

What Is Found There?
Poetry and Emotions in Resistance and Power for Social Change
Among Diverse Community Poets

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Abstract

What Is Found There? Poetry and Emotions in Resistance and Power for Social Change Among Diverse Community Poets

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For many who identify with marginalized social positions, participating in community art has signaled a means of resisting oppressive systems of power. In these settings, art acts as a means of challenging hegemonic ideas, building solidarity and establishing collective power. At the same time, academics have come to embrace the arts as an invigorating and alternative form of research. The arts—and, especially, poetry—have come to be viewed as a means of understanding people’s personal and emotional knowing. In addition, the arts, as well as emotions, have come to be considered as essential components to a deeper understanding of social change.

The purpose of this study was to ask about the significance of community poetry and emotions as vehicles for individual and collective resistance and power in social change efforts among diverse community poets in Montréal. Data collection included five poems written by community poets as well as interviews with the poets and community organizers. Three major themes were identified in this study: 1) *Individual Acts of Poetic Resistance*; 2) *Community Poetry in Interaction: Individual and Collective Power*; and 3) *Poetry and Emotions: Social Change in Community and Beyond*.

The results of the study pointed to the centrality of emotions in social life and suggested how emotions are effective in the social change endeavour. The study revealed that emotions in social change are largely uncertain and complex, especially in milieus that consist of diverse people. The study also indicated that community poetry and emotions are apt means of accessible discursive spaces and alternative practices for people living in marginalized situations, and, as such, exemplified their role in participatory democracy. Additionally, this study suggested that aesthetic features, such as literary devices, intertwined with emotion, play an essential role in art as social change.

This study underscored the need for community organizations and activists to implement activities that emphasize art and emotion, and to validate the contribution these elements can offer to community building and social change. The study’s findings also emphasized the need for scholars to research the role of the community arts in interaction with emotion and social change.

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I also want to thank Warren Linds and Valérie de Courville Nicol, the two other members on my doctoral committee. Warren offered me a tutorial in arts-based and poetic inquiry, which taught me that it was possible to combine research and creativity, and that research itself is a creative adventure. Valérie generously corresponded with me at numerous junctures to discuss emotions in social change. I especially appreciated her encouragement to be creative with her system of emotional discourse analysis and to come up with my own additions and modifications to her system. Creativity once again!

I also wish to thank Jill Hanley, who I met through community work in 2009. She encouraged me to pursue graduate studies and guided me through my M.S.W. program at McGill as my academic advisor.

To my family in Cobble Hill, B.C. and across Canada.

To the memory of my father.

To my *yiddishe khaverim*, and other Jewish compatriots in Montréal.

To the gals ‘in the rooms’ who help keep me grounded.

And to the ones closest to me who love me in all my follies.

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This dissertation recognizes that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka people are recognized as the custodians of these lands and waters.

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PRELUDE: The Journey to a Research Topic

Before embarking on the formal introduction to this study and dissertation, I find it imperative to locate myself in relation to my research topic, drawing on principles of feminist and participatory research (Finlay, 2002) as well as critical autobiography (Church, 1995). In these approaches, researchers show transparency by revealing their social locations and life experiences. The efforts to contextualize myself in this study are made for three reasons: Firstly, to deconstruct the authority of the researcher; secondly, to dismiss conventional ideas of objectivity in qualitative research (*i.e.*, to reveal how personal factors influence knowledge production) (Finlay, 2002); and finally, in the words of Mills (1957), to not “split their (my) work from their (my) life” and to “use your (my) life experience in your (my) intellectual work” (p. 195, 196). Influenced by the works of hooks (1990a, 1990b) and Ellsworth (1989), who speak of power and privilege, part of the contextualization here will involve a discussion of how I have held power and privilege in my life, and specifically, as the researcher in this study.

The research topic chosen for this study—regarding marginalization, diversity, community poetry, social change, and emotions—was conceived, at least in part, because it had meaning for me based on my life experiences. Indeed, since the age of ten, I wrote poetry. Writing was a means for me to make sense of and reflect on the world. At the same age, I was also first diagnosed with what would become lifelong mental health problems. I was a child of working-class parents in an affluent suburb of Vancouver. In part due to bullying, at sixteen I transferred to a school in a nearby town where the children’s working-class backgrounds more closely resembled my own. In addition, these youths represented multi-ethnic backgrounds—a stark relief after having experienced a wealthy and white-bread high school in my hometown. In the same period, I became interested in social justice and began attending political rallies and events. By the end of adolescence, even though I was only, at best, somewhat familiar with the terms *classism*, *sexism*, and *ableism*, I had lived through experiences marked by them for several years. At the same time, poetry and activism had become staples of my existence.

In my early twenties, I moved to Québec. After completing an undergraduate degree in Québec City, everything, at one point, took a very dramatic turn. Now living in Montréal, my mental health problems worsened, accompanied by a growing problem with alcohol. During much of this time, I was on social assistance and lived through many incidents of discrimination,

harassment, and abuse. Additionally, in the same period, I supported the Kanien’Kehá: Ka (Mohawk) during the “Oka crisis” and spent the summer camped out at the Oka Provincial Park. Coming face-to-face with the tanks and armored vehicles of the Canadian army, social justice took on a whole new and intense meaning. I also moved to Côte-des-Neiges, a low-income and very multi-ethnic neighbourhood. During most of this time, I continued to write poetry.

With new-found sobriety and good medication, I went to graduate school and found work in the community sector. Poetry took on a more significant role as I banded with a few other Côte-des-Neiges residents to found L’Anneau Poétique (anneaupoetique.wordpress.com), the poetic association of Côte-des-Neiges, which promotes community poetry as a means of community building for low-income people and newly-arrived immigrants. It also promotes poetry as a means of social change and justice. Indeed, the present study was largely inspired by and aimed to mirror community poetry practices as experienced through my work with L’Anneau Poétique, by, for example, featuring poetry produced in community in its written and performed modalities. At this time, I began attending synagogue and became involved in the Montréal Jewish community. My adult experiences of marginality, diversity, social justice, and poetry therefore reinforced earlier experiences and intensified my interest in these matters. More than anything, these experiences led to a strong desire to provide a forum for people living in marginal situations to express their voices and share their knowledge through poetry: Not only so that they could be recognized for their unique contribution but so that they could, through sharing their knowledge, impact the world around them. Although this desire was being expressed through my work with L’Anneau Poétique to some extent, I felt that it was not enough to satisfy my desire for an in-depth, intense process and that it was restricted to the community sector: I wanted to bridge the community-university worlds.

My graduate studies at McGill and Concordia universities therefore focused on community development, poetry, and poetic inquiry. Applying for the Ph.D. in the Individualized Program at Concordia, I knew that my research would highlight these subjects. Even though I had a personal interest in social justice, I wasn’t sure how to fit it into my research because my experiences as a local organizer had taught me that many community poets are not interested in this topic, or if they are, approach it in subtle ways. One of my struggles as the coordinator of L’Anneau Poétique has been the split between those interested in writing on social justice topics and those who are not, in terms of prioritizing certain projects over others. I had also not initially

intended on including the role of emotions in social life as part of my research, even if I had briefly touched upon the topic of emotions, art and community development in my M.S.W. Individualized Study Project at McGill.

It was through taking Dr. Valérie de Courville Nicol's graduate sociology class at Concordia which examined the sociology of emotions and social movements that these aspects, (*i.e.*, social change and emotions) of my research took root. Discussions in this class reminded me that, throughout my life, I had been accused of being "too sensitive" or "too emotional." Reading the sociology of emotions literature opened my eyes to the fact that throughout history, women, as well as people with mental health issues, or the poor, were often labelled as overly emotional and irrational. This class also examined the role of emotions in social movements which echoed some of my own experiences with activism, that is, that potent emotions can be experienced in the activist endeavour. I also made the connection to poetry and its emotional power: A potency discussed in the poetic inquiry literature and that I had felt in my experiences as a poet and arts-based organizer. More than anything, after taking this class, I felt a strong desire to validate the role of emotions in social life.

Now adding emotions and social change to my Ph.D. research topic, I wrote my comprehensive exams that included these topics. I also began a community consultation process in January 2015 as part of the community-based participatory action methodology and pre-research stage of this study (D'Alonzo, 2010). I presented what could be described as a "rough draft" of my topic to community members and local organizers, which consisted of general ideas as to how emotions, community poetry, marginalization, diversity, and social change fit together. I also asked them if they thought such a topic could be useful to the community. This consultation was limited, however, as I spoke to people I already knew from community involvement in the neighbourhood, which included five community organizers and seven community members in Côte-des-Neiges. Their input was useful, and my research topic was fine-tuned in this consultation process: For example, the idea of emotions as resistance to injustice, and the concept of resistance itself, was first brought up by a community member (reflexive journal, February 25, 2015). Also, although the notion of diversity was important to me as the result of my life experiences, one community organizer stressed the role of diversity in arts-based social change in community settings and strongly urged me to look for a diverse group of people to act as participants in the study to mirror current practices (reflexive journal, March 26, 2015),

especially in neighbourhoods like Côte-des-Neiges. Also, everyone I spoke with seemed enthusiastic about the study and said it could be a useful tool for reflection, or even action, in their community practice/lives. It was also through pre-research group meetings with the four people who would become the study's participants that I decided to act as a participant in this study—they strongly urged me to do it (reflexive journal, October 16, 2015). These consultations continued for several months and led to the research design and research question formulation. Consultation continued throughout the research, thereby impacting various decisions throughout, for example, choices regarding confidentiality and anonymity. In this case, the pros and cons of various options were discussed. The four participants eventually chose a variety of options in terms of identifying themselves: One chose complete anonymity, the other, partial anonymity, and the other two, disclosure of their real identities. These choices reflected the diversity and participatory nature of the study.

I decided to act as a participant in this research study, in part, due to my marginalized social positions which, in many ways, paralleled those of the research participants. At the same time, I realize that certain of my social positions afford me privileges that they, as well as other people, may not have access to or certainly not as readily. For example, I am White, Canadian-born, and come from a family that stressed higher education. Higher education was perhaps more accessible to me for these reasons than to other people. On my father's side, I am from a settler family who was offered cheap land by the B.C. government in my hometown, Tsawwassen. The government had, in the late 19th century, seized a huge tract of land from the local Coast Salish people, the Tsawwassen First Nation, without their prior knowledge or consent. Despite my parents' working-class status in my affluent hometown, my father's family name was recognized and respected as one of the town's "founding families." In the present context, as a Ph.D. candidate and researcher, I have had the luxury of choosing a research topic that echoes my own life experiences and interests. I had the luxury of choosing to ask certain people to be research participants for this study. While this study did involve a consultation process with community members and local organizers as part of its methodology of community-based participatory research (D'Alonzo, 2010), the original "rough draft" came from me, was based on my experiences, and the final decision as to the research design and questions belonged to me.

To summarize, then, my identity and experiences are complex, diverse, and multi-layered: On the one hand, I experience intersecting sites of marginality, for example, between gender,

class, ability (mental health issues), and religious affiliation, and on the other, I belong to mainstream or dominant groups and am privileged, especially in terms of having access to higher education, and therefore have power that others do not have. These factors have played a role in the choice of topic. I also believe, in the spirit of Foucault (1972), that my identity, and identity itself, is always evolving and in flux. For example, I now identify as a Quebecer which was not always the case. In the following dissertation, I will continue to offer reflections as to how my social positions and experiences affected the decisions made about this study and my interactions with the research participants. I will also draw upon my own experiences as a community poet and arts-based organizer when relevant. These reflections will weave in and out of the text.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

*To think and resist
poetry is a way
a response to crisis*

(adapted from Fisher, 2009)

In the academic world, there has been an emergent attentiveness to the emotions of people living in marginal situations¹ (see Kenney & Craig, 2012) and more particularly, to their emotional resistance to injustice and struggle for social change (Gould, 2001). The role of people's social locations, such as gender and religious association, is also deliberated in terms of their emotional engagement in social movements (Jasper, 2014; Vandreford, 1989). At the same time, academics are considering the use of community arts (Horsfall 2008; Kay, 2000), which can allow community members living in marginal situations to confront hegemonic discourse and to engage in community building as acts of social change (Foster, 2012; Fox & Lashua, 2010). In research, scholars are now using poetry as inquiry in the context of resistance to social inequity (see Foster, 2007), feminists are valuing the exploration of emotion in research (Yuen, 2011), and critical and community-based participatory action research is being employed to apply social change principles to research studies (Barndt, 2004).

This study asks questions about the significance of community poetry and emotions as vehicles for resistance and power, both at the individual and collective levels, for social change among diverse community poets in the neighbourhood of Côte-des-Neiges, Montréal. It is grounded in my experiences as a resident, community poet, activist, and arts-based community organizer in this neighbourhood and in those of the community poets² and organizers who have accompanied me on this research journey. The academic knowledge acquired through my Ph.D. studies was interwoven with knowledge coming from the streets and community centres of the neighbourhood and from my own life experiences overall (see Prelude). I have also shared some of the academic knowledge and concepts acquired through this study with the community poets

¹ Sociologist Dickie Clark (1966), when describing marginalization, referred to it as the "marginal situation." I borrow his term in this dissertation because it describes the situation that people find themselves in and does not refer to their identity (*e.g.*, "marginalized populations"). For more discussion about the term marginalization, see Literature Review.

