp and squid for snapper fishing. The wreckage was seemingly endless, most of it indistinguishable and from unknown origin.

Water was still standing in the streets. New buildings with small black and white gator-board signs proclaiming, 'Now Open' had essentially all of their new furnishings stacked at the curbside, windows blown out, premises vacant. At least 50 plain black trash bags created a mound in the parking lot of Ideal Lumber—an island independent retailer that had managed to survive once The Home Depot moved in. All of the traffic lights were out and replaced by generic red and white octagonal stop signs, but I was driving so slowly within my tunnel vision of disbelief, I am not sure if I stopped at any of them.

There was rubble piled at least ten feet high at Stewart Plaza. During my short-lived tennis phase, I frequented a boutique in that shopping strip where I could purchase skirts, visors, and court shoes. But now, it only boasted a handful of small shops: a hair

salon and day spa, a dry-cleaner that could put monograms on shirts in one day, and an adult video store that had stealthily evaded the right-wing city officials due to its hidden location and its non-pornographic façade.

Parker Elementary School's desolation was punctuated by the hull of a six-person boat lying on its side in the teachers' parking lot. Gladiola Parker, the school's namesake, had lived and died in the house caddy-corner to ours in the days after her retirement. This made me feel like I lived near a celebrity of sorts. Over the past 10 years a variety of families had moved in and out, but now, one of my oldest childhood friends, Molly (and her husband) had made the place theirs.

Returning to My Neighborhood

Entering our neighborhood, we saw the familiar face of Walter Whiteman. He and my step dad got together pretty much every other weekend to visit gun or car shows. I mostly remember him as the scary wolf man from childhood Halloweens. His corner house was the first built on the street and, like mom's house, still had its original owner. Walt was constantly tinkering in his garage, but this time, even though our eyes met, he did not give his smiling wave. His head quickly dropped to look at the soaked carpet remnants in each of his hands. As we passed, he threw those handfuls into the growing stack in the driveway and walked inside, head still down, probably to gather more. His usually immaculate corner yard was almost entirely covered with stuff that didn't belong there – sheets, tiles, shingles, papers.

Turning the corner to my street on this particular occasion was unlike any other. I had made that same specific right hand turn in joy and sorrow: coming home with mom after my eighth birthday party, just missing the coroner taking Nanny to the funeral

home; making the final block of the silent car trip from St. Mary's Hospital on January 1, 1981, the day my grandmother died; sporting my first new-to-me-car (a 1979 Chevy hatchback); meeting the ambulance in the driveway the day my Popo passed away; the many successful times I made the turn despite the six-pack I had consumed at my friends' high school party; arriving with my best friend from college to tell my mom that I was filing for divorce, even though I was four months pregnant; bringing home my first son: my one and only born on the island, or B.O.I. to locals; and crawling slowly around the corner to meet my mom when my step-father committed suicide.

I somehow knew what we would find, so my foot came off the accelerator as mom and I tried to calm ourselves by naming the residents of each house we slowly passed. Our voices joined together in harmony, almost as if rehearsed, naming each family and making a sort-of mental check in relief that each house was still standing. These mantras of simple familiarity drug us down Sycamore Drive, inching us closer to our house. I pulled into the driveway and managed to depress the brake. We sat in the driveway behind a large limb, pondering both where a branch so large could have come from and exactly what to do next.

Returning to the House

"Well, it's still standing," my mom proclaimed in an almost excited voice, cutting through the now thick silence. I took those as words of hope. It was my mother's determined spirit that persuaded me to get out of the truck. I walked back away from the house and into the middle of the street, looking at what I had made my mind's-eye miss but knew that I had seen. "It's like a war zone," I thought to myself. "My God, where do we go from here?"

Mom headed for the house, keys in hand, anxious to see inside. Mary, the neighbor to the East, came over to express words of relief that mom had finally made it back and was okay. I did not know Mary that well because she had moved in several years after I had graduated from college, and mom had not talked much about her from what I remember. Mom began fighting to shove the keys into both of the locks, making light jokes as she did so, hoping her humor would help her get inside the house. “Go get it,” Mary told her 14-year old son, nodding, hardly breaking the time-passing, nervous small talk she was giving my mom about how our boat had floated across the driveway. It would have probably washed down the street if it hadn’t gotten stuck between the front yard lamppost and the high bricks mom had used for last spring’s flowerbed. To me, Mary’s voice was just background noise.

The boy came running back with a crowbar, and tears began to well for the first time in my mom’s eyes. “We’re going to have to use THAT?” mom questioned, wanting no more destruction than there already was. I was more focused on the emotions mom was already displaying. Rarely had I seen her cry. She was always the strong one in situations like these.

“I’ll do it,” Mary replied, taking the iron piece from her son, shoving the shorter end between door and frame. That crack of solid wood splintering from itself was my mother’s and my own symbolic entry into the world of a natural disaster victim. We were women who had lost physical pieces of our past and present. The visions we had imagined for our future were now changed as a result of Hurricane Ike. From that moment forward, the door into a post-natural disaster terrain would change our mother-

daughter relationship, our essential outlook on life itself, and our identity as independent women. This door was our symbolic passage into resiliency, recovery, and new lives.

Background of the Problem

Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Ike, are an ecological phenomenon that can happen suddenly without notice or awareness, and they can create widespread social displacement and physical destruction, more than any other investigated trauma (Mizuta et al., 2005). Although it has been over 40 years since crisis intervention was first introduced in the United States, very few efforts have been made to understand the development of adult victims due to loss from these disasters (Lima & Gittlemen, 2004). As new disasters inevitably loom in the future, it is important to understand how the consequences of natural disaster loss lead to identity development for individuals affected, such as Mary, mom, and me.

Disaster theory views the choice of metric used to measure loss as being critically important, but sometimes this choice is driven by a type of data that is easy to gather, like number of deaths and the estimated monetary value of damage. This theory also tends to disregard aspects of disasters that are particularly subjective and cannot be measured because diverse groups in society value them differently. Examples of these include degree of suffering, loss of confidence, and loss of personal memorabilia (Etkin, 2016). However, by looking only at aggregate data to form a basis of a perspective on disaster loss, very little is being rendered about those who were affected and how they develop their identity.

Statement of the Problem

Natural disasters create loss, or should I say, people lose things in natural disasters. And, losing things is painful. Studies show that our developed attachment to *things*, to the point where possessions become a part of our extended self, has been found to start in early childhood. In fact,

A study by Ori Friedman and Nancy Neary in 2008 showed that aged between two and four, kids make the assumption that whoever is first in possession of the object is the owner, regardless of whether they later give it away. (Jarrett, 2013, p. 560)

During middle adolescence, a person chooses possessions based on “What makes me feel happy?” (Chaplin & John, 2007, p. 482). By adulthood, our possessions are fully part of our extended selves, becoming “external receptacles for our memories, relationships, and travels” (Jarrett, 2013, p. 561), and we face the “inescapable fact of modern life that we learn, define and remind ourselves of who we are by our possessions” (Belk, 1988, p. 160). This leads to the following problem: how does the understanding of *me*, the understanding of the extended self, change in people’s lives, when possessions, acting as crucial elements in life, are destroyed, not by man, but by nature?

Purpose of the Study

In keeping with the principles of adult education, the purpose of this research is to explore how women develop their identity by reformulating their definition of *me* after things that have become a part of their extended self are destroyed. More simply put, the purpose of the study is to see how the loss of part of an extended self contributes to an individual’s identity development.

Drawing on the definition of Mead, I define extended self as an individual's self-perception of what makes up his/her whole being, including the things the person owns or possesses (1934). Additionally, and following Erikson's (1968) lead, I use the term *self* and *identity* interchangeably.

Research Questions

So, the questions this research addresses are:

- (a) How did possessions and a home (extended self) become a part of my mother's identity?
- (b) At the time of loss, what was the interrelationship between her extended self and identity?
- (c) How did the loss of home and possessions change my mother?
- (d) How did she create a new identity?

Significance of the Study

In a field dominated by aggregate, quantitative data, this research begins to document the lived experience of natural disaster victims. This is critical because within these lived experiences lies the evidence of how the loss of part of an extended self can contribute to an individual's identity development. Additionally, this research contributes to our understanding of the role of extended self in relation to loss of a possession and adult identity development. Furthermore, this research may help those working in disaster relief by providing a better understanding of how victims of natural disaster experience loss of material possessions that constitute their extended self.

Chapter Summary

This chapter began to describe the lived experience of Hurricane Ike: a natural disaster that demolished my childhood hometown of Galveston, TX. Ike killed people and damaged property, but it also caused destruction of possessions. It is clearly arguable that something much greater was altered when Ike took these from us. I witnessed this firsthand as I returned time and again to help my neighborhood remove, and sometimes refurbish, the shards of home and community that lay in the streets. And, when these *things* were gone, there existed great struggles, pains, and distress.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter, I began to discuss the loss of a significant possession my family underwent due to the devastation of Hurricane Ike. The loss of our home produced great change and altered who we were. This study is situated within the field of adult education, but draws on an interdisciplinary body of literature. This chapter first looks at the literature on natural disasters within the field of adult education. Then I review the literature relevant to the three concepts comprising the conceptual framework: narrative identity development from the fields of adult development and adult education, extended self from the field of consumer science, and family systems theory from the field of psychology.

Adult Education Research

The research on natural disasters within the field of adult education has focused primarily at the level of the community (Allen & Tucker, 2012; Hutton, 2001; Preston, Chadderton, Kitagawa & Edmonds, 2015). Less research has been published focusing at level of individual learning and development (Friedman, Tanwar, Yoho & Richter, 2010). Four studies are particularly relevant to my study.

Learning Experiences of Individual Survivors

Looking at the learning of women in Aceh, Indonesia who survived the 2004 earthquake and tsunami that affected nations bordering on the Indian Ocean, Teng and Yusof (2014) used a conceptual framework of experiential learning, critical reflection, and transformative learning. The goal of the research was to understand the surviving women's ways of learning since women represented the majority of the casualties and were considered the most vulnerable after the natural disaster. This particular qualitative

study is a small section from a larger mixed methods study, and highlights the learning of 13 women of 103 participants who described significant learning during their experience following this natural disaster. The findings show the women based their learning on reflection, talking, and feelings. Additionally, the researchers found that learning and reflection on their life experiences enabled the women to strike a balance and lead better lives.

Learning and development are closely related for adults (Clark, Merriam & Sandlin, 2011). Teng and Yusof's study points out how a natural disaster, when viewed as a critical life event through processes of reflecting on experience, eventually results in a person's changed behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, or skills.

Learning Experiences of Individuals Who Assisted Survivors

Looking at the learning experiences of those who helped during the 2015 flood in Wimberley, TX, Martin (2016) used interpretative phenomenological analysis to focus on personal meaning and sense making of the extended self, with particular attention being given to the experience of compassionate acts. The goal of the research was to understand compassion as experienced by helping professionals and volunteer helpers. The findings show that helping professionals and volunteer helpers addressed both the relational selves and the extended selves of the survivors. Thus, the helpers learned that by exhibiting compassionate care, survivors were enabled to move forward during and after the natural disaster.

In an additional study looking at the personal and learning experiences of individuals during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Ficks (2010) used interviews from helping professionals and volunteer helpers to perform an in-depth examination where

participants shared the transformative learning experiences they experienced as a result of the work they did. The goal of the research grounded itself in the idea that major life events have been identified as sources of transformative change in people (Mezirow, 1991). These experiences revealed two major themes: helping was a catalyst for transformative personal or professional change; and helping was a catalyst for a transformational broadening of worldview, particularly in terms of cultural learning.

When we make meaning from an experience, we make an interpretation of it, but when this interpretation is used to guide decisions or actions, the making *meaning* becomes *learning* (Mezirow, 1990). Martin (2016) and Ficks (2010) point out the importance of the learning experiences of individuals when addressing the extended self during transformative learning experiences, such as Hurricane Ike.

Learning Resulting from the Experiences of Natural Disaster Survivors

Looking at the learning of twenty survivors from the biggest shantytown fire in the history of Cape Town, South Africa, Stewart, Swartz and Ward (2012) collected interviews to demonstrate that in order to understand the human cost of natural disasters, it is important to look at the political occurrences before a disaster, as well as what happened subsequent to the disaster. The goal of their research was to provide further support within the field of disaster research that indicates that it is not the acute disaster itself that creates distress but the longer term psychosocial implications for survivors (Norris Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008) The research shows that this case, much like that of Hurricane Katrina, “underscores the fact that disaster, far from being an acute event which happens to individuals, is better understood as part of a far longer sociopolitical process affecting individuals, groups, and, indeed, societies”

(Stewart et al., p. 422). A natural disaster can project its survivors “forward into a series of experiences that compounded both actual and symbolic losses, including losses to their experiences of dignity and identity” (p. 437).

Adult development means changes in abilities and behaviors as a result of internal and external environments (Hoare, 2006). Stewart et al.’s study accentuates how the qualitative data that can come from a natural disaster leave the *actual* natural disaster as being “far more than an acute event” (p. 437). Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Ike, may begin and end on a single day, but the actual and symbolic losses last indefinitely.

While adult educators are beginning to look at the learning and education that may accompany natural disasters, the research is still limited. Several findings and insights from these few studies are helpful to my research: the insight that natural disasters constitute a critical life event triggering learning through reflection on experience, eventually results in a person’s changed behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, or skills; the importance of the extended self in such learning; and, the importance of both the actual and symbolic losses to survivors.

Adult Identity Development

Erikson, the first social scientist to develop the concept of identity, defined the term as a dual conscious and unconscious entity that allows the individual to feel “a sense of being ‘at home’ in one’s body, of ‘knowing where one is going,’ and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count” (Erikson, 1968, p. 165). The idea of identity formation has been well addressed during adolescence and young adulthood, however “research that has dealt with ongoing identity revision and

maintenance issues during the adult years is in its infancy” (Kroger & McLean, 2011, p. 173).

Limited literature addresses determinants and processes of adult identity and development. However, the concept has been looked at from the theoretical level. Whitbourne (2005) uses the writings of Piaget and Erikson to define adult identity as “one’s representations of oneself with regard to physical appearance and functioning, cognitive capacities, personality features, relationships with others, and the various social roles one undertakes” (Kroger & McLean, 2011, p. 175). From this definition, Whitbourne then addresses the mechanisms of identity status change by examining the means by which one interprets life events in relation to one’s current sense of identity:

Identity assimilation refers to the interpretation of life events to support one’s current cognitive and affective schemata around issues of identity. Identity assimilation can take many forms, but all involve the distortion of facts that are inconsistent with one’s current sense of identity...

Identity accommodation, by contrast, is the process by which one’s cognitive and affective schemata actually change in order to meet current life circumstances and identity evaluations. (2011, p. 175)

Bosma and Kunnen (2001) address the determinants and mechanisms for change in both adolescent and adult identity development, and they propose that the trigger for change is some kind of conflict in person or context. This interrupts optimal identity development, which requires a balance between identity assimilation and identity accommodation. How one chooses to respond to the conflict with these processes are

“personality factors such as openness to change, environmental supports, and developmental history” (Kroger & McLean, 2011, p. 175).

Kroger and McLean (2011) conclude that when adults are faced with periods of identity transition, they are confronted with ideal opportunities for learning and identity development. During these phases, adult individuals are met with challenges of making sense of their life and their life experiences in new ways. Ideally, the individual accommodates and develops new understandings of themselves and their identity, their life structure, and their sense of being in the world.

Narrative Identity Development

The theory of narrative identity development builds on Erikson’s (1963) concept of ego identity and Murray’s (1938) personological approach to the study of lives.