² From here on, I refer to the participants of this study as (the) poets, (the) community poets, or as community members. When I refer to them together with the community organizers who participated in this study, I will use the word "participants."

and organizers (*i.e.*, with the people from my community) which occurred during pre-research meetings and through discussions carried out throughout the project.

In this introductory section, I will begin by elaborating on some basic assumptions and definitions that underscore this dissertation. Notably, I will underline the fact that this study accepts the view that community poetry and emotions can be vehicles for social change. I will also define the key terms used in this study, namely, power, resistance, social change, and emotions. I will also discuss how the study itself incarnates social change, including its limitations in this regard.

This introductory section will then look at the background to the study, including several important aspects of its socio-economic context, such as the approaches towards and beliefs about emotion in western culture, and the interplay between capitalism, urbanity, and emotion. As part of this background discussion, I will also describe globalization's effects on people living in marginal situations, people's sense of community, and the place of art (poetry) in society. In addition, I will discuss recent developments in the fight for social change that include carrying out efforts at the community or individual level and using art as a means of conveying the message of social change. I will then provide information about the study's location, the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood of Montréal, as the socio-economic dynamic of this neighbourhood played a pivotal role in inspiring this study. The study's conceptual foundations and methodological frameworks will then be presented. These frameworks will include a description of the research questions and a summary of the study's methods. This presentation will be followed by a discussion of the study's significance (rationale) to academia and community-based practice. This introductory chapter will conclude with an outline of the rest of the dissertation.

Definitions and Premises of this Study

When discussing social change, it is necessary, firstly, to define notions of *resistance* and *power*, two key elements in the social change process. This study looks at issues of resistance and power primarily as seen by Foucault (1972), who defined resistance as a response to power that is in and of itself an act of power. This study also adheres to Foucault's notion that power is available to everyone, to one extent or another, and that there is no ultimate end to the exercise of power. This study also adopts Freire's (2004) idea of consciousness raising as a means of resistance as well as ideas about counter-narrative (Kinchecloe & McLaren, 2000), poetic

counter-narrative (Foster, 2012), and community building and development (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Kruzynski, 2004) as specific actions and processes of consciousness raising, resistance and power. This study also recognizes resistance and power in terms of emotional responses to injustice where people feel they have had enough or deserve better, which can ignite feelings of powerfulness to enact change (de Courville Nicol, 2011). In addition, this study acknowledges structural issues of power by recognizing the overall inequitable social structure and colonial nature of Canadian society (Adams, 1989; Project Genesis, 2012; Silver, 2007) where certain populations, including the community poets featured in this study, have been systematically marginalized and overall, have less power (Kinchecloe & McLaren, 2000). It also recognizes that poetry written by community members, through the content of the poems, can address structural issues of oppression.

A definition of *social change* is also key to this study and dissertation. Social change here is broadly defined as the recognition that structural issues of power—as experienced through diverse social practices and relations (McLean, 2013)—are responsible for people’s suffering and that changes to these practices and relations may bring about well-being (Kenny & Craig, 2012) and transformation to communities and individuals (Kruzynski, 2004). This study also recognizes people’s use of agency in social change efforts, including their efforts to change themselves and others (de Courville Nicol, 2011). Although this study adheres to the notion that efforts towards social change can occur at many levels, and that there is a necessary interplay between the various points of struggle, its focus is on acts of resistance and power carried out at the individual, group/interactional, and community level (Horsfall, 2008). In this study, these efforts take place through the writings and performances of community members, and in the setting of community organizations (Kruzynski, 2004). Moreover, this study recognizes community-based social change as:

Any struggle to gain control over definitions of self and community, to augment personal and communal empowerment, to create alternative ...processes, or to increase the power and resources of...community (Naples, 1991, p. 479).

While this study recognizes concrete changes as end goals of social change, it adheres to the notion of social change as being primarily about process (Lee, 2009).

Poetry and emotions as tools for social change are the central premises of this study. Another essential premise is that research itself can act as social change. In terms of poetry,

rather than supporting ideas that state that “if one wants to be political” one does “not write poetry” (Fisher, 2009, p. 975), this study adheres to notions like those proposed by Rich (1983) who believed poets must be accountable to “the life of your tribe/the breath of your planet” (37-38). This study concurs with ideas like those set forth by Fisher (2009) who believed that poetry, like other forms of art, is a necessary response to crisis and an alternative way to think and resist. This study therefore acknowledges that poetry can be a vehicle for social change: Hence, it can not only respond to and discuss social issues, but it can argue for and against different points of view and can be a call to action. This study looks more specifically at community poetry as a tool for social change. Community poetry in this study is defined as poems written (or adapted) by community members that are shared, performed, and published in community sources and settings (Sjollem & Bilotta, 2016). Like other forms of community art, community poetry can be said to have a goal of “questioning...the status quo and a commitment to social change” (Barndt, 2008, p. 355).

This study also accepts the premise that emotions, rather than being insignificant or secondary to social change, are an essential aspect of it (de Courville Nicol, 2011). It acknowledges Gould’s (2004) premise that looking at emotions in social change allows for a “thicker and deeper understanding” (p. 173) of people’s—particularly those living in marginal situations—involvement with social change and that social change “does not make much sense if it fails to take into account what it feels like to be treated unjustly” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 209). This study also acknowledges the interplay and intertwining nature between emotions, discourse, and language (de Courville Nicol, 2011) as well as rationality, ethics, and emotion (Sayer, 2011) that take place in everyday life and in the social change endeavour. Specifically, this study defines *emotion* as per Feldman Barrett (Ted x Talks, 2018) who describes emotions as the giving of meaning to basic physiological affective states (such as calm or excitement) by naming or conceptualizing these states. While this conceptualization process is often determined by past events, there is always room for new meanings to arise. This study also defines emotions according to a number of sociologists (see de Courville Nicol, 2011; Wetherell, 2012) who describe emotions not as a set of basic universal feelings (e.g., sadness, anger) shared across space and time, but as arising from context-specific situations. Moreover, emotions are regarded in this study as interactive, spontaneous, and dynamic, as well as patterned, as they can respond to both idiosyncratic and socio-cultural influences (Valérie de Courville Nicol, personal

communication, August 18, 2018). This study also uses, as one of the pillars of its methodology, emotional discourse analysis, based on de Courville Nicol's (2011) in/capacity theory of emotions. This theory regards emotions as being goal-driven, as they can allow us to connect feelings of powerlessness to ones of powerfulness and, potentially, to action. This process is compelled by people's agency, or their ability to pursue the quest for well-being through their efforts at conceptualizing embodied states and determining and executing appropriate action.

Another key premise of this study is that research can incarnate social change. In adherence to alternative approaches to research, most significantly, feminist approaches (Foster, 2012), arts-based research (Eisner, 1991), and participatory action research (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014), this study strives to be a gesture towards social change. Firstly, by highlighting the importance of emotions in research, this study values a different approach to social life that moves beyond objectivity and positivism, and that incorporates personal ways of knowing (Yuen, 2011). As such, emphasizing emotions in research offers a profound understanding of social life (Barbalet, 2001). This study also embraces the use of poetry as an art form that is significant for research, as it can provide for an alternative way of knowing (Prendergast, 2009) in ways that are holistic and combine the rational, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of being (Leggo, 2008b). Finally, this study as research embraces the quest for the redressing and balancing of power, where community members—in this study, community poets—can articulate their voice and share their knowledge: Through their poetry, reflections, and their active participation in this study (as prescribed in participatory action research, see Kemmis et al., 2014).

At the same time, this study acknowledges that its role in social change has limitations. Firstly, the participatory nature of this study was limited, due, in part, to the poets' lack of time which prevented them from getting more fully involved. They all had full, busy lives and to ask them for any more time than what they were able to give would have constituted an abuse on my part (reflexive journal, January 18, 2016). In addition, they were only interested in getting involved to a certain extent. In the final debriefing, they stated that they were satisfied with their level of involvement and did not desire greater participation, for example, by taking part in composing the interview questions or by taking on a greater role in thematic analysis. Therefore, in my social position as researcher, I had the greatest involvement and decision-making power in the study. Also, this study has had limited effect on larger scale social change due to the

restrictions of resistance and collective efforts carried out at the individual, group, and community level (Horsfall, 2008).

This study also recognizes that most of academic information used in this dissertation comes from White, middle class western academics with only (approximately) forty articles or books and a handful of non-academic references penned by women and men of colour, some of whom live and work in non-western countries. These references are primarily from a post-colonial or critical race perspective. In a few cases, such as hooks (1990a, 1990b), these sources are frequently referenced in this dissertation. There are also a few references from the perspective of Queer theory—for example, Ward and Mann (2012). Views representing working-class or poor people are highly underrepresented. Although I made concerted efforts to find references from other than mainstream points of view—in part to represent the poets’ social locations—the concepts and ideas presented in this dissertation reflect a mainstream bias.

Socio-Economic Context

This section of the introductory chapter describes some key aspects of the socio-economic context of this study. Firstly, it describes how emotions have been (and are) seen in different trends in western thought, and what their relationship is to capitalism and urbanity. It then describes how certain shifts in the last forty-to-fifty years, notably globalization and the transformation of social change, have affected art, community, people’s lives, and social struggle in North American society. It also looks at the study’s location, the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood of Montréal, as the socio-economic context of this locality was key in inspiring core elements of this study, for example, marginalization and diversity.

Emotions in Western Thought and Recent Critiques. In traditional western thought, emotion has often been associated with the collectivity and the unruly mob (Barbalet, 2001) who can disrupt proper conduct and purpose, and who are irrational and compulsive (Barbalet, 2001). Emotion has been associated with the physical, the natural, the particular, the private, the female, and the marginalized *Other* (Jaggar, 1989). In traditional or classical thought, emotions are dangerous and inferior and must be suppressed (Barbalet, 2001). According to this line of thinking, rationality (or reason and intellect), the opposite of emotion, is associated with plans and purpose, and is connected with the cultural, the universal, the public and the male (Jaggar, 1989). Reason is highly valued (Jaggar, 1989).

These beliefs have been refuted by many different thinkers, most notably and recently, by feminists. Feminist thinkers (see Ellsworth; 1998; Narayan, 1998) believe that reason and emotion can be mutually reinforcing and helpful, and consider emotions as important and valuable, including in the public realm. They have exposed the patriarchal roots and masculinist biases of modernist approaches to emotion and consider them to support a “disembodied rationalist vision” (Williams, 2001, p. 8) that inaccurately portrays the world as a rationally controllable place. Despite these critiques of modernist approaches to emotion, beliefs in a reason-emotion split and the inferiority of emotion are still widely propagated and accepted in North American society (Barbalet, 2001). According to Walker (2013), it is especially the experiencing and expression of painful emotions, such as anger and sadness, that are discouraged in our society.

Capitalism, Urbanity, and Emotions. The intertwining of capitalism and urbanity first occurred in urban settings during the industrial revolution in the 19th century in North America (Weber, 1930) and are still largely carried out in urban centres (Burns, 2000). These social and economic developments have had and continue to have a profound effect on human emotions (Burns, 2000). For example, the emotional alienation of the worker in the capitalist factory, as recapitulated by Marx, reflected early forms of capitalism (Burns, 2000). In more recent times, capitalism and emotions are still thought of as being at odds with one another (Simmel, 2004) with the difference being that emotions have come to be regarded by some as good for big business (Williams, 2001).

According to Simmel (2004), the instrumental and rational orientation of capitalism displaces emotion as a motivating force: In a capitalist society, the imperatives of human conduct do not lie not in emotions, but in the external demands of the market (Barbalet, 2001). In this set-up, emotions have come to be associated with domesticity, nurturing emotions and the private or inner life, all of which have no market value: Hence, emotions themselves are of little value (Barbalet, 2001). The market and institutions, on the other hand, are associated with purpose, order, and rationality (Simmel, 2004). At the same time, emotions have come to be appropriated and commodified by capitalism, especially as publicized and experienced in the consumer culture’s quest for pleasure and happiness in non-work-related pursuits (Williams, 2001). The commodification of emotions also occurs through their sensationalized forms in T.V. talk shows or through other outputs of mass media (Williams, 2001).

According to Simmel (2004), living in urban environments can also adversely affect people's emotional lives. For example, constantly changing social contacts, moving between neighbourhoods (or cities), and the overstimulation of city life can all lead people to shut down emotionally as a means of protection, which means that they adopt a blasé or indifferent attitude and become overly rational. These situations are in turn tied to an overemphasis on individuality, the want of in-depth personal communication and a lack of meaningful collectivity (Simmel, 2004). However, other thinkers (see Young, 1986) point out that city living can also be exciting and stimulating in that people can partake in mass cultural events and experience cultures different from their own.

Globalization and Neo-liberalism: Effects on People, Community, and Art. In the last forty years, the social context of globalization and neo-liberal politics have profoundly affected people's lives, particularly those living in marginal situations. People's connection to community, and the function and role of art in society have also been touched as corporate need for financial gain increasingly dictates both societal and local practices (Klein, 2000). Because of liberalism, people living in marginal situations (for example, low-income people, the elderly, and newly-arrived immigrants) have found their economic and social situations worsened as the result of policies that have led to the dismantling of the welfare state (Kruzynski, 2004; Ledwith, 2001), which have included cuts to social assistance and the privatisation of health care (Project Genesis, 2012). Thus, low-income people's access to leisure activities and public forums, already difficult due to the costs of participation and other barriers (Frisby & Millar, 2002; Yuen, Arai & Fortune, 2012), have become even more of a challenge, in what Fraser (1999) refers to as a problem of "participatory parity" (p. 3). At the same time, globalization has resulted in the fracturing of communities (Kay, 2000) which, according to Hermsen (2009), means that people are losing a sense of place and lacking an identification with community, including with their local neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods, due to their unique history and culture, can add to the quality of people's lives (Kay, 2000). This loss of a sense of community has impacted participatory democracy at the local level where people, especially those already living in marginal situations, are less likely to get involved in community activities (Carey & Sutton, 2004). Globalization and the primacy of profit (Klein, 2000) have also led to the privatisation and commodification of art (Boal, 2006; Freire, Freire & de Oliveira, 2014) as well as to its increased elitism where art becomes the privy of the select few (Schmid, 2000). Specifically referring to

poetry, Smith (1996) deplors the mass marketing of rap and hip-hop. Schmid, for her part, describes the commercialization of slam poetry as the “incorporation of the Poetry Slam” (p. 35).

Social Change: The Evolution of Art and Social Justice. The arts have long been used as a tool in social struggle in North America. Poetry is no exception (Moran, 1999). For example, in the early 20th century, a group of Yiddish-speaking poets, known as the ‘Sweatshop poets’, wrote poetry that challenged unjust working conditions in New York City factories (Glazer, Weintraub & Salant, 2012). In the 1960’s and 1970’s, poetry was used as a message for social justice in the anti-war, feminist, and Black power movements (Moran, 1999; Schmid, 2000). Since the new millennium, in the form of rap and spoken word, racialized youth in North America have been using poetry as a means of consciousness raising and social change (Akom, 2009; Johnson, 2010).

These social protest efforts, especially those carried out before the 1980s, represent modernist approaches to social change, as they tended to highlight the struggles of a specific group of people (*e.g.*, women or Black people) and encouraged large-scale social struggle (hooks, 1990a). Although these types of activities are still being carried out, more recent social change efforts—carried out at the community or individual level and sometimes described as “everyday acts of resistance” (Horsfall, 2008, p. 15)—are increasingly being valued as a means of social change (Horsfall, 2008). Additionally, the intersectionality of oppression is progressively being the object of reflection (Narayan, 1998) and multi-ethnic and pluralistic dialogue for social change has been increasing (Mair, 2002). These changes are also due, in part, to the growing multi-ethnic composition of North American cities (Schmid, 2000). Although art and poetry have long been used to express counter-narrative ideas, recent trends in social change specifically highlight and seek out the role of aesthetics in activism and social movements, as there is now a consciousness towards understanding that the mode of expression can be as important as the message itself (Mair, 2002).

Côte-des-Neiges: Diverse and Marginal Urbanity. This study took place in the neighbourhood of Côte-des-Neiges, Montréal. The study’s pre-research consultations were carried out with Côte-des-Neiges community organizers and members. The community members who took part in this study lived or had lived in this neighbourhood, or had worked, volunteered, and spent much time there. The community members, who were poets, had also performed their poetry in various settings in Côte-des-Neiges prior to the study. The community organizers who

took part in this study also lived, had lived, or (had) volunteered and worked in Côte-des-Neiges. Côte-des-Neiges, its social life, and characteristics, played an inspirational role in the development of this research: That is, diversity, marginalization, and community-based efforts at social change, as well as arts-based endeavours, were paramount because of the location of the research.

Côte-des-Neiges is located to the northwest of Montréal's downtown area and is representative of many low-income neighbourhoods in Canadian urban centres that are sites of diversity and marginalization (Silver, 2007). Côte-des-Neiges is also where I live and have lived for many years. As such, I am intimately familiar with, and share to a certain extent, the struggles experienced by many community residents. I also participate actively in the community and social life of the neighbourhood. The Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, in 2014, had a population of 99, 038 (Corporation de développement communautaire de Côte-des-Neiges, 2014) and is a very heterogeneous neighbourhood, especially in terms of its ethnic, racial, and religious compositions (Durand, 1983). This neighbourhood finds itself in the most multi-ethnic borough in Montréal (Centre de développement économique communautaire (CDEC) Côte-des-Neiges – Notre Dame de Grâce, 2009) and is one of the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in the province of Québec (Lamoureux, 2001).

At the same time, many—if not the majority in certain sectors—Côte-des-Neiges citizens find themselves living in marginal situations. It is a high-density neighbourhood where people suffer from overcrowding and poor and precarious housing conditions (Landry, Ayotte & Gross, 2014). Many residents are unemployed or are receiving social assistance (CDEC Côte-des-Neiges – Notre Dame de Grâce, 2009). The neighbourhood is low-income where, in certain sectors, 75-80% of the population lives below the poverty line (CDEC CDN-NDG, 2009). Côte-des-Neiges is also known for its immigrant population, including newly-arrived immigrants and refugees, and over half the population was born outside of Canada (Montgomery, McAll, Tremblay & Seminario, 2000). Many residents also suffer from mental health difficulties (Montgomery et al., 2000). Crime is also an issue in the neighbourhood, with disaffected youth joining street gangs (Durand, 1983; Montgomery et al., 2000).

Many residents of this neighbourhood face social injustice daily through discrimination based on race, immigration status, mental health difficulties, or poverty (Corporation de développement communautaire de Côte-des-Neiges; 2006; Project Genesis, 2012). At the same

time, the neighbourhood has a highly active community sector (Landry et al., 2014), with many groups fighting for social justice, in areas such as food security (Multi Caf, 2016), immigrant worker rights (Immigrant Worker's Centre, 2016) and anti-poverty work (Project Genesis, 2012). Many of these groups are part of province-wide social movements and coalitions. Rather than seeing the neighbourhood's residents as merely victims of their circumstances, many of the community organizations stress their agency and involvement in the fight for social justice and for better living conditions (Montgomery et al., 2000).

In Côte-des-Neiges, several community organizations use art, including poetry, in their fight for social change. For example, Project Genesis, mentioned above, produced a poetry chapbook (Project Genesis, 2013) which explored local citizens' challenges living in poverty and their demand for improved laws concerning housing and social assistance. The Côte-des-Neiges women's group, Femmes du Monde, organized a poetry reading and discussion in 2013, in commemoration of the Polytechnique massacre, that allowed women from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds to articulate their stances about violence towards women (Patrizia Vinci, personal communication, March 26, 2015). They also held poetry workshops for women in the fall of 2016 and winter of 2018, as well as organizing a photo and poetry exhibit about violence against women that was displayed in several libraries and community centres in Côte-des-Neiges. Both Multi Caf, the local food bank, and Club Ami, a centre for those with mental health challenges, organized and supported poetry groups for many years (Louise Tremblay, personal communication, April 15, 2015). The local poetry association, L'Anneau Poétique, since 2011, has collaborated with a variety of local and other groups to produce and host poetry performances about social justice issues (see anneaupoetique.wordpress.com).

Study's Conceptual Foundations and Methodological Frameworks

This section of the introduction will give a summary of the study's conceptual foundations and methodological frameworks, including research questions and methodology.

Conceptual Foundations. In line with participatory approaches to research, this study adhered to critical theory as a key aspect of its conceptual foundation. This theory sees both reality and knowledge as being strongly influenced by societal values and the values espoused by the elite (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It sees that the quest of research (and of social change) is to redress inequitable power relations in society so that the historically subjugated voices and knowledge are unearthed. As part of its theoretical framework, this study also includes critical

pedagogy and the arts (Boal, 2006), that integrates aesthetics and emotion as means of knowing and as instruments of social change, and *radical post-modernism*, a term penned by hooks (1990a), that I borrow in this study to highlight, among other elements, local or community-based action as a means of social change (Horsfall, 2008) and the intersectional nature of oppression (hooks, 1990a).

Research Question(s). The purpose of this study was to examine how poetry and emotions act as conduits for community poets to take part in resistance and power in the context of community-based social change. My study posed the main research question: How do community poetry and emotions act as tools for individual and collective resistance and power among diverse community poets in the context of social change? In addition, three sub-questions were asked:

1. What emotions and ideas are expressed by written community poetry relating to issues of resistance, power, and social change?
2. How does sharing poetry and emotions act as a means for individual and collective power among diverse community poets?
3. How can community poetry and emotions act as tools for resistance and power in community organizations for social change?

Overview of Methodology. This study had four key aspects to its methodology: *Poetic inquiry* and *emotional discourse analysis* were employed within an approach of *community-based* and *critical participatory action research*. This study also emphasized as part of its methodological process, *subjectivity* and *reflexivity*.

Poetic inquiry is employing poetry in the research endeavour (Prendergast, 2009). In this study, written poetry, created or adapted by the study's poets, was used as a means of data collection, analysis, representation and dissemination. I also created poems from the interview transcripts, which is derived from a technique called *found poetry*, or poems crafted from other primary written sources (Morrisey, 2010). In addition, I wrote a few original, reflective poems that are featured in this dissertation. Performed poetry—although not a direct source of data collection—was employed as a means of reflection for the poets on how this performed aspect of community poetry can work for social change. *Emotional discourse analysis* (de Courville Nicol, 2011) was employed as a means of analysing the emotional themes and expressions found in or emanating from the discourse—in this study represented by written poetry.

The overall framework or approach to this study was *community-based* and *critical participatory action research* (D'Alonzo, 2010; Kemmis et al., 2014; Lee, 2009; Sin, 2006), which stresses the role of community participation in the formulation of research design in the pre-research stage, and the active participation of the participants in the decision-making process. These participatory approaches view the research process itself as a conduit of social change or a means of social action (Lee, 2009). Another aspect of the overall framework was *subjectivity* and *reflexivity*, which includes the reflections of the researcher in the construction of knowledge (Harding, 2004). Reflexivity in this study was carried out throughout the research process by means of a reflexive journal, discussions with my Ph.D. supervisor, and through reflective poetry. Reflexive comments and a few short poems are found in this thesis.

Study's Rationale

This section will discuss the study's rationale and will offer some ideas as to why it is both innovative and important. This study is innovative in that it brings together three fields of study: Poetic inquiry, the sociology of emotions in social movements, and community development and the arts. From this interlacing of subjects, this study creates a new and unique topic: The examination of emotions expressed through poetry and their significance to social change in community-based practices among diverse groups of people. The study's approach is also innovative because it is grounded in local, community practices of art-based social change where diverse community members are the producers and disseminators of knowledge.

Moreover, there are three significant ways in which this study is important to academia and to community-based practice, it:

- ✓ Provides new understandings to relevant literature;
- ✓ Provides a forum for the expression of community members' voices and knowledge; and;
- ✓ Provides new energy and insight to community organizers and members as to the role of emotions and poetry in arts-based community practices for social change

Each of these areas are described in more detail in the following sections.

Links to Current Literature and Providing New Perspectives. This study is linked with current literature in the fields of poetic inquiry, the sociology of emotions in activism, and community development and the arts, in both the community development and leisure fields.

This study brings new perspectives to these academic fields of knowledge. The following paragraphs describe some examples of these contributions.

To the poetic inquiry field, this study brings the examination of poetry as practiced (*i.e.*, written, shared, performed, and published) by community members in community settings. As well, it provides an in depth-look at the connection between poetry and emotions in these settings as a means of social change. Overall, in the poetic inquiry field, articles focus on poems written by researchers that are derived from interview transcripts (from interviews with community members). As such, articles featuring poems written by community members are lacking. Also, articles that do highlight poems written by community members generally feature poetry written in the context of a research project (see Foster, 2012) where community members can be asked to write on certain themes. For example, in Bishop and Willis (2014), youth were asked to write about hope. Very few articles in this field feature poetry written by community members in community settings. Also, while emotion is often discussed as being linked with poetry (see Leggo, 2008b), the current literature in the poetic inquiry field is limited in terms of providing detail as to which emotions are expressed or evoked through poetry, and how this can be important to social change at the individual and/or community level.

To the community development and the arts and leisure fields, this study brings an in depth-look at emotions, art, and social change (*i.e.*, which emotions get expressed and evoked through arts-based practices in the context of social change). While art, social change and emotion are concerns of these fields (see Stevens, 2011; Yuen, Arai & Fortune, 2012), an in-depth look at the connection between them is limited. Also, overall, in the community development and the arts field, poetry is not featured nearly as often as other forms of art, such as drama or the visual arts (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013).