McAdams (2008) focused his first conception of narrative identity around the content and structural dimensions of life stories, but over the years it has evolved. Recently, McAdams (2011) has summarized narrative identity in the following manner:

Narrative identity is an internalized and evolving story of the self that provides a person’s life with some semblance of unity, purpose, and meaning. Complete with setting, scenes, characters, plots, and themes, narrative identity combines a person’s reconstruction of his or her personal past with an imagined future in order to provide a subjective historical account of one’s own development, an instrumental explanation of a person’s most important commitments in the realms of work and love, and a moral justification of who a person was, is, and will be. (p. 100)

Clark (2010) adds to the idea of narrative identity. To be human is to tell stories. Being storytellers means that this is our way to bring some kind of coherence to the chaos of experience that bombards us daily. Narration is a sense-making act. It is what we do as individuals but, importantly, as individuals situated within various social contexts. We live in a narrative-saturated world, which is to say that narratives are everywhere. If we make sense of our experience through storying it, it follows that we construct our understanding of ourselves narratively.

Additionally, Clark (2010) describes the connection between narrative identity development and adult learning:

The foundational concept [that I am explaining is] that narrative is a sense-making act; thus it is how we give meaning to our experience. The link between learning and experience lies at the core of adult education, going back to Lindeman (1961), who, drawing on Dewey, argued that learning is located in the life world of the learner; moving forward to Knowles (1980) and his principles of andragogy, a key one of which sees experience as a major resource for adult learning; and moving further in our own day to the extensive work on experiential learning, particularly in the areas of constructivism, situated learning, and a critical cultural perspective on learning. (p. 5)

Although individuals start to work on their individual narrative identities during the late-adolescent and early adult years, “the work never really finishes. Stories are never set in stone” (McAdams, 2011, p. 100). Narrative identity development continues throughout much of adult life, as do the accompanying psychosocial challenges, since individuals continue attempts of making sense of their lives through narrative.

The theory of narrative identity development is important to my study because I am looking at how my mother's narrative identity developed between 1957 and 2008 through the stories she told me and the meaning she made of her life following Hurricane Ike. In 2008, the disruption of Hurricane Ike presented substantial psychosocial challenges for both of us. As an autoethnographic study, I am trying to understand how she made sense of her life, as I make sense of my own, within the context of a natural disaster in order to contribute to the adult educators' and related professionals' understanding of the process of identity development triggered by a traumatic event.

Review of Research on Adult Identity Development in the Context of Natural Disasters

This dissertation emerges out of a concern to add to research on adult identity development, specifically in the context of natural disaster, and incorporating the notion of an extended self. The purpose of this research is to explore how women develop their identity by reformulating their own definition of who they are after things that have become part of their extended self are destroyed. The following pieces of literature have contributed to the understanding of adult identity in the context of disaster, and, therefore, they have informed my study.

Identity distress following Hurricane Katrina. Wiley et al. (2011) point out that there is a lack of research linking identity development and natural disaster, saying that although numerous studies have been conducted on the effects of Katrina, at the time of inception for their study, none had examined identity issues. Thus began their look at predictions made from Erikson's lifespan development theory in the context of severe disaster exposure following Hurricane Katrina. As the authors explain, Erikson's lifespan

development theory does not limit identity development issues to only adolescence and early adulthood. However, it does suggest that as we get older, our identity development issues become less noticeable.

Wiley et al. have directed some research linking the relationships among traumatic events, such as natural disasters, and identity development distress (Wiley, et al., 2011, p. 184-191). Their work builds on Erikson's idea that "exposure to a natural disaster may disrupt or otherwise alter normal identity development" (Wiley, et al, 2011, p. 185). Their study collected data through four self-reporting measures, and focused on the psychosocial adjustments of 401 individuals who considered themselves survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

The research concluded that exposures to a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, are associated with some form of psychological impairment and elicit traumatic stress. In turn, this traumatic stress exposure is also associated with identity development distress. So, older adults, such as my mother and me, who are affected by a traumatic stress, may experience more noticeable identity development. Additionally, the authors emphasize the importance of looking at individual's identity development in the context of natural disasters, such as Hurricane Ike, because "it is not traumatic exposure in and of itself that may foster a disruption in identity [development], but rather, one's reaction to that exposure" (p. 189).

Formation of post-disaster identities in Joplin, Missouri. Moulton links identity development and natural disaster by exploring the formation of post-disaster identities through the application of memories by survivors of the May 22, 2011 tornado in Joplin, Missouri (Moulton, 2015, pp. 319-328). She used social media, TV and radio

interviews, published anthologies, formal interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation to situate accounts before, during, and after the tornado on a single timeline. From these emerged narrative identity patterns. Much like Wiley et al., Moulton emphasizes the importance of looking at the individual, such as my mother and me, when studying identity development in the context of natural disasters, like Hurricane Ike. She states that, “Ultimately, the most telling depiction of Joplin life before May 22, 2011, comes from people sharing their own [individual] stories” (p. 320).

Moulton’s study focuses on how shared experience becomes the cornerstone of a new identity, but she explains that the community’s efforts within the social sphere of transformation and recovery mirror the individual’s “struggle to integrate the experience and form a new personal identity” (p. 325). Her community based research of nearly four years of community transformation shows that disaster recovery is more than a feat in socioeconomics. She concludes that after losing things that have become a part of the extended self, self-restoration requires restoration of a sense of place and identity, and this identity development relies heavily on memories.

Identity Development in the Context of Disasters

The loss of place for disaster victims, as Fullilove (1996) explains, can cause loss of identity as well. This is because they have lost part of their extended self. These emotions can elicit feelings of being unattached, emotions of unfamiliarity, and a sense of undergoing loss lead to displacement, nostalgia, disorientation, and alienation, and until these symptoms are resolved, it becomes extremely hard for people to move on with their lives. For some people, the emotional impact of the disaster resulting from loss of part of the extended self leads to significant psychological symptoms causing the individual to

have no interest in social regrouping or in personal recovery. On the contrary, the reestablishment of place, which is essentially the formation of a new identity, can be a form of empowerment as disaster victims seek to rebuild their social infrastructure.

No one can deny that hurricanes such as Ike create havoc both directly and indirectly in every aspect of life. They create loss within the extended self, and this loss contributes to identity development. In a natural disaster, lives are completely altered, new identities begin to form, and “it is reasonable to conclude that hurricanes have a measurable impact on mental health...at least in the short run” (Bourque, Siegel, Kano & Wood, 2006, p. 144). Identity development is an emotional process. This link between natural disasters and individuals’ emotions is well researched by scholars (Norris, Friedman, & Watson 2002), and it demonstrates that this magnitude of loss can leave people with significant stress causing serious deterioration of mental well-being, including PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other non-specific stress disorders. With victims being extremely vulnerable to an emotional impact, many may develop significant and varied psychological symptoms. Symptoms of depression may appear, including sadness, hopelessness, feelings of being overwhelmed, and lack of emotional and physical energy (Zakour, 1997). In continual pondering about whether or not their lives could return to *normal*, anxiety and a heightened sense of guardedness can also develop. Victims can also have self-esteem issues, difficulty concentrating, and they may not be able to complete tasks. Additionally, studies have identified women as consistently showing a higher prevalence of psychological issues after natural disasters than men (Armenian, Morikawa, & Melkonian, 2000). Of course, these also differ greatly between individuals.

However, it is important to point out that just because a person is part of a natural disaster does not mean that the individual will face serious mental health issues since each of us develop our identities differently. Berntsen and Rubin attribute this variance “to the extent to which memories of a highly emotional negative event become[s] central to their identity, [their] life story and [their] understanding of the world” (2006, p. 223). With this being said, memories and the experiences clearly can become a directional compass within the identity development a person is faced with after a natural disaster. In fact, it could be that memories are actually the glue holding together the space that creates time.

Stories from Memories

Leading with this analogy that memories are the glue holding together the space that creates time, I found various other academic thoughts on this concept. Baerger and McAdams (1999) describe the things that give meaning and structure to our life narrative, that help us anchor who we are, and that stabilize the conception of ourselves as memories. They go on to say that memories may act as “personal reference points” (Bentsen & Rubin, 2006, p. 220) that add meaning to other experiences and help serve as guides of what to expect in the future. Memories assist us in identity development after loss of part of our extended self.

Pillemer makes a similar connection concerning memories and identity development with his term “anchoring events: a lasting reminder of the way things are” (1998, p. 74). He believes that individuals can and should use vivid personal memories in validating current feelings and beliefs, and as guides of thoughts and behavior. Personal memories form “turning points or landmarks” (Shum, 1998, p. 423) within each person’s

life story, and these are a critical part of the extended self. This idea that personal memories refer to specific moments in the past, characterized by “importance, definiteness and brevity” (Pillemer, 1998, p. 27), are likely to function as turning points has been extensively defended. Pillemer defines a turning point as “a specific episode [that] appears to alter or redirect the ongoing flow of the life course” (1998, p. 76). With this in mind, turning points can be thought of as a way to explain future choices, acts, and values of a person. They contribute to identity development. Pillemer (1998) gives the analogy of a turning point being the end of one chapter of the life story and the beginning of another.

Undoubtedly, beginning this proverbial new chapter can be an incredible turning point in a person’s life. A new identity is developing. Most literature suggesting functions for memories that contribute to identity development use examples dealing with relatively positive life occurrences (Shum, 1998), but memories can be bright and positive, or they can be dark and negative. Good examples are the experiences of the individuals who assisted Hurricane Katrina evacuees (Ficks, 2010).

Berntsen and Rubin (2006) argue that memories of traumas hold similar functions. If disaster victims let highly negative memories from within their extended self form substitute reference points in the organization of their life experiences, the result will likely be detrimental to their mental health (Berntsen, Willert, & Rubin, 2003) as they undergo identity development.

To synthesize what has been noted from the literature thus far, when natural disaster survivors, such as my mom and me, tell their stories of losing part of their extended self from memory, they offer a wealth of understanding, and this gives them a

way to redefine space and undergo identity development. Memories, both positive and negative, can often be seen as central turning points, and they can have a huge bearing on one's extended self and personal identity development. To add to these concepts, Fitzgerald (1988) explains that the composition of our life stories is basically the format in which we understand ourselves. He defines a life story as a "set of stories that defines who we are in narrative rather than declarative terms" (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 269).

Like the literature in the field of adult education, research exploring identity development in the context of natural disasters is still limited. Several findings and insight from these few studies are helpful to my research: natural disasters are traumatic events can lead to noticeable identity development in adults; and, identity development after a natural disaster relies heavily on memories.

The Extended Self

Within our life story, a traumatic event such as Hurricane Ike is more likely regarded as a central component of our personal identity development and a great part of our extended self (Reviere & Bakeman, 2001). As individuals (for example, my mother and me) re-learn who they are after a disaster, as they develop their identity after a loss of part of their extended self, trauma narratives can help with the identity adjustment as they redefine space as part of their extended self. Telling one's story can be "vital sources of strength and support as survivors rebuild their lives" (Maggio, 2006, p. 42), rebuild their social infrastructure, redefine space, and rearrange the traumatic memory into their life story. Again, this human side of disaster holds a wealth of information and poses a strong case for the necessity of qualitative research.

Attachment to Possessions

Hogg and Mitchell assert: “Individuals choose, construct and communicate their identities through the objects they possess, deriving meaning from their possessions and investing possessions with meaning” (1996, p. 630). Much like a space, “relationships with material objects are not static” (Shimp & Madden, 1988, p. 163); “they evolve and change over a series of interactions and in response to fluctuations in the contextual environment” (Karanika & Hogg, 2011, p. 910). What makes 7018 Sycamore Drive unique is that it was a possession that can also be classified as a place. Therefore, since a place is a tangible object, we can become attached to it.

So, then, what does it mean to become attached to something? Attachment has been defined as the “degree of linkage perceived by an individual between him/herself and a particular possession” (Schultz, Kleine, & Kernan, 1989, p. 360). Ball and Tasaki offer another definition of attachment: “The extent to which an object which is owned, expected to be owned, or previously owned by an individual, is used by that individual to maintain his or her self-concept” (1992, p. 158). Ironically, the beginnings of our socially learned construct of attachment to objects occur right around the time when we are usually first introduced to “The Story of the 3 Little Pigs” – a story of houses (Scieszka, 1996).

As noted in chapter I, our attachment to things is a relationship that young children easily grasp since kids between the ages of two and four make the assumption that whoever is first in possession of the object is the owner, even if they later give it away (Jarrett, 2013). A bit later, in middle adolescence, a person chooses possessions

based on happiness (Chaplin & John, 2007). And, by adulthood, our possessions are fully part of our extended selves (Jarrett, 2013).

Therefore, we create our extended self almost from birth partially through what we possess. Left formally undefined until now in relation to possessions specifically, our extended self is the “definition of self-created by external objects with which one surrounds oneself” (Solomon, 1990, p. 620). In other words, what makes *me* is what I have around me. Belk maintains: “A key to understanding what possessions mean is recognizing that, knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, we regard our possessions as parts of ourselves” (1988, p. 139).

Undoubtedly, one of these possessions could be a house, so it is more than acceptable that a house be the primary possession, the key feature of the extended self, further discussed within this dissertation. Furthermore, on the topic of houses, Jarrett quotes Lollar as saying:

My house is not ‘just a thing.’ The house is not merely a possession or a structure of unfeeling walls. It is an extension of my physical body and my sense of self that reflects who I was, am, and want to be. (Lollar, 2010, p. 265)

We attach ourselves to our possessions; thus, we attach ourselves to places. These specific attachments to places have been described as:

[Roots] which give people a point of outlook and spiritual and psychological attachment to a particular place...roots in a particular place give one a point of world outlook, a grasp of one’s own position, and a sense of spiritual and psychological attachment. (Windsong, 2009, p. 206)

Thinking back briefly to the three little pig's story: when each of the three brother-pigs began laying their roots with straw, sticks, and bricks, they were showing this fairy-tale land who and what they were (Scieszka, 1996). Unfortunately, we are not given enough knowledge of the space created by each pig and his house to see how each plays a part in time-reversing memories. But, unlike the houses created by each of the three pigs, the Sycamore house easily lends itself as an analogy to the academic literature. My grandparents purchased 7018 Sycamore Drive in 1957. A space began its formation, and the experiences within this space created time. The stories developed within the space over time have become memories. My mother and I consider the house a possession.

An attachment to a possession, such as this house, becomes deeper as time passes, and, to complicate matters more, the house as a possession can “serve as a talisman of time-reversal” (Turley & O'Donohoe, 2011, p. 459). So, when the Sycamore house was passed to my mother, my grandparents “bestow[ed] a death-transcending transmission of themselves into the minds and affections of their survivors” (Ekerdt, Addington, & Hayter, 2011, p. 36). It is important to note, “the boundaries between possessions and the self have so far been under-explored and under-theorized” (Wong, Hogg, & Vanharanta, 2012, p. 937). So, it remains unclear if and how continuing ties with a deceased person either facilitate or interfere with adjustment after bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 2005). Additionally, Boelen, Stroebe, Schut, and Zijerveld have made the claim that if possessions of a deceased person are kept, but that person does not gain comfort through this attachment, this is “predictive of more severe grief reactions over time” (2006, p. 774).

Place, Possessions, and the Extended Self

An unpredictable natural disaster blew through an island off the Texas Gulf Coast, and it was gone in a matter of hours. It took with it possessions. It took my childhood house. It left behind people, such as my mother and me, who experienced an extreme life change and would then be met with feelings of hopelessness, despair, and confusion due to this loss of part of our extended selves. In order to better understand where these feelings originate, the literature on how a possession becomes part of the extended self was reviewed.

“A key to understanding what possessions mean is recognizing that, knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, we regard possessions as parts of ourselves” Belk (1988, p. 139). Tuan continues, “Our fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things, to a large degree, we are what we possess” (1980, p. 472). Thus, the extended self can be thought of in the following fashion: what is *me* is *mine* and what is *mine* is *me*. Thus, the lines dividing me and mine have grayed to mutate into a more precise definition of extended self, formed out of individuals’ self-perceptions and shaped by our perpetual changing culture (Mead, 1934). Additionally, places and experiences are also viewed as a clear part of the extended self (Belk, 1988).