To the field of sociology of emotions and social movements, this study brings a detailed examination of how an art form, in this case poetry, interacts with the expression and evocation of emotion in the context of social change. While the current literature in this field mentions the use of art for social change purposes (see Whittier, 2001), the descriptions are inevitably brief and art is usually seen as an appendage to other, mainstream social change activities, such as demonstrations or sit-ins. To this field, my study also details emotions experienced and expressed when a group is formed by diverse people who hold diverse social locations. While the sociology

of emotions and social movements field does address social location and its importance in emotion and social change (see Stein, 2001), discussions about diversity in activism are limited.

A Forum for Community Poets' Voices and Knowledge. This study is about social change in the face of social inequalities that exist in society. As such, the highlighting of community poets' knowledge and voices in this study is primordial. These poets represent community members whose knowledge and voices are often barred from institutional learnings, whether at the community or academic level, due to, for example, being low-income individuals or, even, female (Kruzynski, 2004). In community settings, community members can have a hard time having input and, in general, community development professionals are the ones whose visions are supported (Ikemire, 2010). In academic institutions, and more particularly in research, researchers are typically the ones who make the decisions and who create and disseminate knowledge (Foster, 2007).

This study set out to include and express the community poets' knowledge and voices in three significant ways. Firstly, community-based research (D'Alonzo, 2010; Lee, 2009; Sin, 2006) was carried out through consultations with seven community poets which led to the research design. Second, the poets' work (*i.e.*, the poetry) written and adapted prior to and independently of the research project, was the key element of data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Thirdly, by adopting practices from critical participatory action research (Kemmis et al., 2014), this study also included the poets' knowledge and voices. For example, in taking part in preliminary data analysis and reviewing (and, in some cases, altering) references to them in this dissertation, their ideas and reflections were important aspects of both the findings and writing of this thesis. Giving a forum for such expressions is crucial in that community members are heavily impacted by social injustice and policy changes (Ledwith, 2001) and often have firsthand experience of social issues and problems (Narayan, 1998). Providing such a forum means that community poets are recognized and valued as "historical actors" (Kruzynski, 2004, p. 19) who intervene in the world and its affairs (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013) and who are creators of culture (Hemmingway, 1996).

Energy and Insight to Community Organizers and Members. More community organizers are turning to arts-based methods as an alternative means of community building (Kay, 2000), with many employing the arts as an instrument of social change (Clover, 2007; Stevens, 2011). Poetry, according to some authors (see Sjollema & Hanley, 2013; Wanamaker &

Walsh, 2009), is a popular form of art in community settings. At the same time, art, including poetry, is still a marginalized form of community development (Kay, 2000). Part of the reason for this may be due to the perception of art and artists as being too emotional or too non-linear for community and social change work, which often requires organization, planning and conceptual thinking (Sjollema, 2012). Also, community organizers are overworked and must deal with a dearth of resources (Kruzynski, 2004).

Using art in community-based efforts can be very attractive to community members, because the arts can be used in versatile and flexible ways (Kay, 2000). Poetry is said to be a good tool for people living in marginal situations, especially low-income people, because it is accessible: It is inexpensive to practice and requires few materials (Lorde, 1990). In terms of social change, community-based art activities can highlight the role of creativity and the imagination in challenging the status quo and conceiving of a different future (Stevens, 2011).

This study, by highlighting the role of emotion expressed and evoked by poetry, is important in that it can help community organizers and members develop new understandings, appreciation, insight, and potentially, energy. Firstly, they can learn about the potential of written poetry, as a unique means of resistance to dominant discourse through both its content and through its expression of forceful feelings concerning social change (*e.g.*, outrage, sadness, emancipation). Organizers and community members may also gain insight about how shared and performed poetry evokes emotion in those reading or listening to it. Once again, the content of the poems and their strong evocation of feelings, such as empathy, anger, or even, irritation, would be important. This study can also offer insight as to how emotions are experienced in a diverse group of people—diversity being an ever-growing reality in urban centres in North America (Schmid, 2000) and in community settings (Sjollema, Hordyk, Walsh, & Hanley, 2012).

Thesis Outline

The last part of the introduction elaborates on the thesis outline. This dissertation will firstly, in chapter two, *Literature Review*, discuss background information necessary to an understanding of the study. In this chapter, the theoretical frameworks fundamental to the study, namely critical theory, critical pedagogy and the arts, and radical post-modernism (hooks, 1990a), will be discussed. Additionally, significant research in the areas of power, resistance, marginalization, emotions in social life, and the use of poetry as counter-narrative and tool for social change in community settings will be elaborated upon.

In chapter three, *Methodological Frameworks and Methods*, the methodologies and methods used in the study will be elaborated upon. As such, this part of the dissertation will discuss the research question as well as the primary methodologies used in the study: Poetic inquiry, emotional discourse analysis, critical/community-based participatory action research, and subjectivity and reflexivity. In this chapter, the ethics review process and informed consent issues will also be featured. Finally, this chapter will look at the selection process of poets and community organizers, poet and community organizer portraits, data collection procedures, and the three types of analysis used in this study, namely, emotional discourse, thematic, and poetic analysis (poetic analysis is the examination of the literary devices in a poem, see Sjollem & Bilotta, 2016).

In chapter four, *Community Poems*, the five poems under investigation in this study will be featured, along with brief descriptions of the circumstances in which they were written or previously performed or published in community or activist settings.

In chapter five, *Circles of Knowledge*, the findings of the study will be analyzed. These findings are divided into three major themes: 1) *Individual Acts of Poetic Resistance*; 2) *Community Poetry in Interaction: Individual and Collective Power*; and 3) *Poetry and Emotions: Social change in Community and Beyond*. Each of these themes will in turn be divided into sub-themes that provide detail about the topic at hand.

In chapter six, *Larger Spheres of Understanding*, the findings of the study will be examined in light of discussions about emotion, art/aesthetics, participatory democracy, and social change in a number of academic fields, primarily the sociology of emotions and social movements, poetic and arts-based inquiry, and leisure and community development and the arts. Drawing from discussions in these fields of research, insights as to what some of the study's larger significance and meanings are, will emerge. The three sections of this chapter are entitled: 1) *The Necessity, Variety, and Uncertainty of Emotions in Social Change*; 2) *What Makes Poetry 'Good'? Emotion, Aesthetics, and Social Change*; and 3) *Participatory Democracy in Community Development and the Arts*.

In chapter seven, *Future Considerations and Recommendations*, several recommendations for future consideration for research will be delineated—including suggestions for participatory action research—as well as suggestions for community and activist practice. These recommendations will be based on my reflections on the findings, insights and process of this

study as well as the reflections of the community poets on the study's process and its potential transferable learnings to PAR researchers and to the community and activist sector.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

*We will find it somewhere
through the delicate ear, the glorious print
words that cry 'poetry'
emergent to the world*

(reflexive poem, Sept. 25, 2017)

This study describes the use of poetry and emotions as tools for social change among community poets in Côte-des-Neiges, Montréal. This chapter is designed to give the reader an understanding of the theoretical frameworks underlying this study, as well as the relevant research in the areas of study featured in this dissertation. This chapter is divided into five general sections: (a) Conceptual Frameworks; (b) Ontologies of Power and Resistance; (c) Marginalization and Marginality; (d) Emotions in Social Life; (e) Poetry as Counter-Narrative in Community Settings.

Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual structure of this dissertation takes a critical stance towards the unequal power relations that exist in Canadian society that restricts power and opportunities for those living in marginal situations (Silver, 2007). At the same time, it recognizes the complex nature of social relationships and power (Ellsworth, 1989) and the use of not only rationality, but emotions and aesthetics, as a means of understanding and questioning reality, and as a conduit of knowledge and tool for social change.

Critical Theory. This study embraces critical theory as one of its main conceptual paradigms. Critical theory offers a framework for researchers as one of several alternatives to classical positivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Unlike positivism that stipulates that an objective reality exists independently of social factors, critical theory roots itself in the ontological notion that reality is historical because it is shaped by social, political, cultural, and economic values that are incorporated into infrastructure over time (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Critical theory also posits that reality is virtual in the sense that these infrastructures appear so real that they come to be seen as natural and immutable (Guba, 1990).

Epistemologically speaking, critical theory asserts that knowledge is historically and socially regulated and is a consequence of power relations in society (Tierney, 1993). On a methodological level, critical theory promotes dialogue between investigator and subject that

questions the nature of reality to bring about an informed—and rational—consciousness that social reality’s laws can be changed. Hence, good inquiry according to critical theory promotes critical thinking around the unquestioned nature of reality (Tierney, 1993) that can include issues of power and social structure.

Critical theory has its roots in the Frankfurt School in Germany, a research institute founded in the 1930’s whose main theorists included Adorno and Horkheimer (Held, 1980). Critical theorists question and challenge social inequalities and societal structures (Carspecken, 1996). They believe that in any society, certain groups hold more power than others, and that this inequality tends to get replicated which can lead to the oppression of those with less power (Kincheclow & McLaren, 2000). To claim power for such people, critical theorists encourage the unearthing of what Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to as “subjugated knowledges” that “point to experiences of suffering, conflict and collective struggle” (p. 110). They also advocate political action to challenge structural inequalities and to achieve justice and equity.

While this study embraces the idea of inequitable structural power relations that need to be redressed through reflection and action, it does take issue with some of the modernist aspects of critical theory: For example, it questions the perspective of oppression as a binary oppressor vs. oppressed (Hall, 1999) schema where each side is seen as monolithic and homogenous. It also challenges the view of social change through mega-narratives that view large-scale social struggle as the primary means of mobilisation and especially, that view utopian liberation as the result of such struggles (Hall, 1999). This study also questions the modernist approach that views the individual as a fixed and stable entity and as belonging to specific and set categories of people, such as women and homosexuals (Tierney, 1993), which can pit groups against each other as they vie for the position of most oppressed (Tierney, 1993).

Critical Pedagogy and the Arts. Critical pedagogy, first articulated by Brazilian educator Freire (1971), is another important aspect of this study’s conceptual framework. This pedagogy, which has been adapted to the creative arts field by Brazilian theatre director Boal (2006) and other arts-based practitioners, academics, and educators (see Akom, 2009; Grace & Wells, 2007; Lipson Lawrence, 2005), presents alternative ideas about epistemology. Specifically, it acknowledges that knowing, as drawn from the arts, entails emotional, embodied, aesthetic, as well as, rational knowledge. This pedagogy also embraces the arts as a conduit for social change

where art can challenge power structures in society and act as a means of critical consciousness-raising (for an example, see Hammond & Janssen, 2016).

The concept of critical pedagogy proposes that a community leader (*e.g.*, educator, researcher) can play a role in creating the circumstances in which a group, composed of community members, can collectively reflect upon and challenge reality and structural inequities, and act for social change (Freire, 1971). Critical pedagogy also offered a modernist portrayal of the human subject as rational (Ellsworth, 1989; Humphries, Mertens & Truman, 2000) and encouraged consciousness raising through rational choice and debate ³ (Ellsworth, 1989). This study espouses these ideas with some caveats (see radical post-modernism below).

Radical Post-Modernism and Social Change. According to hooks (1990a), post-modernist discourse has primarily been the foray of White male intellectuals. She believes that post-modernism, as a movement, can be criticized for espousing repressive ideas about social change. For example, she argues that negating the concept of self, a post-modern idea, is inappropriate for those living in marginal situations who need a self-concept in order to organize themselves politically. At the same time, hooks conceives the expression *radical post-modernism* to denote a coming together of certain elements of critical theory with others of post-modernism to create what she calls a *politics of difference*. In this new politics, “sensibilities which are shared across the boundaries of class, gender, and race” are “fertile ground for the construction of empathy...common commitments and...solidarity and coalition” (para. 7).

I loosely borrow hooks’ (1990a) term *radical post-modernism* to signify that my study, while incorporating notions of critical theory (see above), embraces other concepts about reality, knowledge and social change put forth by a variety of thinkers, including Foucault (1980), Atkinson (2002), feminist theorists (see Strega, 2005), and critical race and post-colonial thinkers (see Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1990). Many of these concepts have been labelled *post-modern* by the authors in question (see Atkinson, 2002). Among these alternative ideas, this study embraces the notion that reality can be viewed as fleeting, and knowledge as partial, personal (Ellsworth, 1989), context-dependent (Taiwo, 2011) and co-emerging in our interactions with others (Taiwo, 2011). It accepts that emotions, along with reason, are epistemologically-viable (Ellsworth, 1989). This study also adheres to the view that social change can be carried out by local efforts in

³ In Freire’s later writings, he did put emphasis on emotion (see Freire, 2004).

multiple sites that can be fragmented, heterogenous and diverse (Tierney, 1993) and that resistance can be carried out in a daily fashion by individuals or small groups (Allen, 1996). It views oppression as being diffused through diverse situations and power relations (McLean, 2013) and accepts that the experience of oppression can be changing and fluid (Mehrotra, 2010). This study also embraces the following three notions about social change:

- (1) That social change efforts need to acknowledge the interplay between the personal and the political as well as the local and the global (Atkinson, 2002);
- (2) That oppression is better described through people's specific historical, racial, ethnic, and economic experiences (hooks, 1990a) rather than mega-narratives of oppressor and oppressed or generalizations about utopia, and;
- (3) That social change efforts need to emphasize *intersectionality* (hooks, 1990a), that is, the interlocking systems of oppression between race, gender, class, colonized/immigrant status, and other social positions.