It goes without saying that a possession that is also a place, such as a house, is more than a trinket kept from a first date or a program from a first recital placed in a memory book. A house may be thought of as a physical structure, but it also has those intangible features that make a house into a home. A house as a possession is complicated because it is not just a thing; it is a place to love and a space that becomes inhabited. So, a

house can be considered a part of the extended self. By looking at the defined concepts of time, place, and space within the literature, a clearer picture of how a house becomes a part of the extended self begins to develop.

Time, Place, and Space

Doreen Massey in her book *For Space* (2005), adds to the concept of extended self with her ideas on time, place, and space. By delineating these three terms, she routes a connection between a house, here acting as a possession, and the extended self. Massey begins by forming a comparison: “If time is the dimension of change then space is the dimension of the social—the contemporaneous co-existence of others” (2005, p. 226). Her argument strongly insists that neither time nor space can become the other, and although they remain distinct, they will always remain co-implicated. Moreover, within a space there is also some relationship with time, and it is characterized by constant change, activity, or progress. However, in order for time to exist, “there is the necessary production of change through practices of interrelation” (Massey, 2005, p. 55). Massey is not the only researcher who makes this connection between time, place, and space. Latour writes, “the connections among things alone make time... [this is] a provisional result of the connection among entities” (1993, pp. 74-77).

Massey further defines space as “the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions [and] must be predicated upon the existence of plurality [and] is always under construction...Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far” (2005, p. 9). Relating these concepts back to the possession lost in Hurricane Ike, the space of our Galveston house was full of constant change, activity, and sometimes even progress. These events happened over a course of years beginning in 1957. The

stories-so-far that happened within 7018 Sycamore Drive are what defined that space; these can be looked at over a period of time. That house, that place, was part of its inhabitants' extended selves.

Massey also describes places as having a symbolic value. She contends that the meaning of a place varies among individuals or even among groups of individuals:

For some it is the sphere of the everyday, of real and valued practices, the geographical source of meaning, vital to hold on to as 'the global' spins its ever more powerful and alienating webs. For others, a 'retreat to place' represents a protective pulling-up of drawbridges and a building of walls against the new invasions...there are often shared undergirding assumptions: of place as closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as home, a secure retreat... (Massey, 2005, pp. 5-6)

So, the place known as 7018 Sycamore to my mother is not the same place I came to know. For her, it could have been a place to escape the outside world. Or, it could have been her living metaphor of hell on earth. Whereas to me, it was my only safe-haven against the kids who thought they were better than me, but definitely not a cozy, loving environment. Either way, the place was both a part of her extended self, and it was a part of my extended self.

This symbolic value or meaning of this house as described in both the literature on extended self and on space, place, and time supports my interpretation of the meaning of the place I called home. The real and sometimes valued, sometimes hurtful, practices that happened inside were mine—and no one else's. Not even my mother's.

Embodied Learning in Adult Education Literature

While adult educators have not yet explored the idea of extended self per se or linked this idea to narrative self, they have attempted to understand embodied learning. In chapter 2 of *Embodied Narratives: Connecting Stories, Bodies, Cultures and Ecologies* (Formenti, West, & Horsdal, 2014), Horsdal takes the previously stated idea that “discourse may become the word made flesh” (p. 24) one step further. She asserts, “Our stories are embodied” (p. 47). She extends this by telling us, “the auto-biographical narrative is a symbolic representation of lived experience [but] its meanings and characteristics cannot be fully captured within a discursive approach” (p. 47). She goes on to suggest that since our life stories “reflect our physical movements and journeys in time and space and the accompanied emotions” (p. 47), a modified theoretical approach is needed. And, because “our cognitive abilities for mental time travelling inhabit our narratives,” in her opinion, we need “a theoretical approach which combines the cultural, cognitive, and corporeal elements of auto-biographical narratives” (p. 47).

Additionally, Horsdal recognizes one reason for using others’ narratives as a vehicle for vicarious activity or a mode of “potentially intense identification” (2011, p. 53) may be biological in nature. Our brain’s mirror neuron system keeps us aware of the social actions in our environment, and it is “active in connection to perceived, imagined, planned, and communicated actions in contexts” (pp. 53-54). It is important to point out that the trigger for the mirror neuron system is not always something we see: “The sound of action itself stimulates motor simulation” thus marking the exact point “at which we may explain our identification with the stories we listen to or read” (p. 54). Via biological functions of mirror neurons, we embody stories; we perceive narrated interactions and

emotions almost as if we had experienced those actions and emotions ourselves (Formenti et al., 2014).

As adult education expands its views and interest in the contributions of embodied learning, the ideas Formenti et al. pose in connecting life-narratives and embodied learning become increasingly important. They feel, “When we engage in in-depth research of this kind—in a care-full chronicling and analysis of learner narratives—we can become more aware of the whole people and wider ecologies implicated in learning and its antithesis” (2014, p. 23).

Family as a System

As I look more closely to tell stories of my family who lived in the Sycamore house, I turn to the theory which describes family as a system in order to discuss our social structure and interactions. Family systems theory (Sameroff, 1983) is defined as applying the principals of the general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968) for the purposes of studying the family as an organized system. By doing so, the family can be viewed as a system with wholeness and order, a hierarchical structure, and adaptive self-organization.

Family systems theory previously focused on the parent-child relationship, but more recently there has been a change in this emphasis. According to Cox and Paley (2003), “researchers have moved toward viewing individuals within the context of their larger family systems and considering the mutual influences among family subsystems, such as the marital relationship and the parent-child relationship” (p. 193). This change in emphasis has allowed researchers to better conceptualize and measure processes at the whole family level.

When the principles of general systems theory are applied to understand the family as an organized system, such as my family who lived in the Sycamore house, several properties arise. The following properties are briefly discussed further in an effort to hone in on patterns of interaction: (a) family as an organized whole, (b) families and adaptive self-stabilization and self-organization, (c) extended family and families as systems, and (d) families as systems in the broader social context.

Family as an Organized Whole

According to Cox & Paley (2003), numerous studies have concluded that marital and parent-child relationships are interrelated. McHale and Rasmussen (1998) have made valuable contributions in their investigations of how parents interact together with their child, demonstrating that such interactions are predictive of children's adjustment. Within my family's story, there are two children: my mom and me. Deal, Hagan, Bass, Hetherington, and Clingempeel (1999) found that parents behaved differently when the whole family was together than when they were interacting one-on-one with their child. Paley, Cox, Kanoy, Harter, and Margand (1999) found that the tendency for a husband to withdraw during one-on-one interaction with his wife is related to at least two features of family-level interactions. The first of these is associated with an increased likelihood of parent-child alliances within the family. The second is that whole family interactions have lower levels of positive emotions and higher levels of negative emotions and detachment in families characterized by this kind of marital relationship than in other families. Cummings and Wilson (1999) emphasize the importance of the broader family context, rather than one-on-one interactions within the family, to shape the child's sense of emotional security. They have found that destructive marital conflict (especially

conflict that involves violence or aggression between partners or that remains unresolved) threatens the child's sense that he or she can feel safe and emotionally secure in the family. This understanding is vital to my family because it shows that emotional security is an important factor in the child's regulation and organization of emotion, key processes in the development of early competence in children (i.e., their ability to form positive relationships with others and their ability to explore their environment in a meaningful way).

Families and Adaptive Self-stabilization and Self-organization

Sameroff (1983) believes that families have the capacity to reorganize in response to external forces. So, families can adapt in a way that they continue to function in light of the new circumstances. This is important because it points to the need to consider how the family as a system responds to challenges, and it is important specifically here because of the particularly extreme challenges that arose within my family. Additionally, when looking at a family such as mine, we must consider how each individual or subsystem responds. Since changes can arise at any level of the family system, a change at one level can trigger further change in individuals, relationships, and the whole family system.

Extended Family and Families as Systems

Observations of adult patients with their families of origin inspired a great deal of the work done by early family therapists (Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956; Bowen 1959). This type of research continues mostly in clinical settings because it demonstrates that certain dimensions of family interactions may predict relapse in adults diagnosed with schizophrenia (see Kavanagh 1992), depression (e.g. Hooley, Orley, &

Teasdale, 1986), and bipolar disorder (Miklowitz, Goldstein, Nuechterlein, Snyder, & Mintz, 1988). I, myself, have fought battles of diagnosed clinical depression; but, the most critical information for the purpose of my study is Minuchin's observation (1988) that "the current relationship between the [adult children] and their parents (now grandparents) is a major neglected factor" (p. 11), since my Sycamore family was almost always considered extended.

Families as Systems in the Broader Social Context

Ladd, Le Sieur, & Profiley (1993) found that it is important to view the family system's relationship with the environment as reciprocal. Although external forces may impact the family, it also shapes and selects its environment. So, even though children learn social skills in the context of family interactions, their peer relationships also may be influenced by the family's choice of neighborhood, schools, and utilization of community resources. Within my autoethnography, I have brought in our family's interactions within the broader context whenever possible.

The concept of a family system is important to my study in that enables me to consider our patterns of interaction, emotional security factors, and response to challenges as part of my mother's and my own identity development triggered by Hurricane Ike.

Chapter Summary

This chapter draws on an interdisciplinary body of literature in order to situate the study within the field of adult education. While the literature on natural disasters within the field of adult education is still limited, findings from previous studies are relevant to my own research. Specifically, natural disasters constitute a critical life event that can

trigger learning through reflection on experience. This learning can eventually result in a person's changed behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, or skills. The concept of the extended self in the wake of a natural disaster enables the inclusion of place and possessions in analyzing identity development and the role of both the actual and symbolic losses to survivors. Additionally, research exploring identity development in the context of natural disasters, although also still limited, has found that natural disasters are traumatic events that can lead to noticeable identity development in adults; and, identity development after a natural disaster relies heavily on memories.

III. METHODS

This chapter describes the research methods used to address the research questions presented in Chapter I:

- (a) How did possessions and a home (extended self) become a part of my mother's identity?
- (b) At the time of loss, what was the interrelationship between her extended self and identity?
- (c) How did the loss of home and possessions change my mother?
- (d) How did she create a new identity?

The intent of this study is to contribute to our understanding of adult identity development triggered by the loss of home and possessions from a natural disaster. The study uses autoethnographic methodology approached from a constructivist philosophy.

Research Design

In order to explore how identity can be reformulated after things that have become part of their extended self are destroyed, I situate this study in a constructivist philosophy. Constructivism is “how people make sense of their experience – learning is the construction of meaning from experience” (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 36). Constructivists view knowledge as “constructed by learners as they attempt to make sense of their experiences. Learners, therefore, are not empty vessels waiting to be filled, but rather active organisms seeking meaning” (Driscoll, 2005, p. 387).

I retrospectively and selectively chose to write about and analyze an illuminating discovery that stemmed from losing my family home due to a natural disaster. I used the personal family experiences of my mother and myself to illustrate facets of our lives

before and after Hurricane Ike. Everyone loves a good story, but this is not the intention of using stories within my research to illustrate changes in identity. The reason I used our stories was to vicariously make meaning of our innumerable journeys within time and space. We can “attach ourselves to stories of our families, ancestors, and fellow citizens and make them part of our identity construction. And we may learn from the life experiences of others through their stories” (Formenti et al., p. 53).

Here I employed stories as an approach to autoethnography. Using life history research methods with my mother, I added my own thoughts, understandings, and feelings of happenings within our family system to arrive at a thick description of personal and interpersonal experiences. These voices, as documented through field notes, formal interviews, interactive interviews, casual discussions, memories, and artifacts, provided places for me to look for patterns of identity change following a natural disaster. And, once again emphasizing the importance of how we use stories, I presented these patterns in a storytelling fashion.

Methodological Approach

At the very core of adult education is the link between learning and experience. To me, this link is best utilized through the very personal methodological approach of autoethnography. And, although it may be my preferred way of looking at things, the method has always struck me as being full of a unique set of challenges. So, as I contemplated using autoethnography as a methodological approach, I considered the words of Ellis:

Oh, it’s amazingly difficult. It’s certainly not something that most people can do well. Most social scientists don’t write well enough to carry it off. Or they’re not

sufficiently introspective about their feelings or motives or the contradictions they experience. Ironically, many aren't observant enough of the world around them. The self-questioning autoethnography demands is extremely difficult. So is confronting things about yourself that are less than flattering. Believe me, honest autoethnographic exploration generates a lot of fears and self-doubts—and emotional pain. Just when you think you can't stand the pain anymore, well that's when the real work has only begun. Then there's the vulnerability of revealing yourself, not being able to take back what you've written or having any control over how readers interpret it. It's hard not to feel your life is being critiqued as well as your work. (1999, pp. 671-672)

Using autoethnography allowed me to discuss the personal family experiences of my mother and myself. It allowed me to look at my family as a system and all of the personal details that came with that system. Ellis says:

As a genre of writing and research, autoethnography starts with personal experiences and studies “us” in relationships and situations. Doing autoethnography involves a back-and-forth movement between experiencing and examining a vulnerable self and observing and revealing the broader context of that experience. When we write about ourselves, we also write about each other. (2007, p. 14)

Using autoethnography also gave my mother's life, and my life, exposure that had never been allowed before. It made us, in a sense, naked. Bochner and Ellis say, “Performing these lived through dramas, we transform private troubles into public plight,

making evocative autoethnography powerful, confronting, dangerous, and culturally essential (2016, p. 87).

Using firsthand experience as primary data (Jackson, 1989), I use autoethnography (Ellis, 2004) as a method to integrate my own understanding of past memories with the formal and interactive interviews I had with my mother. Following this idea, Gornick acknowledges that “what actually happened is only raw material; what the writer makes of what happened is all that matters” (2008, p. 8). I accepted the challenge to “artfully arrange [my mother’s and my] life in ways that enable readers to enter into dialogue with our lives as well as with their understanding of their own” (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 79). Along the way, I “discovered the story in my experience and what it means” (Richardson, 2000b, p. 924). In the end, I tried to meet one of the main goals of autoethnography: “to put meaning into motion, and the best way to do that is to tell stories” (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 76).

Also, related to autoethnography as a method for understanding life experiences, Horsdal (2011) makes the important connection between an individual’s life story and his/her environment as being influenced by the following:

[Life stories] are influenced by memory traces of our physical journey from place to place in a social and cultural environment. The path we travel in time and space is unique to each individual.

We experience life as both continuity and change. In the interaction with the environment new things emerge, things disappear or reappear, we recognize the same, the similar and the different, both in ourselves and in our environment, we encounter, interact with, and respond to. We are in a state of becoming,

continuously in a process in which we try to make sense of and create meaning from what happens. Telling stories and exchanging stories is the primary human means of accomplishing this. (p. 3)

As discussed previously in my literature review, *everyone* has a narrative identity, or an individualized story of “self.” Even though these stories are internalized and constantly evolving, they help us make sense of our lives. McAdams (2008) says:

The stories we construct in order to make sense of our lives are fundamentally about our struggle to reconcile who we imagine we were, are, and might be in our heads and bodies with who we were, are, and might be in the social contexts of family, community, the workplace, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and culture writ large. *The self comes to terms with society through narrative identity.* (p. 243)

Therefore, our lives tend to gain some measure of integration and purpose through these internalized and evolving stories of our self. Our life stories speak directly to how we come to terms with our “interpersonal worlds, with society, and with history and culture” (McAdams, 2008, p. 257).