Finally, this study adheres to ideas put forth by Ellsworth (1989), who championed the notion that local people can understand oppression based on their own experiences and that any leader (or researcher) must critically reflect upon his or her role in the community. These ideas critiqued Freire (1971) and his pedagogical stipulation that it is the community leader who will guide the uninitiated oppressed into a critical examination of reality and that community members are unable to critically reflect without a leader. Ellsworth (1989) also criticized the fact that the positionality and power of the leader is left unexamined by Freire (1971). In line with these ideas, this study had as a central source of data, poems written by community members. These poems explored the poets' critical examination of reality. As the poems were written many months or years prior to the commencement of this study, they represented the ability of community members to reflect without the input of a leader, in this case, me (the researcher). This study and dissertation also feature my critical reflections of my positionality and power.

Ontologies of Power and Resistance

This study, with its inquiry into matters of social change, inevitably must address the question of power. Many different aspects of power will be discussed in this section in relation to social change, for example: What is power, where is it located, how are people identified within power struggles, how do power and resistance interact, and what are the results of power

struggles? As this study embraces both critical theory and aspects of post-modern frameworks, both modern and post-modern approaches to power will be delineated.

What is Power? Traditionally, for modernist thinkers, such as Freire (1971), power exists in the hands of the elite, and operates at the expense of others. Vargas (2012) describes this power dynamic as a binary one where “some are above, and others are below” ... “the ones atop execute their power while the ones below are coerced and yield to the influence of the power upon them” (p. 36). The modernist view sees power primarily in negative terms as expressed by structural, overarching relationships of domination and oppression (Vargas, 2012). Kruzynski (2004) refers to this structural domination as a *power-over* dynamic. According to Vargas, from a modernist perspective, structural power is constant and monolithic and the only way to overcome domination is through large-scale social struggle that will result in a fair distribution of resources. Traditionally, the binary power-over dynamic singles out one group of oppressed people, such as the poor or working class (Freire, 1971), and does not address how people can be oppressed simultaneously through various social locations.

Many thinkers have expressed ideas about power that go beyond the binary dynamic and that do not view power as chiefly negative. Primary among these is Foucault (1980). According to Foucault, power is complex and multi-dimensional: It is not as a fixed thing with a known source, but something that circulates, shifts, and has multiple points (Bălan, 2015). Foucault (1980) saw power as relational and, except in more extreme cases of domination, something that everyone can partake in to one degree or another. Foucault also saw power as ubiquitous, present in day to day interactions, and existent in cultural discourse, social practices, and institutions. Foucault stressed the ambivalent nature of power in that it represents a struggle, where one party’s intention to direct the action of another is met with resistance. Post-structuralist feminist Ellsworth (1989) concurs with many of the notions of power expressed by Foucault (1980). In addition, she points out that power is situational in that one can have more-or-less power depending on the situation. For example, a White woman may have less power when interacting with a White man but more power when interacting with a Black woman.

Several feminist and post-colonialist and critical race theorists also describe power in terms that challenge modernist perspectives. Chief among these criticisms is the idea that power is primarily negative. For example, feminist author French (1986) describes power in positive terms as *power-to* (*i.e.*, the ability to do something). In a similar light, hooks (1990b) talks of *agency*

which she refers to as the ability to create change. French also describes power as the collaboration and cooperation between people. Collins (2009), for her part, believes that personal (*i.e.*, individual) and collective power can be positively interwoven in that exercising individual power in a communal setting can potentially increase one's own power and collective power at the same time. This individual and collective power, according to Collins (2009), is effective collectively, for both local and large-scale political action. According to Kruzynski (2004), the central objective of social change is to replace *power-over* or domination with *power-with* or *power-to* relationships.

*We experience
personal power
it's the emotional coloration
of the world*

(adapted from Held, 1993)

Another challenge to modernist notions of power comes from feminists who emphasize “subjective aspect of power” that represents the relationship “between personal and social power” (Deveux, 1996, p. 226). Deveux states that the power dynamic is not only about the objective situation but how a person feels about or reacts to it. Held (1993) describes this personal aspect of power as the “emotional coloration with which we experience the world” (p. 8).

Critical race and post-colonial theorists (see Parker & Lynn, 2002; Spivak, 1990) and feminists (see hooks, 1990a) challenge the modernist underscoring of one group of oppressed people. Instead, they speak of power or domination in terms of intersectionality, that is, how oppression can be experienced at the intersection of race, gender, ability, and other social locations. According to hooks, the intersection of oppression is an important concept for different groups of people to build empathy and solidarity in social struggle.

Power and Subject. A primary concern in the discussion of power is how the human subject is viewed. Several different ideas exist as to human subjectivity. For example, as Humphries, Mertens and Truman (2000) point out, modernism portrayed the human subject as unified and rational. The human subject, according to this perspective, is also clearly identified as belonging to a specific group of people (*e.g.*, woman, homosexual). However, Foucault (1980) refuted these types of notions of human subjectivity. Instead, he regarded the human subject as unstable, self-contradictory and in progress (Deveux, 1996). Specifically, Foucault was against

confining people to a collective identity because he found that this essentialist stance forces group uniformity and supports dominant discourses about identity (Foucault, 1980; McLaren, 2002).

Still other authors, such as Sawicki (1996), express ideas about subjectivity and collective identity that are described as achieving a middle ground between modernist and post-modernist notions. Sawicki (1996) endorses the notion of “identity politics with a difference” (p. 168) that does not reject people’s subjectivity and identity, but that allows for an openness so that connections can be made with others who are in the same group yet different and between the assorted and shifting features of the self. Mann and Huffman (2005), referring to ideas of post-colonial thought, state that it is possible to “rescue collective categories” (p. 67) and be amenable to multifaceted realities at the same time. This stance uses a strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1987) that employs collective identities for political strategizing yet criticizes the flaws in modernist subjectivity. According to hooks (1990a), it is this type of respecting of difference within social struggle that is the most effective framework for social change.

Power, Resistance, and Liberation. In social change, questions of how to resist power and where struggles of and against power ultimately lead to are vital. Several feminist writers (see Held, 1993; Sawicki, 1996; Shaw, 2001) define structural or modernist resistance as collective acts that defy, oppose, or confront structural power and dominant ideologies. Aggleton and Whitty (1985), along with Freire (1971), regard this type of collective resistance as a large-scale political force that can be used for social change. The result of this type of action is often envisioned as a utopic freedom and liberation (Freire, 1971). Aggleton and Whitty specify that the modernist version sees resistance as a unified, cohesive, and stable force fitting into an us vs. them binary logic.

In Foucault’s (1980) thought, power and resistance are interwoven. He believed that acts of resistance aimed at overcoming power produce new acts of power (Pietrykowski, 1996). Foucault did believe that in some cases domination can be impervious to resistance (Allen, 1996), but in general, strongly advocated for the possibility of resistance. Foucault emphasized daily acts of resistance carried out by individuals or small or local groups (Allen, 1996). Foucault (1980) saw resistance as fragmented and inconsistent and spoke of a plurality of resistances. Finally, Foucault did not believe that power and resistance lead to a collective utopia where freedom from power struggles is achieved (McLaren, 2002) but rather that there is no end to the exercise of

power in life. At the same time, he, along with other thinkers (see Ellsworth, 1989) did believe that change for the better was possible in certain situations and saw liberation as a process rather than an event or result.

Several feminist writers (see Deveux, 1996; Held, 1993; Collins, 2009) discuss an important aspect of resistance often overlooked by many male theorists: That of inner or emotional resistance. According to Collins, for example, people can develop a sphere of freedom “on the inside” (p. 111) by, for example, not believing projections or ideologies imposed by dominant society. Deveux refers to this inner resistance as the “subjective aspect of power” that represents the relationship “between personal and social power” (p. 226). In this schema, power and resistance are not only about the objective situation but how a person feels about or reacts to it. Deveux’s ideas fall in line with de Courville Nicol’s (2011) definition of resistance, as de Courville Nicol describes it as an embodied reaction that acts as a “counter powering” to an exercise of power that causes people “strain or pain” (p. 76). Resistance, according to De Courville Nicol (personal communication, September 22, 2015), is a pushing back – the feeling that a boundary has been violated, and that one has had enough.

Marginalization and Marginality

This section of the literature review will discuss notions of marginalization or marginality, as described by modernist and post-modern thinkers. While it is possible to offer a very long list of groups living in marginal situations in current North American society (see Vasas, 2005), this study, to represent the community poets involved, has narrowed the list to the following groups: Women and people of colour (Silver, 2007), people with mental and physical health problems (Hall, 1999), the elderly, religious/ethnic minorities, immigrants (Vasas, 2005), low-income people (Silver, 2007), those with alternative sexualities and gender questioning (Lee, 2009), people with alternative political views (Vasas, 2005) and people living in low-income communities where numerous social problems exist (Silver, 2007).

A Note about the Term *Marginalization*

In many ways, I was hesitant to use the word “marginalized” to describe the poets in this study (reflexive journal, February 10, 2016) as this term can be considered discriminatory and pejorative, or minimally, as setting people apart (or *Othering* them) and reinforcing binaries (see hooks, 1990b) by describing people as being outside of mainstream society or the majority population. I had what Kemmis et al. (2014) refer to as a “felt dissatisfaction” (p. 6) with this type of terminology, in part, due to my own

experiences with marginalization and feeling like an outcast in various situations. At the same time, hooks' (1990a) ideas about post-modern marginality (see Literature review) as a place of self-definition and power greatly appealed to me (reflexive journal, February 10, 2016).

Before writing up the invitation to participate in this study to the poets where I requested that they identify as having “marginalized status” (see Appendix A), I asked each one what he or she thought about using the term “marginalized” or other similar terms to describe them. An in-depth discussion ensued with two of the poets who did express some concerns, primarily about being set apart and judged. After these discussions, even though the two poets seemed re-assured that this type of vocabulary would not be used in a judgemental manner in this study, I still felt uneasy about using these terms for the reasons described above, (e.g., setting people apart) (reflexive journal, February 10, 2016).

After more reflection, I decided, in this dissertation, to avoid as much as possible using terms of marginalization when speaking directly of the poets. In a few instances, I refer to them as identifying with marginalized social positions or as having marginalized status. In most cases, I refer to them as (the) (community) poets, or (the) community members or, when grouped together with the community organizers interviewed for the study, the participants. When describing in a general way those experiencing marginalization, I also decided not to use the term “marginalized people” but rather those living in marginal situations, or as being identified with factors of marginalization or with marginalized social locations and positions. In some cases, I use the words “marginalization” or “marginality” when describing these phenomena in a general way. While paraphrasing or quoting academic sources, I used the terms concerning marginalization of the various authors cited (reflexive journal, February 11, 2016). In terms of the effects on this study, I had to revise certain sections of the dissertation and re-word certain aspects of the research question in response to these reflections (see Methodology and methods section).

Marginalization and Structural Power. Discussions of marginalization and structural power are important (Strega, 2005), particularly for writers and thinkers expressing views from a modernist perspective, who, as has been previously noted, see power in binary terms. The authors cited in this section come from diverse fields of study, notably from sociology. Dickie-Clark (1966) was one of the first sociologists to discuss the concept of marginalization or what he called the *marginal situation*. He believed that the marginal situation developed from historical practices that normalize disparate status and opportunity structures. According to Dickie-Clark, the exercise of power and the institution of policies and laws, carried out by privileged groups, both create and maintain the status of those identifying with marginalized social locations who

experience structural, social, economic, and emotional barriers to participate in social life, and are therefore excluded from partaking in many of its facets. For those holding multiple marginalized identities, the experience of exclusion is compounded (Dickie-Clark, 1966). Vasas (2005) notes that, due to this process of exclusion, people living in marginal situations come to be seen as *the Other* by mainstream society and that a set of binaries is set in place and maintained: For example, the centre vs. the periphery, the majority vs. the minority. According to Vasas, this process of *Othering* reproduces positions of domination and subordination.

Certain authors (see Case & Hunter, 2012; Narayan, 1998) liken this power differential and its effects to oppression. More specifically, Narayan, who calls people living in marginal situations *insiders*, describes oppression as being manifest in both every day and trivial situations and in violent and life-threatening ones, for example, police brutality. According to Vasas (2005), such people are routinely ignored, trivialized, rendered invisible and unheard, and are perceived as inconsequential. Hall, Stevens and Meleis (1994) specify that aggression towards such people can take the form of symbolic violence which involves the manipulation of terminology and language by those in power who create stereotypes, myths, lies, images, and labels about people living in marginal situations, which has an effect of keeping them in a position of subjugation. Hall (2004) calls this manipulation of language “word politics” (p. 47).

Post-Modern Marginality. Several authors, notably feminist writer hooks (1990a, 1990b), and Queer theorists Cixous (1976) and Ward and Mann (2012), have engaged in ongoing deliberations about marginalization and have proposed ideas that challenge modernist assumptions, particularly about the binary nature of the margin-centre and the essentializing of the marginalized social position. As recommended by hooks (1990a), rather than being marginalized by those in power, people can *choose marginality*, which means that they can create and choose inclusive spaces that are outside the binary of *margin-centre*: Therefore, rather than being defined by the centre as *Other* or waiting to be included, people identifying with marginality can claim spaces on the margin and define themselves (hooks, 1990a). According to certain thinkers (see Soja & Hooper, 1993; Butler, 1990), claiming marginality is an act of resistance that displaces and disorders notions of difference and dislocates binary power. According to Butler, “the point...is to participate in whatever network of marginal zones is spawned from other.... centres and which, together, constitute a multiple displacement of those authorities” (p. xi). Numerous examples exist of this kind of reclaiming of identity and space. For

example, young rappers define themselves beyond the margin-centre binary by re-appropriating the term *nigga* (Abrams, 1995) and graffiti artists have reclaimed public space as their own (Conquergood, 1997). Other authors (see Janeway, 1980) adhere to the notion that people living in marginal situations do have power that they can exercise for their own benefit and well-being. Pessin (2009), discussing the ideas of Queer theorist Cixous, says that Cixous goes one step further in that, for her, the margin permits people to live more fully or in the flow of the “unbounded life force” (p. 181). Here, to be *Other* is a “mark of wonder, not a badge of shame” (p. 181).

Another critique of modernist ideas about marginality regard their essentialist nature (hooks, 1990b). According to modernist notions, for example, there is a clear distinction between those who identify with marginalized social positions and those who do not and being marginalized is fixed and unchanging (hooks, 1990b). Rich (2003), conversely, states that many people hold both mainstream and marginalized social positions. Collins (2009), for her part, believes that people can experience intersecting areas of marginalization (*e.g.*, between race, gender and ability), and that within any group there are many different identities and social locations. According to Ward and Mann (2012), Queer theory espouses as its central notion the idea that all categories and identities of marginalization create a binary for those not fitting in the ‘normative’ description and posits, rather, that all identity is open, fluid, and emergent. Vasas (2005) states that marginalized status is not static and can change over time. Hall (2004) gives the recent extreme marginalizing of Arabs and Muslims since 2001 as an example of this.

Emotions in Social Life

The role of emotions in community-based and artistic social change among community members is a major preoccupation of this study. As such, a discussion about the role of emotions in social life will be deliberated upon in this section. Specifically, a discussion as to what emotions are, how society influences emotion, and how those living in marginal situations experience emotion within the context of social change, will take place. Finally, deliberations will occur as to the interplay between emotions and language (discourse) and power, as well as how the arts, and specifically poetry, express and evoke emotion.

Emotions, Society, and Culture. Certain philosophers have dismissed emotions as irrational and dangerous (Burkitt, 1997), and as being opposed to reason. However, many thinkers, past and present, have in fact lauded emotion. This latter perspective stipulates that

emotion is the felt qualitative experience of situations that allow us to make meaning of them, and of our lives (Burkitt, 1997). Other authors (see de Courville Nicol, 2011; Jaggar, 1989) describe emotions as relevant to and interrelated with knowledge, language, discourse, and power. Rather than an emotion-reason split, many believe that emotions and reason complement each other (see Narayan, 1998; Summers-Effler, 2002) and that both rationality and emotion form essential parts of our interpretive process (Gould, 2004). Still other thinkers (see Sayer, 2011) believe that values, or what people deem to be ethically correct, are interactive with both emotion and rationality. For these thinkers, there is no doubt that emotions occupy a central place in human life. As Jasper (1998) states: “Emotions do not merely accompany our deepest desires and satisfactions, they constitute them, permeating our ideas, identities and interests” (p. 399).

A variety of discussions as to what exactly emotion is have taken place in academic literature. For example, according to sociologists Freund (1998) and Reddy (1999), emotion is a subjective experience connected to the biochemical workings of our automatic nervous system and to the body’s motoric activities. Other sociologists (see Wetherell, 2012) regard emotions as spontaneous, dynamic and idiosyncratic as they can be highly personal and arise out of context-specific situations. Wetherell (2012), who refers to emotions as “affective practice” or “embodied meaning-making” (p. 4), also views emotions as patterned or structured by socio-cultural factors. This view of emotions contrasts with the classical perspective that regards emotion as coming in “basic universal forms” that are “shared by all humans across time and space” (p. 4). Feldman Barrett (The Bregman Leadership Podcast: Episode 106, 2018), a neuropsychologist, defines emotion as basic embodied affective states (*e.g.*, calm or excitement) that we assign meaning to by conceptualizing these states (*e.g.*, a person with a racing heart may conceptualize this state as *anxiety*). According to Feldman Barrett, we also make predictions as to how we are going to feel based on past experiences (*e.g.*, I interpreted my racing heart as anxiety in the past when someone raised their voice, and if I think someone will do it now, I prepare to feel anxiety). Feldman Barrett’s (Ted x Talks, 2018) notion of emotion contrasts with classical ideas about emotions that regard them as innate feeling states in the human body that are triggered by outside experiences (*i.e.*, everyone has within them innate feelings of sadness or anger that are triggered). De Courville Nicol (2011), similarly to Feldman Barrett, views emotions as basic embodied affective states of pain and pleasure that we assign concepts to, or what de Courville Nicol refers to as

“norm pairs” (p. 4)⁴. De Courville Nicol views emotions as being goal-driven in that they help us solve problems by allowing us to connect feelings of fear and powerlessness to feelings of powerfulness and desire. These latter feelings, in turn, can allow us to take action to arrive at feelings of well-being and security. Both Feldman Barrett (The Bregman Leadership Podcast: Episode 106, 2018) and de Courville Nicol (2011) view people as having agency when it comes to their emotional experience because, although past experiences and cultural influences can strongly influence our predictions and concepts of basic affective states, we are free to find other meanings to assign to these states, ones that will perhaps lead to actions that are more beneficial.

According to de Courville Nicol (2011), we also undergo learnings as to what emotions are appropriate following societal or cultural dictates. She refers to these learnings as social control or the *emotional socialization process* (de Courville Nicol, 2011). The principal means of this emotional socialization process is what de Courville Nicol refers to as “emotion management” (p. 7) which means that language and discourse can have as their goal to elicit specific desired emotions and actions in others with the reward being them experiencing positive feelings. These messages can be of the self-realizing variety, for example, inspiring others to eat well so they will feel self-esteem, or they can be of the punitive variety, for example, scolding others so they will not eat junk food so that they will feel good about their body (de Courville Nicol, 2011). Scheff (1990) points out that in terms of following emotional and social norms, people do so out of a desire to feel connected to others and a sense of shame when they don’t. Despite potential painful feelings due to non-conformity, Reddy (1999) notes that, in some cases, people do indeed not conform: Rather, they will challenge the powers that represent these norms, which, in turn, can have political implications for social change (Jasper, 1998).

Emotions, Marginalization, and Social change. The emotional life of people living in marginal situations has been studied by a wide variety of academics, here represented primarily by feminists and sociologists (see Gould, 2001; Hochschild, 1983; Jaggar, 1989). This examination, as represented in this section, includes these populations’ relationship to social norms, to mainstream society, as well as their experiences fighting against injustice and working for social change (Ellsworth, 1989; Summers-Effler, 2002).

⁴ Norm pairs are a central aspect of de Courville Nicol’s in/capacity theory of emotions (2011), see Methodology section.

Emotions, Marginalization, and the Mainstream. Ellsworth (1989) explains that in western thought, the ideal of the rational generic human, represented by the White, middle class, heterosexual, and Christian male, has often been contrasted with the emotional or irrational exotic *Other* (i.e., people marginalized by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, and other factors). According to Narayan (1998), the emotions of these populations have been seen as pathetic, a symptom of weakness, and a lack of self-control.

Hochschild (1983) talks about “feeling rules” (p. 18), i.e., the social norms that dictate people’s feelings. She says that these rules have an effect of reinforcing the subordinate positioning of those living in marginal situations. According to de Courville Nicol (2011), this subordinate positioning can lead those in dominant groups to feel disdain towards people in marginal situations, and to punish, ignore, neglect, violate and even act violently towards them. As Thoits (1989) discusses, these groups, in response to this positioning, can experience and express *deviant emotions*, which are emotions that can help them break free from this subordination. According to Thoits, chief among these deviant feelings is anger, which Gould (2004) calls a disreputable emotion highly discouraged in North American society, especially when expressed by those who identify with marginalized social positions. Gould (2001) along with other authors (see Jasper, 2014; Wilkins, 2008) discuss the array of—sometimes ambivalent—emotions felt by people living in marginal situations: Towards themselves, their group and mainstream society. For example, they can feel shame, pride, love, hate as well as solidarity, joy, and emotional connection.

Social Change, Emotions and Marginalization. Historically-speaking, sociologists studying social change have regarded emotions as being irrational (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007). For example, before the 1960’s, sociologists focused on the effects of the crowd on demonstrators. Those participating were regarded as irrational actors with unconscious motivations, easily swayed by the mood of the crowd or the impassioned speeches of demagogues. Later, sociologists focused on the emotions of the demonstrators themselves, who were often viewed as being compelled to participate in order to respond to conflicted inner needs and desires (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007). By the 1980’s, sociologists, for the most part, turned away from studying emotion in social change and viewed activists as rational, calculating actors who would coolly weigh the benefits and costs of participation. Interest was also shown to those whose motivation in activism was to establish new cultural modes and lifestyles (once again, not

analyzing the emotional aspect of such actions) (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007). Since the 1980's, sociologists have changed their view on the role of emotion in social change. For example, Gould (2004) has emphasized the need to include and value emotion in social change efforts and decried the dependency on rational reflection in social struggle, as well as the portrayal of activists as strictly "rational actor(s)" (p. 161). According to Gould, looking at emotions in social change allows for a "thicker and deeper understanding" (p. 173) of people's involvement with social change, especially those living in marginal situations. Sociologists have shown interest in a wide range of topics involving emotions and social change, such as analyzing how emotions play a part in recruiting people to a cause, how recruiters use moral outrage to shock people into becoming interested in activism, and how opposing groups use emotions to demonize their opponent and rally people to their side (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007)

According to Kenny and Craig (2012), social change among people can occur when they no longer shame themselves for their inability to conform to social norms and instead look to outside causes as the basis of their suffering. These individuals can see themselves as agents of change and act to make changes to these outside structures (as well as to themselves) as a means to their well-being (de Courville Nicol, 2011). At the same time, Gould (2001) claims that people living in marginal situations can experience emotional ambivalence as they move back and forth between seeing either themselves or outside circumstances as the cause of their suffering.

Certain authors (see Narayan, 1998; Scher & Heise, 1993) state that people living in marginal situations must trust the emotions they feel that signal that an injustice or oppressive situation is occurring. According to Summers-Effler (2002), it is through the sharing of deviant emotions that people can question larger social dynamics and social norms which can lead to social change. Other writers (see Jasper, 2014; Palacios, Hampton, Ferrer, Moses & Lee, 2013; Stein, 2001; Vandreford, 1989) remind us that people's marginalized social positions, such as being female, a person of colour, or working class, can affect how they feel about injustice, social issues, activism and getting involved in social movements.

Certain authors describe the potential emotions experienced and expressed in social struggle among those identifying with marginalized social locations (see Goodwin & Jasper, 2007; Gould, 2001). These authors, along with others, also highlight specific emotions they consider essential to the activist endeavour—activism here being defined as consisting of a variety of collective endeavours that strive for social change (Whittier, 2001). Gould (2001), for

example, stresses that people in social struggle can feel and express a mixture of pride, outrage, and shame. Goodwin and Jasper (2007) identify an ambivalent combination of emotions that can arise in the activist endeavour: For example, feelings of hope, dignity, love, and effervescence on the one hand and fear, grief, exhaustion, and disappointment on the other. Gould (2004) also describes the spontaneity of emotions in people's experiences of social struggle, in that their feelings can vary in intensity and can shift while taking part in social action. She gives the example of a gay AIDS activist participating in a demonstration whose initial feeling of anger suddenly shifted into intense grief.