Life stories contain accounts of high points, low points, turning points, and other emotionally charged events (Singer & Salovey, 1993). Our positive events concern emotions such as “joy, excitement, and love; negative events are about experiences of distress, sadness, fear, anxiety, anger, guilt, shame, and the like” (McAdams, 2008, p. 252-253). Generally speaking, the stories my mother and I shared and discussed regarding family life before Hurricane Ike were mostly classified as negative. McAdams goes on to point out the following about negative life-event stories:

At the level of the life story, negative events seem to *demand an explanation*.

They challenge the storyteller to make narrative sense of the bad thing that happened – to explain why it happened and perhaps why it may not happen again, to explore the consequences of the negative event for later development in the story. (p. 253)

Autoethnography and other research using life stories within adult education “help build up systemic bodies of knowledge on how people make sense of their lives in society and culture and how the stories they tell largely determine who they are and affect what they do” (McAdams, 2008, p. 258).

Clark connects experiential learning and the telling of a life story as:

A sense-making medium. Experience itself is prelinguistic; it exists prior to and apart from language. We access it, reflect on it, make sense of it through languaging it, which is to say, through narrating it. In short, we learn narratively. (2010, p. 5)

Researcher's Role

As an adult education researcher, I embrace the link between learning and experience. As an autoethnographer, I write about specific moments in my life, which I believe have changed its trajectory, and I attempt to analyze these experiences. Since my study situates itself in the system of my family, I consider myself a life-long participant observer. And, although my research questions focus on the change in my mother's identity, my role as a autoethnographic researcher is best viewed as the describer of the events as I experienced them and as I experienced my mother's stories.

The extensive knowledge, sometimes first-hand, of topics discussed within the formal and interactive interviews with my mom, as well as our informal conversations, helped me by not only adding to the thick, descriptive nature of my storytelling, but this knowledge has elicited emotional responses within me during and after our interviews and discussions. Including this range of emotions within my research demonstrates not only how I have changed as a result of this natural disaster, but it also demonstrates how I have changed as a researcher through this process.

Research Questions

It is clear that disaster loss can be more completely understood by going beyond aggregate data, and I have shared that my motivation to learn from those who have experienced this type of loss does come from a personal connection. My childhood neighborhood, where my mother still lived at the time, suffered great loss during Hurricane Ike in 2008. As a researcher, I aim to develop an increase in the importance of learning from those who have been directly affected from natural disaster loss. So, the questions this research addressed are:

- (a) How did possessions and a home (extended self) become a part of my mother's identity?
- (b) At the time of loss, what was the interrelationship between her extended self and identity?
- (c) How did the loss of home and possessions change my mother?
- (d) How did she create a new identity?

Participants

When I initially began my dissertation in 2011, I interviewed four women who lived in the Gulf Village neighborhood of Galveston Island at the time of Hurricane Ike. One of these women was my mother. At that time, my only participation aside from being the researcher was as videographer and photographer. As I fell deeper into the research, I found it necessary to do additional formal and interactive interviews with my mother. I also found it necessary record autoethnographic information. This officially made me a participant observer.

As my research progressed and I established a clearer theoretical perspective for my study, I made the decision to focus solely on the data I had obtained from my mother's formal and interactive interviews and my autoethnographic information. By limiting the number of participants to just mom and me, I felt I could go deeper into how the loss of part of an extended self contributes to an individual's identity development. In this case, I believed that fewer participants could give me richer, thicker data and understanding.

Data Collection Procedures

My research was informed by the theoretical perspective of extended self within the larger context of the theory of narrative identity development and this became the lens to investigate my research questions. The concept of extended self enabled me to integrate the dimensions of home, possessions and place into my study. The theory of family systems, and specifically the concept of family interactions, enabled me to focus on the relationships that had formed among family members, including my mother and me, both before and after Hurricane Ike. My intent was to research how the loss of part of

an extended self contributes to an individual's identity development within the context of a natural disaster. My research design model used the following guiding questions:

- How did my childhood home of 7018 Sycamore, here considered part of my mother's extended self, become part of my mother's identity?
- Who had lived in the house and during what time frame did he/she live there?
- How was each of these people significant to my mother and her identity?
- What significant events happened within the house, who did they involve, and why was each specific event even important?
- What memories had been created within the house based on these significant events?
- What was the extent of the interrelationship between the Sycamore house and my mother's identity at the time of Hurricane Ike?
- How had she arrived at this connection to the house?
- How had specific individuals aided in my mother's interrelationship with the house?
- How had the loss of the Sycamore house sustained during Ike changed my mother?
- How did this loss lead to a change in my mother's identity?

The research focus was on narrations of identity before and after Hurricane Ike, so I looked at our family system retrospectively and selectively. My first objective was to limit the various components that make up the extended self to a practical number. Based on the terms previously defined and my epistemological stance, I established the

following: culture, place, and material possessions. Since my research compared facets of the extended self before and after Ike, I used these three components in that way.

From there, I decided what could be used as evidence for each of these components, aside from my own memories, keeping in mind that they did not need to be the same when comparing pre-Ike to post-Ike. I used the space created by family as the evidence of culture before Ike, whereas evidence of culture after Ike was the space created by family in Kyle, Austin, and Granger, Texas. Evidence of place before Ike came from video footage, photographs, and magazine articles. Evidence of place after Ike came from photography. Material evidence of extended self before Hurricane Ike came from interviews and memorabilia. Material evidence of extended self after Hurricane Ike came from interviews.

Before Hurricane Ike

In order to illustrate the culture of our family system, I formally interviewed my mother about the community environment and memorable events of Sycamore Drive (see Appendix A). I also did a self-interview in which I discussed growing up on the block. To evidence the space that was created by our family, I continued my research with numerous interactive interviews with my mother and frequent informal conversations. I also supplemented these data by doing a second interview of my mother and another self-interview. Additionally, family photos were used as data to illustrate the space created by family.

I used video footage, photographs, and magazine articles to illustrate place. When mom and I returned to the Island after Ike, ten days post-hurricane, I filmed our journey from the start of the causeway until we entered the house. This was the very first piece of

data I collected. I also used family photos and photos from the *Galveston Daily News*. Magazine articles, such as a 2015 cover story about Galveston and Hurricane Ike in *Texas Monthly*, and periodicals from the Rosenberg Library Collection in Galveston, also helped to illustrate place before Ike.

The interviews I conducted with my mother, both formal and interactive, focused on our experiences. Mom and I also went through the little memorabilia we were able to salvage from the Sycamore house.

After Hurricane Ike

In order to understand the Granger community, I collected information from the city website. I used this to discuss the history of this small town. Additionally, I used statements from mom's second formal interview, my second self-interview, and numerous interactive interviews and discussions with mom. I also used parts of these interviews and discussions to show the new space my family created after Hurricane Ike. Mom and I also discussed photos we each had taken. I selected among these to be representative of parts of our extended self.

Photos were also used as a mode for discussion of place. Mom took a series of photos she believed represented her "place," and I did the same. The data collected then became more than just the photos themselves. The rich conversation was just as valuable. Finally, mom's second interview showed the body/bodily experiences, as did my "self" interview.

Approach to Analysis of Data

Once I had all of my data collected, I began by transcribing each of the interviews and read them over several times. I decided to look at the whole situation created by

Hurricane Ike as a moment of “astonishment, mystery, and breakdown in one’s understanding” (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 1). Brinkmann (2012) defines abduction as a form of reasoning used in situations of uncertainty, when we need an explanation or understanding of something that has happened. According to the abductive model, he says, “we do research, inquiry, analysis, for purposes of living, and theories and methods are some of the tools used in the process” (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 3). Through the abductive form of analysis, I was able to clearly bring in my autoethnographic material that I had literally lived. The abductive model helped me in focusing my epiphany.

I went back to the questions this research addresses. Question number one asks, “How did possessions and a home (extended self) become a part of my mother’s identity?” From the literature that I have explored, I knew that a house could become part of a person through the interactions and memories made within it. Drawing on what Moulton (2015) had done within her study, I began with the year my grandparents had the house built, 1957, and constructed a timeline extending up to when Ike destroyed the house. This timeline made the interactions and memories from my family culture concrete. I began manipulation of the timeline by using color-coded blocks of time for each person who lived in the house (see Appendix B). In this way, I was able to visually see who the interactions were between within a set period of time. Below my color-coding of residents, I plotted significant events that occurred within the house; I was careful to add not only things that I remembered but also events mom had specifically indicated within her our formal and interactive interviews, and our informal discussions. I also used family photos and other pieces of memorabilia, such as my Grandmother’s address book, which held much more than addresses, to add to what would become a rich

life history of our family's system and culture within the Sycamore house before Hurricane Ike. The stories that lay on that timeline directly answered my first research question.

After I wrote the autoethnographic narrative that extended from the timeline, I read over it several times looking for thematic ways in which a possession could form a relationship with a person. By doing so I was searching for the answer to my second research question, "At the time of loss, what was the extent of the interrelationship between her extended self and identity?" Within the autoethnographic narrative, I was looking for themes that would describe what the house had become to my mother. I arrived at three themes which answered my second research question. At the time of loss, the Sycamore house was viewed by my mother as: (a) a possession of power and control, (b) an external receptacle for memories, and (c) a reflection of James Charles, Jr. and Bessie, my grandparents.

These themes gave me clarity, an illuminating discovery, in understanding mom's choices after Hurricane Ike. I may have never understood these choices if I had not followed this abductive form of analysis. I felt like I had solved a mystery because I was now able to understand how the loss of this possession, the Sycamore house, was not necessarily a bad thing for her or me. The relationship between the house and mom was negative and vile, and this relationship had persisted for over five decades.

As I sought the answers to my third and fourth research questions, "How has the loss of home and possessions change my mother?" and "How did she create a new identity?" I compared mom's life before Ike and after Ike. My data collection again was focused on day-to-day life, and it was easy to see the changes that had occurred with my

mom. I was able to revisit both formal interviews I had conducted with her, and continue our ongoing interactive interviews and informal discussions. Interestingly, she had spoken more openly about life after Hurricane Ike than before it. This natural disaster had not only taken away. It had given something more important than things to my mother and me; it had given us a new family system and an avenue for my mom to create a new identity.

Probably my favorite interview/discussion with mom was when she shared photos she had taken of things that were important to her since Hurricane Ike. Interestingly, her photos' main focus was the house she had bought in Granger, Texas. Between these before and after bodies of data, I was able to see three types of changes in mom as she developed her identity. These were changes in relationships, changes in outlook, and changes in her extended self.

Rigor of the Autoethnographic Research

The strength of my research is found in my approach to autoethnography. I have followed in the tradition of Ellis (1997) to provide an evocative account of experiences in identity development within the context of a natural disaster. I have made myself extremely vulnerable as I used a descriptive literary approach to illustrate these deeply emotional experiences. But, I also attempted to analyze it, contributing to theory.

I believe I have successfully achieved the main goal of evocative autoethnography, which, as described by Le Roux (2017), is “to use narrative to evoke emotion and to take the reader to depths of personal feeling and sympathetic understanding” (p. 199). In order to appraise the rigor of my autoethnographic research, I

used the five criteria suggested by Richardson (2000a): substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, the impact the narrative causes on the reader, and its credibility.

To begin, my research makes a substantive contribution to the field of adult education. When searching for literature on adult identity development within the context of natural disaster, I only found two relevant studies. Neither used an autoethnographic approach. It has been an honor to assist in filling this gap.

As I wrote each narrative, I continually strove for a high aesthetic merit. I wanted my dissertation to be a quality work of art. Comments from my chair indicate that I have been successful. During one of our meetings intended to discuss the first draft of my research findings chapter, she told me that she truly believes I have a gift for putting words to a deep emotional experience. I moved her to tears, which speaks to the impact narrative can have on a reader.

I have maintained self-reflexivity in two ways. First, I had deep discussions about myself during therapy sessions. Additionally, the conversations with my mother helped me stay self-aware of myself as a participant researcher.

Trustworthiness of the Study

I used the ideas put forth by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to address trustworthiness in my research study. They say trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

I maintained prolonged engagement during formal and informal interviews with my mother so as to ensure a result of thick and rich data. I recorded all interviews and later transcribed them. I was diligent in describing the research decisions made along

the way through use of graphic organizers, timelines, and a step-by-step retelling of my approach to analysis.

Additionally, I used my life experiences to add to data quality. I engaged in member checking during interviews with my mother to achieve reliability in my autoethnographic material. In this way, I ensured a natural overlap of data between what my mom remembered and what I remembered.

I also participated in debriefings with my dissertation chair as I made sense of my data and to aid in the conceptual development of my study. These meetings helped me in the synthesis of my work so that I was able to see patterns within my data. In turn, her questions helped me develop my own questions to ask myself through my research. Our debriefings aided in the development of credibility.

Human Subjects Protection

The Institutional Review Board of Texas State University's Office of Research Compliance approved this research on October 20, 2015 (see Appendix C). The application approval number is 2015E9232. Additionally, I updated my certification with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative on October 3, 2015.

Chapter Summary

My methodology was based on Ellis's understanding of autoethnography and Horsdal's connection between an individual's life story and his/her environment. My theoretical perspective is narrative identity development with the added dimension of extended self.

My data collection procedures involved using guiding questions to understand the various components that make up the extended self, specifically culture, place, and

material possessions. From there, I designed a graphic organizer to help in the selection of evidence and data to collect for both before and after Hurricane Ike.

I used abductive analysis to better link life story experiences to extended self and adult identity development.

My research and guiding questions helped me to construct a multi-level timeline ranging from 1957 to 2008. This timeline helped me form an autoethnographic narrative piece from which I gathered thematic ways in which my mother formed an interrelationship with the Sycamore house. After seeing what the house was to my mother, I then used the formal and interactive interviews plus conversations I had done with her, coupled with more autoethnographic data, to identify three changes in mom as she developed her identity after Hurricane Ike. Mom experienced changes in relationships, in outlook, and in extended self.

My research is limited in that it focuses on my mother and myself since I intended to retrospectively and selectively describe an illuminating discovery that stemmed from the extended self being destroyed by a natural disaster. It is also deepened by this intensive focus.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter uses my own stories and my mother's stories to show how my childhood home became a part of my mother's extended self. I use the stories of our lives and our experiences of Hurricane Ike and its aftermath to explore how a home and possessions (extended self) become part of one's identity.

A Possession Becomes Part of the Extended Self

My mom's stepfather and mother bought the Sycamore house in 1957. She was 11 years old. After living with her father and grandmother for a period of between three and four years, she was sent to live with her parents in the new house. At that time, to her, it was just an average house built as the beginnings of a subdivision. The relationships between the people living in the home and the events that happened over the years would soon define the space that would forever be a part of her extended self.

Sycamore House: 1957 to 1964

Grandma did not come from a wealthy family, and as I recall, a significant part of her life once she moved to Galveston was spent within the Galveston projects called Magnolia Homes. Popo was her third husband, and it is obvious from family photos that she had married up this time. Dressed in stylish clothes from each era, his parents, sister, and he were always posed in front of a two-story turn of the century house or a new car. His father, James Charles, Sr., served on the Galveston Police force, while his mother, my Nanny, was always a housewife. Popo had been married before, but the death of an infant son ended that relationship. Grandma had fallen into the graces of a wealthier man this time, and they appeared to be trying to fit the mold of the stereotypical late 1950s couple.

Grandma had four children: three boys and my mother. Mom was the oldest and definitely the least preferred. On several occasions through her early childhood, Grandma had placed my mom in a Galveston orphanage. Over the two years before she moved into the Sycamore house with my Popo and Grandma, mom had lived in Huntsville with her biological father's mother. But now, Grandma had a blue-collar working husband and a suburban-style house, so to make the picture complete she needed a child. I can only speculate that my Popo made the choice of mom over her brothers; the loss of his son, Jimmy, was still a fresh wound. Whatever the reason, mom was now a resident of 7018 Sycamore Drive, and my Grandma could take all of the staged family photographs she wanted.