In a study about the emotions of civil rights activists, Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2015) found that fear, of all the emotions involved in social change, was, by far, the most common emotion expressed by these activists in oral histories done with them. The authors found that feelings of fear had to be managed, mitigated, or overcome for the activists to embark in social action. Other authors, such as Freire (2004) and Summers-Effler (2002), single out anger and hope as critical emotions in social change. They state that these feelings are essential to the activist endeavour among people identifying with marginalized social locations in that these feelings energize people and allow them to exercise power. Freire also includes taking action in his definition of hope, as, for him, simply feeling hope is not sufficient. However, Gould (2009) moves away from focusing on any one emotion or set of emotions as being essential for groups identifying with marginalized social locations in social struggle and rather describes emotions in this context as being “non-static”, “combinatory” and “indeterminate” (p. 399): That is, feelings can oscillate and change, they can be “bundled together” (p. 399)—for example, despair can co-exist with anger—and they can have uncertain effects, in some cases, for example, despair can be mobilizing and in others, demobilizing. De Courville Nicol (2011), for her part, believes that emotions that are often considered disempowering, such as fear, necessarily contain within them empowering emotions— in this case, desire—that, if tapped into, can allow people to strategize to affect change.

Emotions, Knowledge, Language, and Power. Many feminist thinkers, along with academics from the field of the sociology of emotions, speculate on the interactions and relationships between emotions, knowledge, language, discourse, and power. For example, feminists Jaggar (1989) and Narayan (1998) believe that people often first come to know something through their emotional responses experienced in daily situations. This type of

emotional knowing is an embodied one that occurs at the sensory level and precedes, and interacts with, reflective awareness and interpretation (Kirby, 2011). De Courville Nicol (2011) also describes emotions as a form of embodied knowledge. Burkitt (1987), for his part, describes emotions, and the knowing they impart, as emergent and changing rather than fixed.

Many sociologists (see Burkitt, 1987; Gould, 2004; Reddy, 1999) deliberate on the relationship between emotions, language, and discourse. Gould, in her study of emotions in social struggle, states that, in general, emotions are “opaque” (p. 169), which means that, at least from an outside perspective, we can only deduce what a person is feeling through their words and actions. This situation changes, at least somewhat, when people begin to articulate, either in verbally or in writing, what they are feeling. Burkitt (1987) describes this relationship between emotions and language as a reciprocal interaction: That is, while emotion can be expressed through verbal and written language, language in turn can shape, form and restructure emotion. Reddy (1999), similarly, describes an ongoing interaction between emotion and language in his concept of *emotives*. According to Reddy, emotives are written or verbal emotional utterances that attempt to translate inner personal states into linguistic symbols while at the same time altering—changing, intensifying, hiding—the original feeling. Therefore, expression and emotion are in constant interplay with each other (Gould, 2004). Importantly, as Gould (2001) points out, emotives are historically and culturally relative, and are shaped by societal or group norms. Gould (2004) also describes the importance and use of emotives in social struggle, which can be expressed, for example, through signs, publications, and shouted slogans and which can set the emotional tone for the activists involved. De Courville Nicol (2011), for her part, describes emotions, as expressed through verbal and written language, as a part of discourse. Discourse has traditionally been defined as systems of beliefs, ideas, practices, and attitudes that construct subjects and social life (Foucault, 1972).

An important aspect of the discussion of emotions involves notions of power. De Courville Nicol (2011) equates emotions, and the knowledge therein, with power. In her felt in/capacity theory, she states that humans are forever seeking hedonic power, or emotional well-being and, through a dialectic interplay of feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness as well as through courses of action, come to feelings of emotional security and pleasure. This move towards feelings of powerfulness and security can occur on the individual level. De Courville Nicol also

speaks of this schema as being applicable to political feelings and action when the capacity to exercise power at the societal level is at play.

Emotions, the Arts, and Poetry. Many academics who work in and write about arts-based inquiry speak of the special relationship between emotions and art. A forerunner and much quoted writer in this domain is Eisner (2001). According to Eisner, the life of feeling is best revealed through the arts, as this is their special province, the task that they best perform.

Specifically, in the field of poetic inquiry, many academics agree that poetry is an excellent conduit of emotion and in fact, imparts emotional knowing. For example, some authors (see Leggo, 2008b; Prendergast, 2009; Rohde, 1996) state that it is by using literary devices such as metaphor, rhyme, rhythm, and imagery that poetry engenders emotional knowing. This knowing is also referred to as aesthetic knowing (Kirby, 2011) or indirect knowing at a non-linear and visceral/bodily level (Eisner, 2001). Furman (2007) concurs that imagery and metaphor are very apt tools to accurately depict the tone, complexity, and nuance of emotion. Glesne (1997) praises poetry's ability to help us stop and reflect, which also allows us to feel. Sullivan (2007), for her part, pinpoints the qualities of voice, ambiguity, tension, and associative logic found in poetry as being connected to its ability to express emotion. Sherry and Shouten (2002) state that it is through poetry's penchant for detail and concreteness that its message can be poignantly felt. According to Furman, Langer, and Taylor (2010), it is poetry's compact form that allows it to express and evoke emotions in a particularly intense fashion.

At the same time, authors, such as Foster (2012) and Rohde (1996), remind us that poetry can reach its readers and audience members simultaneously at cognitive, emotional, and spiritual levels. On an emotional level, the arts, including poetry, can engender empathy and compassion (Eisner, 2001). According to Eisner, experiencing such emotions enables us to discover our own humanity and interior landscape and to take action.

Poetry as Counter-Narrative in Community

Poetry is the central tool in this research study. It is the vehicle through which emotion is being expressed and evoked. It is how issues of social change—including resistance and power—are being articulated by diverse community members. In this study, the language of poetry is the key source of discourse. This section examines notions of poetic counter-narrative, firstly by discussing notions of counter-narrative, or counter-discourse, in general, and then by seeing how poetry has been used by people identifying with marginalized social locations and minority

groups in this function. Poetry is also seen through the light of community art settings and how it has been used as a tool for social change in these milieus. Finally, a closer look at community poetry in Montréal is delineated.

Poetic Counter-Narrative. Poetry has often been employed as *counter-narrative*, a term commonly used interchangeably with the expressions *alternative discourse*, *counter-discourse*, or *counter-hegemony*, that confronts dominant discourses and ideology (Abrams, 1995; McLaren, 2002). Dominant discourse is a power-knowledge complex that renders people into objects of knowledge and that defines experience from a specific social position, that of the elite or the establishment, while representing these experiences as universal (McLaren, 2002). Dominant discourse and ideologies often seek to eliminate or invalidate any oppositional attitudes or tendencies, enforce social practices (Terdiman, 1985) and are propagated through mainstream institutions, such as universities and the media (Foster, 2012; Leggo, 2008a).

Counter-narratives, according to critical theorists, are "the...stories of those individuals and groups whose knowledge and histories have been marginalized...or forgotten in the telling of official narratives" (Peters & Lankshear, 1996, p. 2). Foucault (1980) described counter-narrative as "subjugated knowledges" or "popular knowledge" (p. 82) or as "(the) disqualified knowledge of people low in the hierarchy" (p. 82) that has been "buried" (p. 82). Counter-hegemony is denoted as the expression of ideas or representation of images that are subversive of existing power relations (Abrams, 1995) and that can foster a culture of questioning and resistance (Kubayanda, 1987). For Gonzalez (2015), counter-narrative that simply responds to dominant narrative is not enough. As he states: "One does not shift narrative by responding to it. One shifts by authoring a new narrative so brilliant it makes the existing one look painfully unimaginative" (p. 73). Whatever the type of narrative, according to Terdiman, (1985), all discourse can be utilized to influence and control our imagination, perception, and thoughts. Essentially, then, counter-narrative is part of a power and political struggle to know, name, and label that ensues in the domain of language and culture (Conquergood, 1997).

Several authors from the field of education as well as many poets/essayists deliberate on the notion of poetic counter-narrative and believe that poetry is a good tool for political discussion because it, along with politics, represents the art of verbal persuasion and rhetoric that can introduce new ways of being and seeing (Orr, 2008). Gaylie (2002), for example, states that poetic counter-narrative is about restoring language to its vernacular origins linked to place, and

about displacing media monologues on social events through local rhythms that force us to look at such events from another perspective. According to Gaylie, poetic counter-narrative, unlike pre-packaged ideas expressed in the media and other institutions, is about the process of words and forms in flux. Leggo (2008b) describes poetic counter-narrative as unconventional discourse that gives a fresh or unusual perspective and that represents an encounter between critical and creative discourse. As such, he considers poetry as a creative form of counter-narrative. Wissman (2009) points to imagery and rhetorical devices in poetry, for example, by asking rhetorical questions, to counter stereotypical images of certain populations and to confront ignorance and prejudice.

Feminist writer and poet, Rich (2003b), deliberates on poetry's potency as counter-discourse. She describes poetry's ability to break despair and inspire a sense of collective hope because of its capacity to help us envision social change by using the imagination. Poet and essayist Fisher (2009) states that poetry questions and struggles against the speech of the corporate media and that its emotional effects are a "vehicle of social and political correction" (p. 978) that opposes the "insincere language of the state" (p. 978). He also enunciates the debate about the complexity of poetic counter-narrative: Do straightforward poems that express "certainty" (p. 979) represent "truly revolutionary works?" (p. 979) or are ambiguity, ambivalence, and complexity in poetry, in both content and emotion, necessary to truly "voice resistance?" (p. 979). At the same time, Mathieu (2001), referring to ideas put forth by De Certeau, cautions that writing, including poetry, is "tactical discourse" (p. 152) that represents only momentary success in terms of influencing opinion or ideas.

Feminist writer Lorde (1990) focused on the emotional force of poetry as being key to its role in social change that can help us transform our hopes and dreams and orient them towards change. In her schema, emotions expressed through poetic language can fuel new ideas and lead to tangible action. In poetic inquiry literature, much mention is made of the emotional power of poetry and this fact is sometimes associated with poetry's role in social change (Faulkner, 2007).

Marginal Discourse as Poetic Counter-Narrative. Throughout history, minority or groups identifying with marginalized social locations have employed discourse as a conduit for counter-narrative. For example, literature has often been a favoured channel for expressing alternative ideas by these populations (JanMohamed, 1984; Kubayanda, 1987). According to JanMohamed, minority literature explores political, collective, and marginal aspects of the human experience,

and refuses individualistic, liberal, and apolitical humanism. Minority or oppressed groups, throughout history, have also employed poetry as a tool to challenge hegemony (Moran, 1999), whether it be through the words of insolent factory workers (Zandy, 1997), those of Black South African women against Apartheid (Narismulu, 2003), or through rap shouted out by disaffected youth (Abrams, 1995). For Rankin (2015), counter-narrative poetry is the privy of those living in marginal situations: “When I look around at the types of poets who choose to engage in...sociopolitical discourse...I see Black poets, women poets, Latina/o poets, working-class poets—I see members of marginalized populations” (para. 6).

Many authors, from disciplines such as social work, community development, and education, discuss the employment of poetic counter-narrative among minority groups who identify with marginalized social positions. For example, Foster (2012) qualifies minority poetic counter-narrative as local and situated knowledge that exposes the ways in which minority voices have “previously been written over” (p. 752). Wannamaker and Walsh (2009) recount the encounters of a group of minority women in prison who employed poetic counter-narrative to break free from a culture of silence and self-blame to one where they openly named their oppressors. Gaylie (2015) states that for such groups, poetic counter-narrative can not only be a conduit of expression but be a very means of survival. Finally, several authors (see Hull, 1996; Lorde, 1990; Sjollem & Hanley, 2013) focus on the accessibility of poetry to people living in marginal situations due to the low cost of practicing it and due to its compact form—which allows people, who may experience time constraints or who have difficulties concentrating, to practice it in stop and starts.

Of course, when minority or oppressed groups write, share, and perform poetic counter-discourse, they do so to addressees, whether they be readers or audiences of various sorts. According to Cohen and Mullender (1999), sharing poetry can act as a consciousness raising experience that occurs among those listening to or reading the poetry that can sensitize them to the challenges faced by those living in marginal social situations. For those who share marginalized social positions with the poets, the poetic happening can affirm a bond of solidarity and can create a sense of community (Johnson, 2010, Schmid, 2001). At the same time, as Mathieu, Westmoreland, Ibrahim, Plowman, and Cohen (2004) remind us, such sharing of poetry among mainstream audiences can lead to stereotyping or public attack. Among people sharing marginalized social locations (Johnson, 2010; Westbrook, 2004), disagreements about matters of

identity or other social/political issues can ensue during dissemination. In many instances, poetry or other forms of writing can include personal testimonies where the personal and political are linked (see Yúdice, 1991). In these cases, those reading or hearing the works can incorporate and embody the struggles recounted as well as understanding them at an intellectual level (Yúdice, 1991).