Mom lived with Grandma and Popo through her junior high and high school years. During that time, primarily, Popo's mother and father visited the family. Occasionally, my Great Aunt Doris (Popo's sister) and her family came from Mississippi to visit. Mom was in R.O.T.C. during high school and excelled in academics. She kept her notebooks from Ms. Oppe's botany class, and I remember carefully flipping through the pages of seed, leaf, and flower collections when I was in grade school. Mom was so meticulous in labeling each part of every specimen, and her cursive handwriting was beyond perfect. Looking at these with my mom was one of the happier times of my childhood. I recall Popo walking in on us one time while we were looking at the notebooks. He gave his version of a smile and walked over to me to ruffle the curls on top of my head. "You got the smarts just like your mom, little girl," he whispered as he made his way out the front door.

I have the feeling that Popo truly wanted to be a supportive and loving father figure to mom, but his feeling for my grandma—and her feeling towards my mom—always took precedence. In mom's own words: Grandma was never a very loving parent. Was it because mom was academically inclined? Grandma never graduated high school and was nearly 50 before she received her G.E.D. Or, was it because she saw mom having experiences she was never offered? Perhaps she just did not know how to love a child? The answers to those questions were taken with her to the grave.



Figure 1. Popo Cutting the Grass at the Sycamore House. This is one of the photographs mom shared with me during our meetings, of Popo cutting the grass at



Figure 2. Grandma Gardening at the Sycamore House. Another of the photographs mom shared with me during our meetings, of Grandma pruning a bush in front of 7018 Sycamore in Galveston, TX. The photo was taken around 1960 by my grandfather.

Sycamore House: 1964 to 1970

Grandma and Popo controlled mom's life at the Sycamore house. They had to know where she was at all times, and any social plans mom may have had needed to be vetted by them first. Mom never talks about dating anyone during high school or a special high school sweetheart. I have seen photos of her and a date on formal occasions such as the Military Ball, a Sadie Hawkins dance, and Senior Prom, but nothing social beyond that. My grandparents' rule of "speak only when you are spoken to" was definitely

instituted while my mom was growing up. Thus, the time between mom's high school graduation and my arrival into the world became her period of rebellion.

After she graduated high school, mom went to Sam Houston State Teacher's College in Huntsville, TX, but she dropped out after a year of study and moved back to Galveston. Once again living at the Sycamore house, my Grandma and Popo thought that they were going to control her every move, but mom was not having it. She got married twice: the first time, simply because her mother specifically told her that she could not get married; the second time, possibly for love, but probably so she could escape the wrath of my grandparents and be out of the Sycamore house. However, she would soon find herself back on the steps of 7018, and this time she would be with me.

Unfortunately, my Grandma and Popo were anything but supportive when she showed back up at their front door with a child. Surely, it was not my mom's first choice of residence, but with the circumstances being what they were, returning to live with her parents was her only option. When she had me, she was living in her car on the streets of San Antonio. My father's career as a hair stylist opened up a door that would take him to Las Vegas. As he became the personal beautician for Debbie Reynolds, my mother chose parenthood and all of the obstacles that come with it. Her biggest hurdle: coming home.

Once again, my grandparents struck with full controlling force. They allowed mom to move in with me, but she was continually bombarded with negative displays of support. Comments such as, "You needed a kid like you needed a hole in your head!" were Grandma's weapon of choice. They even went so far as to take mom to court seeking legal custody of me. From what I have been told, their case against my mom did not involve anything that she had ever done to me. Instead, they gathered photos of my

father in full drag at the local gay bar, the KonTiki. How could anyone who would associate with the likes of a homosexual be fit to be a mother? The judge sided with my mother, and my grandparents never gained legal custody of me. However, the social infrastructure, with them ruling the household, continued.

Sycamore House: 1970 to 1976

It doesn't take a child long to figure out the who's-who within a family, and with me as a new character in the Sycamore house, I needed a role. That would be determined, of course, by my grandparents. I took orders according to the chain of command: from Grandma, then Popo, then mom. Popo may have been the man who seemed to be the head of the household, but Grandma was the real boss. My grandparents definitely placed me on a pedestal, and this served as a constant reminder to my mom that I was a huge mistake that she had made. They were being *good Samaritans* and *cleaning up her mess in the best way possible*. And, she was made to pay, not just figuratively, for their duties.

I can remember feeling like mom was more of my sister than my mother, and I often contemplated if my grandparents had adopted me in some kind of mid-life crisis. Mom worked as a purchasing agent at Farmer's Marine and Copper Works, a metal fabrication shop on the opposite end of the island. It seemed to me like she was always at work, so when I was not at daycare or school, I was with my Grandma. It was not until I was older that I found out mom was at work so much because she had to pay my grandparents rent for her and me to live with them. And, if Grandma watched me while mom worked, she had to pay her. To top it all off, when I reached kindergarten age, my Grandma found the perfect private school for me to attend. There was no way their granddaughter was going to public school with all of the minorities that had filtrated into

Galveston. Plus, mom had been in high school when segregation ended – and look what happened to her. They could not have me harmed like that! I would be sent to Trinity Episcopal School, and mom would pay for it. Our Sycamore household would once again look like the perfect, although extended, family.



Figure 3. Mom and Me. This is one of my favorite pictures of my mother and me at the Sycamore house. It was taken around 1973 on a special occasion. I say this because we are both dressed up and it we are sitting on the living room couch, which was only used on holidays, birthdays, and funerals.

Sycamore House: 1976 to 1978

Our household would be forced to grow again when Nanny, who by this time had moved to a senior living center called Gulf Breeze Apartments, could no longer live alone. The facility was not the type with caregivers, and I am not sure if there were any in Galveston. Whatever the case, Nanny was moved into the Sycamore house with non-severe medical issues and slight dementia. Popo was still working for National Cash Register Corporation, so it became Grandma's job to take care of Nanny. And then came the bruises. Lots of bruises.

Whenever I asked Grandma about the marks on Nanny's face, hands, and legs, I was first told that "little girls should speak only when they are spoken to, so it was my place not to ask such questions." But, this would always be followed with "she fell." As a child, I accepted the answer. She was old, and nobody else seemed to be concerned. Not the neighbors, not my mom, not my Popo. Then one day I heard the bruises happening. "Bessie...Bessie...Bessie. No! Stop Bessie," Nanny begged in her 82-year-old voice. I saw the bruises happening as Grandma pulled Nanny, naked, down the hallway of the Sycamore house. "Stop, Bessie...please stop." I felt the bruises happening, and it was something I could not unfeel.

The bruises stopped on January 14, 1978. Mom had taken some friends and me to a movie for my birthday, and while we were away, Nanny died. The story that Grandma told was that she had just gone to sleep in her easy chair, and when she came to check on her to see if she needed to use the bathroom, she had passed away. In my little mind, one of two things had happened: either the bruises had killed Nanny, or Nanny had finally found a way to get Bessie to stop.



Figure 4. Nanny. I took this photo of Nanny with the Polaroid camera I got for my 8th birthday. That would make the timing in January 1978, and it was very near her time of death. The bruises which I described are clearly evident within the photo.

Sycamore House: 1978 to 1981

The bruises weren't discussed by anyone after Nanny passed away, but I could feel a definite divide between all of the adults. When Popo was not working, his social time was devoted to the Masonic Lodge. One night of the week he spent with a man named Jim in deep discussion of whatever Free Masons talk about. Another night was Lodge night, and many of the other nights were spent away from the house, too. Mom

started dating again, but just occasionally on the weekend because she could trust that Popo would be there. This was not to say that either he or my Grandma approved of her actions, but since I was getting older, they did not mind watching me. It could also have been because Grandma had found out that her days were numbered. In late 1979, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

Numerous day and nights were spent at St. Mary's hospital. The doctor had only given Grandma 13 months to live, and the treatment she underwent was fierce. She lost all use of her colon functions and was given something doctors called a new technological innovation: a colostomy bag. When Grandma was out of the hospital, mom was the one who changed it. Picture a clear baggie taped to an open wound in the abdominal region that had the sole purpose of collecting bile. The smell alone made it impossible for me to even be near her when it was changed, but not even once did I hear mom complain about having to do this chore. During Grandma's final months, a time period where she had lost all of her hair and donned a cheap salt and pepper colored wig, there was no screaming, shouting, tears, or thank yous. We were all just waiting for inevitable death. Our Sycamore house telephone rang extra loudly on January 1, 1981, and it was followed by Popo's tearful screams. "Bessie...Bessie...Bessie...No!" I had heard these exact words before, but this time they gave me a feeling of uncomfortable relief.

Sycamore House: 1981 to 1984

After my Grandma died, Popo was lost. All of his efforts were focused on two things: finding a replacement for Grandma and smoking. Neither of these was healthy, and it remains questionable, which of the two had the most negative repercussions. He

smoked at least three packs of Parliament Lights 100's per day, and even though I was not quite 12 years old, he would send me to our neighborhood grocery store, Gerland's Food Fair, to buy him a carton of the blue and white packaged "cancer sticks" on a regular basis. Bob Garcia, the manager of the establishment, knew who they were for, so no questions were asked.

Popo made attempts at being a father figure to me. When it came time for me to learn my multiplication tables, he told my mom that he would take care of it. For me, it meant sitting at the kitchen table for oral quiz time. He would call out the problem, and if I got it wrong, not only would he scream the correct answer, his large meaty hand would strike the table, palm side down. This would go on for hours, and it always ended with me in tears.

He also attempted to get me involved in the *correct* social organizations. I begged to be allowed to try out for the volleyball team or to be part of the Girl Scouts. The answer there was always "No." However, on the day of my 12th birthday, he made it mandatory that I turn in my application to be part of a Masonic youth service organization: The Order of the Rainbow for Girls. Only one of the members attended my school, and there was a lot of memorization of text to be delivered in a ritualistic form during meetings. It was not my first choice as an after-school activity, but it did instill values of community service, honesty, and leadership in me at such an impressionable age. This was Popo's way of bringing me into womanhood.

Popo wanted me to grow up faster than I was, and he wanted me to fill the void left by Grandma's death. In hindsight, buying cartons of cigarettes was only part of his way of having me become this replacement. I do not remember the first night it

happened, or what provoked the thought, or why my mother even allowed it to happen, but by the time I was 13 years old, my Popo and I were sharing a bed. Even after years of psychotherapy, I have not been able to determine the extent of this social construct, and it is probably best that it remains this way. If there was any type of sexual abuse, that ended during my first week of high school.

Riding the school bus was a new experience for me because the small private school I had attended since kindergarten did not have a bussing system, so it is easy to imagine the excitement and freedom of riding with all of my public school peers to get to and from Ball High School. At last I was being exposed to people of color, of varied nationality, who were different than me. Mom was unable to drive me back and forth because her work schedule was different from my class schedule, and Popo was no longer able to drive because his emphysema had taken over his body. Smoking three packs a day will do that. Mom had hired a nurse to stay with him during the day, and she was the one who met me and the bus in the front driveway on that late September afternoon in 1984.

Mom and I followed the ambulance that carried Popo to St. Mary's Hospital – the same place Grandma had died three years earlier. I knew before we even made it there that he had died at the Sycamore House. His bedroom was the first place I ran to when I jumped off the bus and met his nurse in panic. There he was. Slouched over on the right side of the bed. A familiar semi-naked pose. His last breath had been taken. Death had struck. And once again, a feeling of uncomfortable relief came upon me.

Sycamore House: 1984 to 1988

After Popo died, only mom and I were left. So much of our time was spent trying to figure out how to assume these new roles as mother and daughter. I was going to turn 15 years old in a matter of months and the social infrastructure between mom and me had remained the same as my grandparents had dictated. Mom had a knack at solving minor problems as they arose, and the first one before us was transportation. Mom was still unable to drive me back and forth to school because of the difference in our schedules and, given the traumatic experience of Popo passing, and its close association with arriving home on the school bus, she was determined to find an alternative. Even though I did not have my license because I was not old enough yet to drive, mom bought me my first new-to-me-car: a 1979 Chevy hatchback. This car would not only get me to and from school, it would also take on the miraculous powers of helping me always get home despite the six-pack I had just drunk at my friend Alan's parties.

The moments of "Now-how-do-we-do-this?" grew further and further apart, not because we had figured out much, but because my car gave me the independence I never had before. Mom was also broadening her horizons, and one day she took me roller-skating in Texas City with a couple of my friends. There were several people there from her work, but she particularly wanted me to meet the man named Norman. Later that night, she asked me if he would be a good person for her to date. My mind went straight to one thing: I could finally have a father! And, that was the first thing that Norman made clear to me after he and mom got together: he was *not* and would *never be* my father!

Sycamore House: 1988 to 1997

When I graduated from high school in May of 1988, I went off to college three days later. This left mom and Norman as the sole residents at the Sycamore house, but the social constructs were not typical. Norman owned a house on Galveston Bay that he had grown quite attached to and with which he was not going to part. He also did not feel comfortable at the Sycamore house, so he kept the bulk of his personal items down at the camp. Norman always referred to the house on Sycamore as “your momma’s house” and never tried to display any type of ownership. They would stay in-town during the week and then go “down the Island” to the camp on the weekends. During the summer, the duration of their stay at the camp would grow longer.

Not much happened at the Sycamore house either: no parties, no big holiday celebrations. But, there was lots of television watching. It was almost as if the house had just become four walls with a roof, a bed, and a TV, and it was a depressing place to visit on the weekends I came home from college. Mom and Norman finally married in 1992, just months after I tied the knot with my first husband, but this did not change their relationship or their travels between the in-town house and the camp. Norman begged mom for years to join him in retirement, and she finally agreed and said goodbye to her purchasing agent job at Farmer’s. After nearly 30 years she could stay at home, but she quickly determined that she did not like how this extra time at the Sycamore house made her feel. Within two years she had gone back to work as a librarian’s assistant for Galveston Independent School District. This gave Norman extra alone time which he chose to spend mostly at the camp.

Sycamore House: 1997 to 2004

For over ten years, the family system within the house remained at a low hum, but a trip to the gastroenterologist changed mom's role from wife to caregiver and Norman's role from husband to patient. Although she was able to maintain her job at the elementary school, mom accompanied Norman back and forth to doctor and hospital visits as he fought colorectal cancer. He insisted on spending as much time as possible at the camp, the place where he felt comfortable. He had put his foot down, insisting that the Sycamore house produced death, and with him standing within death's reach, he wanted to be as far away as possible. Mother agreed, and she complied by traveling back and forth from the camp to work or from the camp to doctor visits.

Gradually Norman developed trouble grasping objects, and his voice changed from a low bass range to a higher labored pitch. At first, he and mom paid no attention to the symptoms, thinking that they were a result of the intense chemotherapy he was enduring. The doctors recognized the symptoms and diagnosed him with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, most commonly known as ALS. He had to adjust his diet because swallowing solid foods became impossible, and he started experiencing progressive muscle weakness limiting his walking ability. This meant he could no longer climb the stairs on the elevated Bay house. All of the couple's existence was forced back into the Sycamore house.

Even though I was not living in the house at the time, I knew the end was near. Norman had refused to use the wheelchair suggested by the doctors, but mom had agreed to let Hospice services begin. Still with the belief that the Sycamore house produced death, Norman was not going to let this disease and cancer take him. He was not going to

let the house win. Instead, he took death into his own hands and ended his life using a tool of one of his favorite hobbies. That particular German semi-automatic pistol was his favorite.

Sycamore House: 2004 to 2008

Mom had been left alone to reside at 7018 Sycamore Drive. She threw herself into her job at the elementary school, working as many hours in a week as they would let her. My kids and I only visited once or twice because of the feelings of loneliness and awkwardness the house exuded, but she insisted everything was okay with her. Everyone had left her alone to reflect on what the house meant to her.

Possession, Extended Self, and Natural Disaster

The day that mom and I returned to Galveston after Hurricane Ike is most definitely a story beyond compare. It was shared within this writing as an introduction, so I will not repeat it here. Instead, I will rewind time back to the scene where I had finally pulled into the driveway. “Well, it’s still standing,” my mom proclaimed in an almost excited voice cutting through the now thick silence. This is where a crack of solid wood splintering from itself became my mother’s and my own symbolic entry into the world of a natural disaster victim. At that moment, we had become women who had lost physical pieces of our past and present. The visions we had imagined for our future were now changed as a result of Hurricane Ike. From that moment forward, that door would become the threshold into a post-natural disaster terrain, changing our mother-daughter relationship, morphing our essential outlook on life itself, and altering our identity as independent women. The door to 7018 Sycamore Drive was our symbolic passage into resiliency, recovery, and new lives.

The relationships between the people who had lived in the Ike-stricken home, not to mention the events that happened within those walls over the years, had defined a space that was now forever part of mom's extended self. She described this piece of her as "remnants of a family that had lived and died." The house was previously used as a possession of power and control, and the memories forming the bond between mom and the house did not produce a system of comfort. My grandparents had bestowed a death-transcending transmission of themselves into the mind of my mother and me, especially since their deaths constituted the circumstances by which mom had acquired 7018 Sycamore. The paragraphs that follow form a comprehensive look at the house at the time of Ike in order to analyze the interrelationship between a possession and my mother's extended self.

Sycamore House: A Possession of Power and Control

Stories were previously used to illustrate the social constructs that occurred within the Sycamore house through a period of time that ranged from my grandparents' purchase of the home in 1957 until the year Ike swept through Galveston in 2008. Through these years, 7018 Sycamore was used as a possession of power and control by my grandparents over my mother. When she became pregnant with me, living in her car on the streets of San Antonio, she sought support from her parents. She needed a safe place to be in order to raise a child. However, instead of a warm welcoming abode, she was granted permission to stay in her parents' house. Since this was her only option at the time, she put up with the battles that ensued.

In order to continue living at the Sycamore house, mom endured the negative comments such as, "You needed a kid like you needed a hole in your head!" She went to

court and listened to the homophobic descriptions of my biological father presented by my grandparents. She put up with the constant reminders my grandparents gave her: she was able to live there because she had made a huge mistake; they were being good Samaritans; and, by placing me well above her on their schema of people, they were just cleaning up her mess. And, she worked as many hours as she could at her job in order to be able to pay the bill presented to her at the end of every week.

Mom gave them the dollars and cents that they demanded. But, with my grandparents' continual threats to my mother—telling her that if she tried to leave 7018, they would once again file for custody of me—they made it clear they had installed themselves as the rulers of the kingdom. The need to live there in order to keep her child had become their law. The house had become the ultimate possession of power and control.

Sycamore House: An External Receptacle for Memories

My grandparents' house, the place where both my mother and I did most of our growing up, can not only be looked at as a possession of power and control, but also as a possession that collected our memories. Although there were great family memories associated with living there, it seems the ones that stuck to the house were, to quote my mom, “not so good.” They are memories of abuse, disease, and death.

The physical abuse that my Nanny could not escape leaves me with questions to this day. How could this be allowed to go on for so long? Why did none of the neighbors, or my Popo, or my mom step in to stop the abuse? The graphic scene that I personally experienced—where Nanny was being drug down the hallway, naked—will always stay engraved in my mind. Her calls of help were embedded into the Sycamore walls, and

they were the cause of many nightmares while I lived there as a child, possibly continuing into adulthood.

Nanny did not truly qualify as *diseased* with her non-severe medical issues and slight dementia, but both of my grandparents did. And, Norman did, too. Grandma's ovarian cancer gave our house memories of someone who lost the battle. A bald woman forced to wear a wig for vanity. Colostomy bag changes. Vomiting from chemotherapy. Popo's smoking, finally leading to emphysema, gave our house memories of someone who refused to see that there was even a battle to be fought. He never tried to stop smoking. He denied until the end that cigarettes had caused his lung disease. Ashes and butts. Ashtrays and empty cartons. Norman's colorectal cancer and ALS gave our house memories of someone who decided for himself when the battle was over. A not-old-enough man who refused to use a wheelchair. Enough was enough. And, then, there was a gun.

Norman's suicide was not the only memory of death to be formed within the walls of 7018 Sycamore. Nanny died on the day of my 8th birthday party in her easy chair. Her son, my Popo, died my first week of high school in the bed that he and I had shared for at least a year. And, although my Grandma did not die in the house on New Year's Day of 1981, the memory formed by my Popo's tearful screams of "Bessie...Bessie...Bessie...No!" left the depiction of death.

Sycamore House: A Reflection of James Charles, Jr. and Bessie

Since the death of my Popo was the final circumstance by which mom had acquired 7018 Sycamore, it is safe to say that both he and my Grandma had bestowed a death-transcending transmission of themselves into the mind of my mother. The house

had not been acquired by my mom by choice. And, unfortunately, James Charles, Jr. (my Popo) and Bessie (my Grandma), had left reflections of themselves within the crevices.

First and foremost, my grandparents had left their idea that parenting meant harboring a sense of power over a child. My mom was clearly controlled by my Grandma and Popo: they had to know where she was at all times; any social plans that she had needed to be vetted through them; and, they constantly preached the phrase “speak only when you are spoken to.” When she became old enough to leave the Sycamore house and her parents behind, her herculean effort to escape their wrath only accentuates how forceful their dominance must have been. And, at the time she needed them the most, they used their self-proclaimed supremacy to extend this control beyond their deathbeds. Their idea of maintaining power over a child as a substitute for good parenting insulated the walls of the Sycamore house.

Accompanying these parenting strategies were thoughts of blatant racism. When I had reached kindergarten age, my Grandma found the perfect private school for me to attend. They were highly opposed to minorities being schooled together with Anglos, so there was no way they were going to let me go to public school. To back up their rationale, they used mom as their example of how failure would surely follow in the wake of attending public school since she had been in high school when segregation ended. Additionally, neither mom nor I were allowed to be involved in any organizations that did not hold White-privilege as one of its foundational pillars. Mom was allowed to participate in R.O.T.C. and the Order of the Rainbow for Girls. I could only be a part of the latter. Yes, racism was part of the shards of debris that formed 7018 Sycamore.

Furthermore, Popo and Grandma had bequeathed several forms of abuse as reflections of themselves. The psychological abuse began when my mother was young; probably concurrent with the idea that brandishing power over a child equaled good parenting. It was continued when I saw the bruises happening as Grandma pulled Nanny, naked, down the bedroom hallway as she pleaded for her life. And, it perpetuated after Grandma died, with Popo. He had overtly displayed substance abuse as far back as mom can remember, but after Grandma died, he increased his intake to at least three packs a day. He continued the psychological abuse by not only sending me to the grocery store at 12 years of age so I could purchase his next fix, but also through his attempts of being a father figure to me and wanting me to grow up faster than I was. His need to fill the void left by Grandma's death commenced the psychosexual abuse. The multiple genres of abuse—psychological, substance, and psychosexual—were embedded in the walls of 7018.

Losing a Possession and Gaining a New Identity

Previously I described an intense scene that mom and I lived on the day we returned to Galveston after Hurricane Ike. In it, mom's neighbor, Mary, pries open the water-warped door of the Sycamore using a crow bar. I further developed the crux of this action into a metaphor: 'this crack of solid wood splintering from itself became my mother's and my own symbolic entry into the world of a natural disaster victim.' Dramatic. But, rethinking the comparison, I owe many thanks to that trusty crow bar called Hurricane Ike because when we were forced to pry open our own doors and look inside—to *really* look inside—changes could begin. The relationships between the people who had lived in the Ike-stricken home, not to mention the events that happened within

those walls over the years, had defined a space that was a large part of mom's extended self. Thankfully, natural disasters create loss, and people lose things in natural disasters. Changes in relationships and the overall outlook on life occur. And, the extended self is modified. The paragraphs that follow provide an analysis of how the loss of the Sycamore house has changed my mother and helped her create a new extended self.

Post-Ike: Changes in Relationships

Within days of our visit back to Galveston after Hurricane Ike, mom made the decision to leave and sell the Sycamore house. She told me that she felt that she could not return to live by herself since she really did not have any help in getting the place put back together. In hindsight, that may have actually been the simpler choice. After we sold the property *as is*, the contractors were able to gut the house and have it on the market within two weeks. But, mom had made a choice that no handyman could tackle. She wanted to make a new life. She needed to leave behind the space that was a manifestation of power and control. She sought a new place that would serve as an external receptacle for memories. She desired to be free of the walls that were a reflection of James Charles, Jr., and Bessie. Her first step in her new life would be moving in with me.

I had recently split with my life partner of 13 years, and I had two sons below age 12. My house was definitely big enough, so moving mom in was not the challenge. We were faced with the reconstruction of a social infrastructure that had not really experienced an overhaul—even after my Popo's death in 1984. My grandparents had placed me on a pedestal, and this served as a constant reminder to my mom that I was a huge mistake that she had made. Through my childhood, I remember feeling like my mom was more of my sister than my mother. After Popo died, and only mom and I were

left at the Sycamore house, so much of our time was spent trying to figure out how to assume these new roles as mother and daughter. Unfortunately, this co-existence perpetuated the composition dictated by my grandparents. But, as the moments of “Now-how-do-we-do-this?” grew further and further apart, we grew further and further from each other. Mom bought me a car, and it gave me independence. In a way, I was given the keys to drive away from the needed soul searching that could have revealed our social infrastructure. Our post-Ike experience left us no such convenient escape routes.

Our choice to disregard the original conceptualization imposed by the teachings of my grandparents did not morph at a rapid pace, but mom and I worked together. We became active participants in building this new relationship. We struggled. We fought. We cried. I understood that mom was striving for a sense of self-worth and a sense of safety. Our efforts even lead us to move into separate apartments for a few years. This may have been an expensive step, but it was invaluable. It gave us a choice of being apart while still working on our relationship. I encouraged mom to buy her own house, and at the time I did not understand her reluctance. Now, I can see that the apartment was sort of a weaning period that helped her come out of the war zone created by my grandparents. The destruction caused by Hurricane Ike was not the war zone—the war zone had existed since 1957.

Post-Ike: Changes in Outlook

Hurricane Ike had created an escape route for mom. By leaving the Sycamore house behind, she could finally be free of her parents. Holding on to this possession had not allowed her to move forward. Her outlook was tainted because the house was such a huge part of her extended self. There was an extensive interrelationship between 7018

Sycamore and my mother. The savage intensity of Hurricane Ike shattered her bonds and initiated her change in outlook.

In 2013, mom came to me and said it was time. What she meant was that all the debris residue associated with the Sycamore house was gone. She had gained strength. She was ready for the next chapter in her new life: buying her own house. As I walked her through the arduous process of real estate formalities and mortgages, I saw her strength. I saw happiness in her that had not existed before. A woman who once thought she had no place to go suddenly realized she had many places to go. And, the place that she decided to make into her space was reminiscent of Galveston, but nothing like 7018 Sycamore.

The house she chose is in Granger, a small town outside of Austin, TX. Like Galveston, Granger has a community captivated by its rich historical character. The city originated in 1882 as a crossroad within the railroad network. Since Granger is in the middle of the fertile backland area, the location became an important city in which to market and export cotton. The community has a strong Catholic and Protestant influence. The Granger National Bank, opened in 1937, still exists and although the town has seen a population decline due to a general exodus from rural communities to major cities, Granger has retained its charm. Mom calls it her “happy, peaceful little town.” Complete with her menagerie of chickens in the backyard and a daily take of a dozen or more free-range eggs, mom’s outlook on life has undergone a dramatic change.

Post-Ike: Change in Extended Self

Mom bought the Granger house in 2014: a two-story Victorian-style house with simple brown beams aligning the extended porch, a bay area to extend the formal living

area, and a wood door inlaid with clear cut glass. The dark brown accents were to showcase the light yellow two-inch wooden planks that stretched around all four sides. It was built as a church parsonage in the 1930s to flank a Methodist gothic revival building but had been recently restored to accommodate modern life. Kirby and Marco hung the front porch swing that rests right outside mom's bedroom window, and the no-longer-needed mailbox was replaced with a rusty yet decorative Texas star. To the passerby, it seemed a well-constructed place resonating beauty, health, and prosperity. To mom, it was her mansion of freedom, happiness, and new beginnings.

To say that is extensive evidence that mom has successfully experienced a change in her extended self might be an understatement. She now has a place to call her own that will hold decades of new memories. Granger and that house form a place where she has established a new *me*. She was even able to describe this to me in one of our interviews and her words speak volumes. I have paraphrased her words below:

I've made a new life for myself. I have a house that is really mine with no lingering thoughts about my parents. My extended family lives with me. I used to be alone, but now I'm working with my family to make this new life. Not only for me but also for all of us. I'm better now than I was before Ike, and I would never want things to go back to how they were on Sycamore. This different place has made all the difference. I didn't really have a chance to grow there. I was always surrounded by the people who had lived there before. It was just a presence. It was the things that were there. I guess I was haunted.

Thank goodness the Sycamore house was taken away. Thank goodness someone said, "Let there be Ike..." Thank goodness.

Chapter Summary

This chapter used stories to illustrate the social constructs that occurred within the Sycamore house through a period of time in order to analyze how my childhood home became a part of my mother's extended self. A comprehensive look at the time of the loss of the house, due to Hurricane Ike, was made in order to analyze the interrelationship between the possession and my mother. Finally, I analyzed my mother's stories that happened after Hurricane Ike to see how the loss of the Sycamore house changed her. The following chapter will provide a summary of the findings and draw conclusions based on the research questions. The chapter will also include a discussion and suggestions for further research.

V. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I address these four research questions:

- (a) How did possessions and a home (extended self) become a part of my mother's identity?
- (b) At the time of loss, what was the interrelationship between her extended self and identity?
- (c) How did the loss of home and possessions change my mother?
- (d) How did she create a new identity?

Additionally, I address my contribution to the literature and discuss the significance of the study. Within this discussion, I have included a self-reflective piece in which I address how I perceive the experience changed our relationship. Furthermore, I speak to the trustworthiness of this study and give suggestions for further research.

The first research question guiding this study was, how did possessions and a home (extended self) become a part of my mother's identity? In order to understand how possessions and a home became part of my mother's identity, I first sought to understand what this possession stood for or represented. I looked at what the house was and how my mother characterized it. Using Massey's (2005) interpretation of space and place, I saw her house as a space that is made of interrelations, and these interrelations grew out of the experiences that occurred over time within the space. Lollar (2010) tells us that a house is not a structure of unfeeling walls. A house is an extension of the physical body and the sense of self. A house reflects who a person was, is, and wants to be. I then turned to the concept of extended identity borrowed from consumer science (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016) and the idea of narrative identity development (McAdams, 2008; 2011) to

understand how the stories we tell each other and the narratives we make of our own lives become part of our identities.

Within my research, I have shown the relationships between the people living within a particular place over a period of time. Additionally, I have drawn on stories to examine the experiences that occurred over time within the space. In doing so, I have illustrated the space that was created at 7018 Sycamore. What I have concluded is that the house became a part of my mother's and my own identities and relationship with each other through the lived experiences within the space over time.

The people in this study did not walk the earth as structured pieces of processed metal that repelled everything with which we collided. We were not glass figures that broke if our collisions had too much impact. Instead, we were porous creatures that absorbed life. We absorbed conversations we had with others in our family. We absorbed birthday celebrations. We absorbed fights we had with our significant others. We were sponges.

As sponges, we lived our lives day-to-day constructing our story, absorbing every element. And, as we absorbed the elements of our individual stories, these became a part of who we were. The conversations we had with family and friends were absorbed and became part of who we are. Our actions at work were absorbed and became part of who we are. Our relationships were absorbed and became part of who we are. And, as we were actively taking in these specific occurrences, other elements came along. Those relationships, those conversations, and those actions all happened somewhere. They happened in a place. Our bodies would not allow us to just absorb the occurrence and

leave the element of place behind. So, as our relationships, conversations, and actions became a part of who we were, so did the places in which they happened.

Simply put, the house as a part of our narratives about each other and ourselves became part of our identities, a material extension of our selves and our relationships.

The second research question asked, at the time of loss, what was the interrelationship between her (my mother's) extended self and identity? In order to understand the extent of the interrelationship between my family's possessions, especially our home, and the people we were and became, I turned to the literature on possessions and identity. Hogg and Mitchell (1996) theorize that individuals choose, construct, and communicate their identities through the objects they possess. We derive meaning from our possessions and invest these possessions with meaning.

I analyzed the data to better understand the interrelationship between the Sycamore house and my mother. I found the house to have three meanings for my mother: a possession of power and control; an external receptacle for memories; and, a reflection of James Charles, Jr. and Bessie (my grandparents). The relationships between the people who had lived in the Ike-stricken home, not to mention the events that happened within those walls over the years, had defined a space that was now forever a part of mom's extended self. This interrelationship was built through her physical movements in time and space within the house, and the emotions of the family living there. Her memories and the stories she developed to make sense of her life in the house played a key role in the construction of her identity.

The Sycamore house became a part of mom's identity over a significant amount of time. The house reeked of the relationships between the people who had lived in the

home, not to mention the events that happened within those walls over the years. The house was a place that had previously been used as a possession of power and control. The memories were not comforting. In fact, my grandparents had bestowed a death-transcending transmission of themselves into mom's mind. Their presence seeped from the walls. Until Ike, mom was stuck in that house and stuck in the identity she had developed over the many years she had spent with them and other family members in the house.

The third research question asked, how did the loss of home and possessions change my mother? In order to understand how loss of a possession can change an individual and create a new identity, I turned to the literature on identity development during adulthood. Bosma and Kunnen (2001) state that the trigger for change is some kind of conflict in person/context, and this trigger interrupts optimal identity development causing an imbalance between identity assimilation and identity accommodation. This spark can very well be the loss of a possession within the context of a natural disaster.

After Hurricane Ike, mom chose to respond to the conflict in person/context through changing her relationships and her outlook. The loss of the Sycamore house was a trigger for change. This in turn interrupted the balance between identity assimilation and identity accommodation. When the realization of the Sycamore house being gone hit my mom, she entered into a complex and fuzzy world, and she was confronted with non-fitting information. She would have to continue her life away from a place that had been a part of her identity over a significant amount of time. She was finally "free" from her controlling parents, but this new freedom would require a period of adjustment. Once her world reached a place she could call normal again, the result was changes in her identity.

The final research question asked, how did she create a new identity? For my mother, continuing to live in the house in which she had spent much of her life, held in place the memories and the stories of the identity she had constructed there. She could have chosen to move to a different place since the memories the place elicited were negative. For my mother, however, the place had to be destroyed entirely for her to become un-stuck.

When she did move, an un-sticking process began. The place was destroyed. Everything was gone. However, what was truly removed was not the house itself, but rather the continuous and ongoing interrelationship between my mother and the house and thus the events that had taken place and the relationships that had formed. When she was forced to leave, she could develop her identity in new ways. What could not be taken away from her identity though were her memories of her life and relationships there. We are our stories. We are our places.

Hurricane Ike forced mom to take a closer, emotional look within the walls of the Sycamore house and allowed change to begin. After 7018 Sycamore was out of her life, mom was able to successfully produce change in relationships and her overall outlook on life. With these under her belt, a new “me” emerged. She ended one chapter in her story, and began a new one, situated in a new place.

My Contribution to the Literature

To contribute to the research on natural disasters within the field of adult education, I sought to understand how home, as extended self, becomes part of one’s narrative identity, and how loss of this part of the extended self can lead to identity development. Through interviews and conversations with my mother, I sought to

understand how the relationships between the people living in the home and the events that happened there through these years became part of my mother's extended self, and then how loss of this piece of her extended self led to identity development. As an integral part of these stories myself, I use my own autoethnography to understand my mother's narratives of her identity development and in the process make sense of my own and our relationship. I found that the house and possessions which were lost in Hurricane Ike, through memories and stories, constrained my mother's identity development and helped form my own. Additionally, I found that the loss of these possessions were the triggering factor leading to her freedom to begin narrating a changed identity.

Adult Education Research

The research on natural disasters within the field of adult education, as described in my literature review, has focused primarily at the level of the community. However, Teng & Yusof (2014) found that the women in Aceh, Indonesia who survived the 2004 earthquake and tsunami based their learning on reflection, talking, and feelings, and it was this learning and reflection on their life experiences that enabled the women to strike a balance and lead better lives. My autoethnographic study confirms this finding as both my mother and I used our discussions as a means to reflect on our lives in order to move on in the after-math of Hurricane Ike. However, my study also demonstrates how the memories and stories that we had developed about ourselves while living in the house and allowed to live on through a house and possessions, also held our identities in place. The natural disaster of Hurricane Ike constituted a critical life event for both my mother and me that triggered our identity development resulted in the freedom from the identity

we had each developed to be able to change our behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, and ultimately embark on creating new identity narratives.

The concept of extended self was first brought to the study of disasters in the field of adult education by Martin (2016). She found that helping professionals and volunteer helpers addressed both the relational selves and the extended selves of the survivors during the 2015 flood in Wimberley, Texas. I add to this by showing how our places and possessions become a part of our identities, our learning about our identities, and the development of our identities. In the adult education literature, some research has focused on embodied learning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), but none has sought to understand the role of place and possessions in learning. My study contributes to this research by showing how a home and possessions become a part of one's narrated identity and how a natural disaster like Hurricane Ike, through destroying a home and many of the possessions can free from the material constraints of the identity developed within that home to begin developing a new one. Additionally, my research looks at how the relationships that also comprise our identities are held in place by home and possessions. My autoethnographic study of my mother and myself shows how the relationships formed in the house became part of our narrated identities and were further represented by photographs and other possessions.

This research contributes to the literature by providing a better understanding of how victims of natural disaster experience identity development through loss of material possessions that constitute part of their extended self. Hurricanes destroy things. What they cannot destroy is our story because, once our story has been constructed, it is a part, if not the whole, of who we are. However, natural disasters like Hurricane Ike can enable

us to construct stories that are not so constrained by the homes and possessions in which held our earlier narratives in place.

Adult Identity Development

My autoethnographic study adds to the adult identity development work done by Wiley et al. (2011) and Moulton (2015) in several ways. Wiley and her co-authors used a large group of natural disaster survivors to establish a link between the traumatic event and identity development distress in older adults. They found that exposures to a traumatic event, like a natural disaster, are associated with some form of psychological impairment and elicits traumatic stress. This traumatic stress exposure is also associated with identity development distress. Therefore, older adults who are affected by a traumatic stress may experience noticeable identity development. In an attempt to add to this body of literature, my study takes a specific older adult and examines the link between the traumas of losing a possession due to a natural disaster, but also traces the identity development that occurs. I answer the question “does this happen?” as they did, but I also address “how does this happen?” My Mother’s loss of her childhood home during Hurricane Ike acted as a spark or trigger for change within her.

Moulton uses a variety of data sources in order to situate accounts before, during, and after a specific natural disaster onto a timeline. She found that after losing things that have become a part of the extended self, it takes a restoration of a sense of place and identity, and this identity development relies heavily on memories. In my study, I use autoethnographic data to create a before, during, and after timeline. Individual stories are a data source that Moulton believed gave a “most telling depiction.” But, she explained how the community’s transformation mirrored the individual’s struggle to form a new

personal identity. To do this she looked at several lives to show how a community undergoes identity development. In contrast, my study showed how an individual's process of identity development did not focus on how it was linked to community identity, but how one's identity is extended through home and possessions and then changes when home and possessions are destroyed through a natural disaster. In my mother's case, she left her community and began rebuilding her identity in a new house and community and in new relationships with her daughter and grandchildren.

Self-Reflection

I have appeared in and out of my mother's story. The fact that I have collected the stories and that I am now making sense of them, makes me implicit/complicit in what I write. Therefore, the intent of this section is to address how I perceive the experience changing the relationship between my mom and me.

When Ike happened, I saw my mother's entire world fall apart. I feel like I became the advice giver. She moved in with me, and I was happy to help her. But, something happened about six months into her living with me. It was not one particular thing that she did. And, in all honesty, it really was not her at all. Perhaps it was me reflecting on mom's situation at the time. It could have been me thinking about why mom was even living in that Sycamore house in the first place.

Whatever started my thought process had uncorked the bottle of my childhood feelings. It was at that point when I remember a feeling of resentment towards my mom because she had kept us in that house for my entire childhood. I was angry at my mother for letting my grandparents be so mean to her, and me, and my Nanny, and each other. I

was angry at my mother because she had not protected me from this. In my mind, at that time, she had failed at the first rule of motherhood: always protect your baby.

This anger caused a significant mental breakdown for me. I had already been seeing a psychiatrist, and he wanted me to check into Shoal Creek Hospital for intense inpatient therapy. I refused on the advice of my mother, and I am not exactly sure why. I had been there before, so it was not the stigma of being in a mental hospital. Mom had not been around during that dark time in my life. But, she was here now. And, she was willing and able to listen to me.

Although she had never participated in the process herself, she took me to therapy three times a week. She never was an active participant in the sessions with me, but there came a point within my therapy that I was able to share with her my anger. And, at that point, she was able to tell me, adult-to-adult, what was going on with her during my childhood. I was able to understand the feeling of her being more like a sister than a mom to me was because that was the place my grandparents had dictated to her. Mom helped me through my painstaking experience of not only letting go of my grandparents, but she agreed with me when I made the claim that they were not nice people.

Shortly thereafter, we made the decision, together, that all of the experiences from our past that had been dug up as a result of losing the house in Hurricane Ike, were causing considerable pain. This pain was the reason we had been lashing out at each other. This pain was so engrained that we each needed our own space to work on ourselves individually. But, we also wanted to be near enough so that when we felt that we could share in each other's lives, then we could.

We each got an apartment in the same complex. My sons and I had our place, and mom had hers. I was able to focus on being a mother without a hovering grandmother. She was able to do her own thing. Our paths crossed often, and she took pleasure in being a grandparent. I took pleasure in seeing her become a grandparent so different than those I had grown up with.

We began scheduling outings together, particularly dinners. And then, after about two years of us keeping our considerable distances from each other, we decided, together, to try once again in sharing the same house. Both of us agreed that it was the best economic choice we could make. When we went house hunting, I wanted mom to be the one “in charge.” She was the one who had lost everything in Hurricane Ike. The house was to be hers. But, we all agreed (this included my two sons) that we could all live together as an extended family so long as each of us had our own place for retreat.

Some mothers and daughters consider themselves best friends. I do not know if mom and I will ever get there, and it is okay if we do not. Since Hurricane Ike, our relationship has ebbed and flowed in a manner that has allowed us to fight our own, shared demons. Our relationship is unconventional, but we have never lost hope in it lasting.

Suggestions for Further Research

The notion of extended self as a part of identity development has only just begun to be explored in adult education and adult identity development research (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016). However, currently our world is experiencing increased disasters and forced displacements of populations. Some of these are naturally occurring and some are not. But, whether the circumstance is a natural disaster or destruction directly caused by

humans, these events often disrupt or destroy the places, homes, and possessions that are so central to our identities. The concept of extended self enables analysis of how the loss of home and possessions impacts adult development and how adults make sense of major disruptive disasters in their lives. As we come to a better understanding of this meaning-making process and the ways home and possessions are intertwined with adult identity, we may be able to provide more effective learning opportunities to facilitate this process. As research is just beginning on this, additional qualitative studies would help to deepen our understanding of the process. In particular, studies focusing on the meaning of loss of home and possessions in the lives of refugees would be particularly helpful to adult educators working with refugees and immigrants in formal and community education. Studies focusing on the extended self in the identity development of adults who have lost their homes and possessions as a result of war, changes in climate, and terrorist events would better inform adult educators of the learning and educational needs of adults impacted by such events.

Chapter Summary

This study looked at how the loss of part of the extended self contributes to an individual's identity development. I addressed the following research questions:

- (a) How did possessions and a home (extended self) become a part of my mother's identity?
- (b) At the time of loss, what was the interrelationship between her extended self and identity?
- (c) How did the loss of home and possessions change my mother?
- (d) How did she create a new identity?

To answer these questions, I used autoethnography to arrive at a thick description of personal and interpersonal experiences. These voices, as documented through field notes, interviews, and artifacts, provided places for me to look for patterns of change within my mother's identity following Hurricane Ike. My theoretical perspective, extended identity, enabled me to look at how my mother's interrelationship with the house where she grew up and lived until Hurricane Ike became a part of her extended identity and how the loss of her house influenced her subsequent identity development.

My findings were that the house became a part of my mother's identity through the lived experiences within the space over time. I found the house to have three meanings for my mother: a possession of power and control, an external receptacle for memories, and a reflection of James Charles, Jr. and Bessie (my grandparents). The relationships between the people who had lived in the Ike-stricken home, not to mention the events that happened within those walls over the years, had defined a space that was now forever a part of mom's extended self. This interrelationship was built through her physical movements in time and space within the house and accompanied by the emotions from the family living there. Her past, present, memory, and revolution/evolution with the house played a key role in the construction of her identity. My mother's loss of her childhood home during Hurricane Ike acted as a spark or trigger for change within her. The result was changes in my mom's identity. Hurricane Ike forced mom to take a closer, emotional look within the walls of the Sycamore house and allow change to begin. After 7018 Sycamore was out of her life, mom was able to successfully produce change in relationships and her overall outlook.

APPENDIX SECTION

A.	INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE	95
B.	TIMELINE OF 7018 SYCAMORE RESIDENTS.....	96
C.	CONSENT FORM.....	97

APPEDIX A

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me a bit about yourself
2. Describe the community environment on Sycamore Dr. before Ike
3. What are some specific memorable events while living here in your life before Ike?
4. As Hurricane Ike approached Galveston, what were you thoughts? Feelings? Actions? Plans? Tell me your story.
5. When the storm made landfall, where were you? What were your thoughts? Feelings? Actions? Plans? Tell me your story.
6. After the storm passed (wherever you were), what were you thoughts? Hopes? Fears? Beliefs? Disbeliefs? Feelings? Actions? Plans? Tell me your story.
7. When did you return to your residence? Tell me about that experience?
8. Who or what guided you in your decisions of long-term plans after the Hurricane? How did you feel as you were making these decisions? What support did you feel you had? Did you decide to stay? Why or why not?
9. Describe changes in your life since Ike.
10. How has your identity changed?
11. How has the community changed?
12. Would you say things have returned to pre-Ike conditions? If yes: How long did this take? Who/what helped in the return of the conditions? If no: What still needs to happen? Do you think this will ever happen? Why?
13. What would you say are lessons that you learned from your experience of Hurricane Ike?

APPENDIX B

TIMELINE OF 7018 SYCAMORE RESIDENTS



APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Texas State University

IRB Approval # 2015E9232

My name is Michelle Holcomb. I am a student at Texas State University. I can be reached by e-mail at: me.holcomb88@gmail.com. My phone number is (409) 370-5673. This study is being supervised by Dr. Ann Brooks, a faculty member in the Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education and School Psychology, within the College of Education at Texas State University. Dr. Brooks can be contacted by e-mail at: abrooks@txstate.edu. His phone number is (512) 245-1936.

I am doing this research project as part of my Ph.D. I am continuing a study I previously did of women living on Sycamore Dr. during and after Hurricane Ike. The new part of my study is to see if and how loss of possessions due to Hurricane Ike affected women's lives. If you decide to help, you will be asked to tell me your story of things you lost due to Ike.

This interview will be videotaped in your home. The entire study will take about two hours of your time.

To protect your confidentiality, your real name will not be used. I will make every effort to protect your identity. Since the interview will be videotaped, your physical appearance may be seen in a public forum.

After the interview is finished, it will be transcribed. You will receive a transcribed copy of your interview. You will have the chance to correct any misspellings of names, places, or other items you feel need correcting.

Videotaped data may be made into a documentary. It may be seen in a public forum. You will receive a copy of the DVD. I will keep the original recordings and transcripts in a locked and fire resistant box at my private residence for at least 5 years.

Your help in this study is entirely voluntary. There will be no penalty if you decide not to tell your story. You may opt-out at any time during the study without penalty, prejudice or jeopardy to your standing with the University and any other relevant organization/entity with which you are associated. If you decide to withdraw from the study once you have begun, you may choose to keep your story private. Assent will be acquired at the time of withdraw from the study. You will have an opportunity to decide at that time if the information you shared up until assent may still be used as a part of the study.

You may choose not to answer any question(s) for any reason. Additionally, anything that you do or say could end up in the study. The data collection procedure is kept confidential.

There is little risk involved in participating in this study. However, telling your story may bring up painful memories, feelings, or intense emotions. If telling your story makes you severely upset, the following mental health providers can help you:

Dr. Rochelle L Hall-Schwarz

1618 Williams Dr.
Suite 3
Georgetown, Texas 78628
(512) 649-0074

Jim B. Airhart, MD

2401 S. 31st St.
Temple, TX 76508
(254) 724-2150

Richard L. McColl, MD

425 University Blvd.
Round Rock, TX 78665
(512) 509-0200

This list has services that charge fees, accept certain types of insurance, base fees on a sliding scale, or are free. Neither Texas State University nor the researcher shall be responsible for any cost of treatment related to this study.

These types of feelings should also be shared with me at any time during our meeting. Then, we will decide if you should continue with the study. If you think you need to talk to a professional about feelings related to your experience with the hurricane, I encourage you to use the resources included. If you need help contacting them, I will be happy to help you.

A summary of the findings will be provided to you when it has been completed. Questions about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related

injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Jon Lasser (512- 245-3413, lasser@txstate.edu), or to Ms. Becky Northcut, Compliance Specialist (512-245-2102).

Your signature below says that you have read and understand this form. You willingly agree to participate in this study.

I have read the form and agree to participate. I will receive a copy of this form. I am not giving up any legal rights.

(Signature)

(Date)

REFERENCES

- Allen, B., & Tucker, E. (2012). Circles of learning in Mississippi: Community recovery and democracy building. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 2012(130), 89-100.
- Armenian, H. K., Morikawa, M., & Melkonian, A. K. (2000). Loss as a determinant of PTSD in a cohort of adult survivors of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 102(1), 58-64.
- Baerger, D. R., & McAdams, D. P. (1999). Life story coherence and its relation to psychological well-being. *Narrative Inquiry*, 9(1), 69-96.
- Ball, A. D., & Tasaki, L. H. (1992). The role of measurement of attachment in consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1(2), 155-172.
- Bateson, G., Jackson, D., Haley, J., & Weakland, J. (1956). Toward a theory of schizophrenia. *Behavioral Science*, 1(4), 251-264.
- Belk, R. W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), 139-168.
- Berntsen, D., & Rubin, D. C. (2006). The centrality of event scale: A measure of integrating a trauma into one's identity and its relation to post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 44(2), 219-231.
- Berntsen, D., Willert, & Rubin, D. C. (2003). Splintered memories or vivid landmarks? Qualities and organization of traumatic memories with and without PTSD. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 17(6), 675-693.
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative autoethnography: Writing lives and telling stories*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Boelen, P. A., Stroebe, M. S., Schut, H. A., & Zijerveld, A. M. (2006). Continuing bonds and grief: A prospective analysis. *Death Studies*, 30(8), 767-776.
- Bosma, H. A., & Kunnen, E. S. (2001). Determinants and mechanisms in ego identity development: A review and synthesis. *Developmental Review*, 21(1), 39-66.
- Bourque, L. B., Siegel, J. M., Kano, M., & Wood, M. M. (2006). Weathering the storm: The impact of hurricanes on physical and mental health. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 604(1), 129-151.
- Bowen, M. (1959). Family relationship in schizophrenia. In A. Auerbach (Ed.), *Schizophrenia: An integrated approach* (pp. 147-178). New York, NY: Ronald.
- Brinkmann, S. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry in everyday life: Working with everyday life materials*. London, UK: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S. (2014). Doing without data. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 720-725.
- Brooks, A. K., & Anumudu, C. (2016). Identity development in personal branding instruction: Social narratives and online brand management in a global economy. *Adult Learning*, 27(1), 23-29.
- Chaplin, L. N., & John, D. R. (2007). Growing up in a material world: Age differences in materialism in children and adolescents. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34(4), 480-493.
- Clark, M. C. (2010). Narrative learning: Its contours and its possibilities. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2010(126), 3-11.
- Clark, M. C., Merriam, S. B., & Sandlin, J. A. (2011). The relationship between adult learning and development: Challenging normative assumptions. In C. Hoare

- (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of reciprocal adult development and learning* (2nd ed., pp. 17-38). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Cox, M. J., & Paley, B. (2003). Understanding families as systems. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(5), 193. doi: 10.1111/1467-8721.01259
- Cummings, E. M., & Wilson, A. (1999). Contexts of marital conflict and children's emotional security: Exploring the distinction between constructive and destructive conflict from the children's perspective. In M. Cox, & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), *Conflict and closeness: The formation, functioning, and stability of families* (pp. 105-129). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Deal, J. E., Hagan, M. S., Bass, B., Hetherington, E. M., & Clingempeel, G. (1999). Marital interaction in dyadic and triadic contexts: Continuities and discontinuities. *Family Process*, 38(1), 105-115.
- Draper, R. (2015). The calm before the storm. *Texas Monthly*, 43(8), 76-172.
- Drye, W. (2008, September 26). Why Hurricane Ike's 'certain death' warning failed. *National Geographic News*. Retrieved from: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/09/080926-hurricane-ike-evacuation.html>
- Ekerdt, D. J., Addington, A., & Hayter, B. (2011). Distributing possessions: Personal property can become a social matter. *Generations*, 35(3), 34-40.
- Ellis, C. (1997). Evocative autoethnography: Writing emotionally about our lives. In W. G. Tierney, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Representation and the text: Re-Framing the narrative voice* (pp. 115-139). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Ellis, C. (1999). Heartful autoethnography. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(5), 669-683.

- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(1), 3-29.
- Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth, and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Etkin, J. (2016). The hidden cost of personal quantification. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(6), 967-984.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2008). *Hurricane Ike impact report*. Retrieved from: https://www.fema.gov/pdf/hazard/hurricane/2008/ike/impact_report.pdf
- Ficks, D. B., II. (2010). *Toward transformative learning: An inquiry into the work and subsequent learning experiences of individuals who assisted Hurricane Katrina evacuees* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest LLC. (ProQuest No. 3414284).
- Fitzgerald, J. M. (1988). Vivid memories and the reminiscence phenomenon: The role of a self narrative. *Human Development*, 31(5), 261-273.
- Formenti, L., West, L., & Horsdal, M. (2014). *Embodied narratives: Connecting stories, bodies, cultures and ecologies*. Odense, DK: University of Southern Denmark.
- Friedman, D., Tanwar, J., & Yoho, D. W. (2010). Disaster preparedness information needs of individuals attending an adult literacy center: An exploratory study. *Community Literacy Journal*, 4(2), 55-73.

- Friedman, O., & Neary, K. R. (2008). Determining who owns what: Do children infer ownership from first possession? *Cognition*, 107(3), 829-849.
- Fullilove, M. T. (1996). Psychiatric implications of displacement: Contributions from the psychology of place. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 153(12), 1516-1523.
- Gornick, V. (2008). Truth in personal narrative. In D. Lazar (Ed.), *Truth in nonfiction: Essays* (pp. 7-10). Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.
- Hoare, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Handbook of adult development and learning*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hogg, M. K., & Mitchell, P. C. (1996). Identity, self, and consumption: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 12(7), 629-644.
- Hooley, J. M., Orley, J., & Teasdale, J. D. (1986). Levels of expressed emotion and relapse in depressed patients. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 148(6), 642-647.
- Horsdal, M. (2011). *Telling lives: Exploring dimensions of narratives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hutton, D. (2001). (2001). *Psychosocial aspects of disaster recovery: Integrating communities into disaster planning and policy making*. Toronto, ON: Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction.
- Jackson, M. (1989). *Paths toward a clearing: Radical empiricism and ethnographic inquiry*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Jarrett, C. (2013). The psychology of stuff and things. *The Psychologist*, 26(8), 560-564.
- Karanika, K., & Hogg, M. K. (2011). Trajectories across the lifespan of possession-self relationships. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(7), 910-916.

- Kavanagh, D. J. (1992). Recent developments in expressed emotion and schizophrenia. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 160(5), 601-620.
- Knowles, M. *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge Books.
- Kroger, J., & McLean, K. C. (2011). Identity narratives during the adult years: Development and learning. In C. Hoare (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of reciprocal adult development and learning* (pp. 173-185). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ladd, G. W., Le Sieur, K. D., & Profilet, S. M. (1993). Direct parental influences on young children's peer relations. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Understanding relationship processes: Learning about relationships* (Vol. 2, pp. 142-183). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Latour, B. (1993). *We have never been modern*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Le Roux, C. S. (2017). Exploring rigour in autoethnographic research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 20(2), 195-207.
- Lima, B. R., & Gittelman, M. (2004). Differential and long-term effects of disasters: The need for planning and preparation. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 32(4), 3-5.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lindeman, E. (1961). *The meaning of adult education*. New York, NY: Harvest House.
- Lollar, K. (2010). The liminal experience: Loss of extended self after the fire. *Qualitative Research*, 16(4), 262-270.

- Maggio, M. J. (2006). Hurricane Katrina: Resiliency, the other side of tragedy. *Federal Probation*, 70(3), 42.
- Martin, M. C. (2016). *Compassion in crisis: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of flood survivors and first responders*. (Doctoral dissertation). Texas State University, San Marcos, TX.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. London, UK: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- McAdams, D. (2008). Personal narratives and the life story. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 242-262). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- McAdams, D. (2011). Narrative identity. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 99-116). New York, NY: Springer.
- McHale, J. P., & Rasmussen, J. L. (1998). Coparental and family group-level dynamics during infancy: Early family precursors of child and family functioning during preschool. *Development and Psychopathology*, 10(1), 39-59.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions in adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: JosseyBass.

- Miklowitz, D. J., Goldstein, J. J., Nuechterlein, K. H., Snyder, K. S., & Mintz, J. (1988). Family factors and the course of bipolar affective disorder. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 45(3), 225-231.
- Minuchin, P. (1988). Relationships within the family: A systems perspective on development. In R. A. Hinde, & J. Stevenson-Hinde (Eds.), *Relationships within families: Mutual influences* (pp. 7-26). London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Mizuta, I., Ikuno, T., Shimai, S., Hirotsune, H., Ogasawara, M., Ogawa, A., ... Inoue, Y. (2005). The prevalence of traumatic events in young Japanese women. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 18(1), 33-37.
- Moulton, S. M. (2015). How to remember: The interplay of memory and identity formation in post-disaster communities. *Human Organization*, 74(4), 319-328.
- Mount, M. (2008, September 11). Texans evacuate coast ahead of Ike. *CNN*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/weather/09/10/hurricane.ike/index.html>
- Murray, H. A. (1938). *Explorations in personality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Norris, F. H., Friedman, M. J., & Watson, P. J. (2002). 60,000 disaster victims speak: Part II. Summary and implications of the disaster mental health research. *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes*, 65(3), 240-260.
- Norris, F. H., Stevens, S. P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K. F., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2008). Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41(1-2), 127-150.

- Paley, B., Cox, J. J., Kanoy, K., Harter, K. S. M., & Margand, N. (1999, April). *Adult attachment stance and marital quality as predictors of whole family interactions*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Albuquerque, NM.
- Pillemer, D. B. (1998). *Momentous events, vivid memories*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Preston, J., Chadderton, C., Kitagawa, K., & Edmonds, C. (2015). Community response in disasters: An ecological learning framework. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 34(6), 727-753. doi: 10.1080/02601370.2015.1116116
- Reviere, S. L., & Bakeman, R. (2001). The effects of early trauma on autobiographical and schematic self-representation. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 15(7), 89-100.
- Richardson, L. (2000a). Evaluating ethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2), 253-255.
- Richardson, L. (2000b). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Robbie Berg National Hurricane Center. (2009). *Tropical cyclone report: Hurricane IKE 1-14 September, 2008*. (Report No. AL092008). Retrieved from: https://www.hcfcd.org/media/1240/nhc_hurricane_ike_report.pdf
- Sameroff, A. (1983). Developmental systems: Context and evolution. In P. H. Mussen, & W. Kessen (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology* (Vol. 1, 4th ed., pp. 237-294). New York, NY: Wiley.

- Schultz, S. E., Kleine, R. E., & Kernan, J. B. (1989). These are a few of my favorite things: Towards an explication of attachment as a consumer behavior construct. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 16, 359-366.
- Scieszka, J. (1996). *The true story of the 3 little pigs!* New York, NY: Puffin.
- Shimp, T., & Madden, T. (1988). Consumer-object relations: A conceptual framework based analogously on Sternberg's triangular theory. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 15, 163-168.
- Shum, M. S. (1998). The role of temporal landmarks in autobiographical memory processes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(3), 423-442.
- Singer, J. A. & Salovey, P. (1993). *The remembered self: Emotion and memory in personality*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Soloman, M. R. (1990). The imperial self. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 17, 68-70.
- Stewart, J., Swartz, L., & Ward, C. (2012). The personal politics of disaster: Narratives of survivors of a South African shanty town fire. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40(4), 422-437.
- Stroebe, M. S., & Schut, H. A. (2005). To continue or relinquish bonds: A review of consequences for the bereaved. *Death Studies*, 29(6), 477-494.
- Teng, Y. F. J., & Yusof, Q. (2014). Surviving women's learning experiences from the tsunami in Aceh. *Adult Learning*, 25(1), 20-27.
- Tuan, Y. F. (1980). The significance of the artifact. *Geographical Review*, 70(4), 462-472.

- Turley, D., & O'Donohoe, S. (2011). Grief goods: Material possessions and meaning reconstruction in bereavement. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 9, 459.
- von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General systems theory*. New York, NY: Braziller.
- Whitbourne, S. K. (2005). *Adult development and aging: Biopsychosocial perspectives* (2nd ed). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Wiley, R. E., Berman, S. L., Marsee, M. A., Taylor, L. K., Cannon, M. F., Weems, C. F. (2011). Age differences and similarities in identity distress following the Katrina disaster: Theoretical and applied implications of Erikson's theory. *Journal of Adult Development*, 18(4), 184-191.
- Windsong, E. A. (2009). There is no place like home: Complexities in exploring home and place attachment. *The Social Science Journal*, 47(1), 205-214.
- Wong, P., Hogg, M. K., & Vanharanta, M. (2012). Consumption narratives of extended possessions and the extended self. *Journal of Market Management*, 28(7-8), 936-954.
- Zakour, M. J. (1997). Disaster research in social work. *Journal of Social Services Research*, 22(1-2), 7-25.
- Zucchini, D. (2008, September 11). Evacuations are ordered as Ike strengthens in gulf. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from:
<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/sep/11/nation/na-ike11>