The Personal-Political Link in Minority Discourse, Art, and Poetry. Several authors elaborate on the personal-political link when discussing the discourse, art, and poetry of people who are minorities, living in marginal situations or who are oppressed (see Brabeck, 2003; Browdy de Hernandez, 1994; Yúdice, 1991). For example, Yúdice examines the social struggle in Latin America in the 1980's and 1990's and the *testimonio* movement that acted as an important instrument for the popular masses to express, through writing about their personal and lived experiences, the fight against oppression. According to Yúdice, these texts obscured the boundaries between political activism and literature. While the activists were writing about their personal situations, they were also writing on behalf of the collective "we" (Brabeck, 2003). According to Yúdice, a wide variety of political organizations, human rights groups, and alternative publishers, in and outside Latin America, encouraged this type of writing. The *testimonio*, according to Brabeck, was a perfect example of post-modern writing in that struggles against oppression were described in personal, local, and specific terms rather than general or universal ones. The *testimonio* also permitted oppressed populations to enact agency through writing rather than relying on others to recount their stories (Brabeck, 2003). As such, the *testimonio* did not fetishize *Otherness* and thus challenged mainstream images and ideas about these populations. Browdy de Hernandez (1994) also elaborates on the personal-political link in minority literature when discussing the autobiographical writings of Indigenous women. According to her, these writings represent the self in relationship that goes beyond the Euro-American emphasis on the individual hero. These writings not only discussed personal and cultural survival, but "performatively enact(ed) the survival of the individual and the tribal collective self" (p. 56).

Other authors have also discussed the link between personal and political in the art and writing of people living in marginal situations. For example, Parry and Johnson (2007), two leisure researchers, speak of creative analytic practice (CAP) as allowing specific personal and social meanings of experience to emerge rather than easy generalizations. Foster (2012)

illustrated in her study with working class women in Britain that poetry as counter-discourse brings together personal and political meanings. She sees this linking of the biographical with the political or social as essential for community poetry to act as resistance to conservative and dominant ideology and practice. She believes that this linking is especially necessary for those living in marginal situations whose lives and experiences are often misrepresented by dominant discourse.

The Community Arts, Poetry, and Social Change. This section will briefly describe the mechanisms of social change that can take place in community organizations. It will then look at the topic of community arts and specifically, poetry, and their relation to social change. Finally, this section will summarize community poetry activities in Montréal.

According to certain authors (see Horsfall, 2008; Kruzynski, 2004) social change, at its roots, takes place in small group and community settings where the process of community building and development happens. This community building can consist of formerly isolated individuals gaining and expressing a voice, feeling as if their concerns matter, and coming to feel a sense of belonging and emotional connection to others (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Their lives are often changed for the better, for example by gaining leadership skills, thanks to such participation (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013).

According to several authors (see Kruzynski, 2004; Ledwith, 2005a; Maton, 2008), community organizations and settings often act as a link between people's private lives and social activism. Specifically, as Kruzynski mentions, it is at the level of community or grass roots organizations that people from diverse and marginal backgrounds go through a consciousness raising process: That is, it is where they first come to analyze power, see their personal lives and problems as being related to structural inequalities, and begin to claim their voice. Ledwith states that the reclaiming of voice in community, particularly, allows people from marginal backgrounds to develop confidence, agency and a critical autonomy that constitute the basis for developing alliances and engaging in collective action. The development of such traits can, in turn, help people to manage any fear and anger that may arise in alliance-building (Ledwith, 2005a). Maton, for his part, cites a study where it was found that it is often through their participation in community organizations that community members get involved in citizen mobilization. This study found that people's sense of community belonging and solidarity were essential to their ability to act at a political level. Along similar lines, Kruzynski notes that low-

income women traditionally have enacted social change through activism based in community groups rather than through other forums.

In the field of leisure, the process of social change is placed within community-based perspectives that emphasize the common good (Arai & Pedlar, 2010) and that address questions of structural inequities and community members' collective empowerment and resistance to oppression (Arai & Pedlar, 2010; Hemingway, 1996). In this field, creation of new and alternative forms of practice at the community level, or the "creation...of discursive space" (Mair, 2002, p. 232), is regarded as key for participative democracy (Hemingway, 1996) in the process of social change.

Community Poetry and Social Change. Community art has traditionally existed as a channel for people to convey their collective histories, identities and hopes (Barndt, 2008). With the arrival of industrialization in the western world, art has been progressively coupled with professional exclusivity, commodification, and the market (Barndt, 2008). This development has led to a community-art split with community art being considered not true or real art (Barndt, 2008). In the last twenty years in North America, however, there has been a revival of the production of participatory arts in community settings (Barndt, 2008). Among the arts, poetry has carved a place in this reappearance with inestimable groups and activities operating in community settings in cities in North America (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013). These poetry groups occur in half-way houses, prisons, shelters, soup kitchens and other community locations (Rich, 2003b).

Many authors have looked at community poetry as a community building experience (see Mathieu et al., 2004; Sjollema & Hanley, 2013; Westbrook, 2004) where community poets meet on an ongoing basis, usually in groups of four to twelve people, to share, perform and discuss their work. The subjects of the poems shared in these groups can vary, but some groups specifically share material that concerns social change (see Foster, 2012; Mathieu et al., 2004). In the community development and leisure studies literature, community development and the arts is an emergent topic of discussion. Much of the literature agrees that using art in community often consists of art activities taking place in specific geographic neighbourhoods (Carry & Sutton, 2004; Fox & Lashua, 2010) of community building and collective well-being as essential aspects of the endeavour (Cohen & Johnson, 1997; Foster, 2007; Stevens, 2011; Yuen, Arai & Fortune, 2012), of the involvement of people identifying with marginalized social positions

(Sjollema & Hanley, 2013; Yuen et al., 2012), and of inspiring and mobilizing individuals and groups for social change (Barndt, 2008; Brown, 2009). Shaw (2001), a prominent leisure studies academic, notes that leisure and cultural activities that occur in community settings can be a means of resistance to structural power and dominant ideologies and a local expression of power that encourages individual agency and collective struggle. In striving for social change, creativity and imagination are cited as essential elements in the consciousness raising process, in disputing power and in envisaging an alternative future (Clover, 2007).

In the leisure—and especially—the community development and the arts literature, poetry is not discussed as often or in as much detail as other art forms (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013) and the term *counter-narrative*, or its synonyms, to describe poetry is seldom used—with exceptions being found in Foster (2012) and Sjollema and Yuen (2016). At the same time, poetry's capacity as tool for social change among community members in community settings is stressed by several authors (see Cohen & Mullender, 1999; Foster, 2012; Sjollema, 2017). Sjollema, for example, cites the inexpensive and portable nature of poetry and the ease in which a community poetry group can be set up or even moved as an advantage for low-income and other people fighting for social change. For a few of these authors (see Sjollema & Yuen, 2016), the potency of poetry to express and evoke emotion makes poetry a significant community building tool as empathy and intimacy are developed among those reading, listening to and sharing poetry. This constructing of community, according to these authors, can help build solidarity in the fight for social change.

Community Poetry in Montréal. This study takes place in the neighbourhood of Côte-des-Neiges in Montréal, Québec, Canada. However, community poetry, defined as poems created by community members that are shared, performed, and published in community sources and settings (Sjollema & Bilotta, 2016), is by no means limited to this specific locality. As noted previously, in the last twenty-to-thirty years, poetry has been part of a re-emergence of community art activities operating in community settings in cities across North America (Sjollema & Hanley 2013), including in many Canadian cities and towns (Sjollema, 2012). Therefore, this study is not an isolated event and the information provided here about the situation of community poetry in Montréal can provide insight as to the dynamics of community poetry elsewhere in Canada and North America.

Over the last ten years, several studies and investigations have taken place that describe the situation of community poetry in Montréal. For example, in a 2013 publication, Sjollema and

Hanley reviewed a pilot study conducted the previous year which discovered twenty-five creative writing groups and activities in Montréal (including anglophone, francophone, and multi-lingual groups) principally centred in youth organizations, food banks, and drop-in centres. Some of the events were carried out in more informal community settings such as parks or consisted of performances that took place during public demonstrations. These pursuits were occurring at the time of the study or had existed prior to it. A brief internet search carried out in September 2016 also revealed the existence of at least three slam/spoken word poetry collectives in Montréal whose members are primarily people of colour (see Kalmunityvibe, 2016; Throw Poetry, 2016 and Slam Montréal, 2016) and one ongoing activity that features women poets of colour (see Sisters in Motion, 2016).

A second study carried out in 2013 by L'Anneau Poétique, in conjunction with the Community University Research Exchange (CURE) at QPIRG Concordia, highlighted that some community poetry groups in Montréal employ artistic expression, as well as community building, to transform their communities or society (Abdelhak, 2013). These two studies, along with a third carried out at McGill University (see Hanley, Beeman, Hannan, McKale & Sjollema, 2014), revealed that the bulk of people taking part in community poetry activities are racial, ethnic, or religious minorities (including newly arrived immigrants) or/and people experiencing poverty, gang affiliation, mental health difficulties, prostitution, literacy challenges, and addiction. Because of the instability of involvement of community members, in addition to the unpredictable duration of many of the groups (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013), it is impossible to approximate the number of people writing, sharing, performing, or publishing in community settings at any point in time. Commonly, these groups publish poetry in community publications such as chapbooks, zines, anthologies, and journals and perform their work in community centres and organizations, youth drop-ins, or even, the street (Abdelhak, 2013).

The main concern of this study was the use of poetry, emotions, as well as research, as means of social change for diverse people identifying with marginalized social positions. As such, the incorporation of critical theory, arts-based critical pedagogy and radical post-modernism as the study's underlying theoretical frameworks was appropriate. Together, these concepts provided a social justice-based framework that considered the intricacies of recent shifts in social change, including the use of community-based perspectives, emotions and art. Important research in the areas of power and resistance, marginalization and marginality, emotions in social

life, and poetic counter-narrative in community illuminated the ongoing interest and pertinence in academia of these themes. In addition, this information provided important background and contextual information to this study as well as situating this study in this body of research. The next chapter of this dissertation will further discuss how social change was manifested in this study through the choice of methodologies and methods.

CHAPTER 3: Methodological Frameworks and Methods

*When I tell them
I use poetry as research
emotions as research
they say “how cool is that?
and how the hell do you do that”?*

(reflexive poem, Sept. 26, 2017)

This chapter of the dissertation will begin by describing the research questions. It will then elaborate on the methodologies used in this study, namely, poetic inquiry, emotional discourse analysis, critical/community-based participatory action research, and subjectivity and reflexivity. It will then briefly discuss the ethics review process and informed consent. Finally, this chapter will describe the selection of poets and community organizers, poet and community organizer portraits, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Research Question(s)

The purpose of this study was to examine how poetry and emotions act as means for community poets to take part in individual and collective resistance and power in the context of community-based social change. The main research question was the following: How do community poetry and emotions act as tools for individual and collective resistance and power among diverse community poets in the context of social change? In addition, three sub-questions were asked:

- ✓ What emotions and ideas are expressed by written community poetry relating to issues of resistance, power, and social change?
- ✓ How does sharing poetry and emotions act as a means for individual and collective power among diverse community poets?
- ✓ How can community poetry and emotions act as tools for resistance and power in community organizations for social change?

Developing the research question(s) was an iterative process (Spriggle, 1994) that occurred throughout this study and the writing of this dissertation. For example, the original research questions contained the term “marginalization” in reference to the community poets. As discussed earlier, I decided at one point to not use this term in my description of the poets. The

research questions were therefore modified to reflect this decision. Another change that occurred was the addition of the word “individual” to the second sub-question so that it would read “individual and collective power.” While carrying out the data analysis, it was clear that the sharing of poetry in a group process included expressing one’s individual voice by sharing one’s work. This expression could be experienced as an act of individual power. I also changed sub-question number two from “performing poetry” to “sharing poetry” because while doing the analysis and writing out the findings, it was obvious that the second level of social change in community poetry occurred both by listening to performed poems or reading the written version of them. In some ways, I found this process of changing the wording of the research question unnerving, but I also felt it was a dynamic process that mirrored my ongoing reflection (reflexive journal, April 2, 2018).

Methodologies

Poetic Inquiry. Poetic inquiry is the central methodology of this study. Poetic inquiry, derived from narrative approaches, uses the literary arts to comprehend and reveal human life (Prendergast, Leggo, & Sameshima, 2009). Poetic inquiry is the use of poetry in the research endeavour (Prendergast, 2009). It reveals experience, not only through its content, but also through its literary devices for example, rhythm, rhyme, imagery, and metaphor, that both express and evoke emotion (Prendergast, 2009).

History and Uses of Poetic Inquiry. Approximately forty years ago, educator Elliot Eisner conceived the notion that understanding is mediated by form (Butler-Kisber, 2002), which prompted qualitative researchers to begin exploring the use of poetry in research, along with other art forms. In the research world, sociologist Laurel Richardson was among the first to use found poetry, which, in her studies, consisted of taking interview text and creating poems from it (Butler-Kisber, 2002). According to McCullis (2013), today poetic inquiry is used in a vast number of areas of study, including nursing, anthropology, social work, medicine, and education. Some of the most common uses of poetry in research involves the researcher creating poems from interview text (Butler-Kisber, 2002), researcher-written poetry (Sjollema & Yuen, 2016), or poets writing poetry in the context of a research project (Foster, 2007). Researchers also create poems from field notes (Sjollema et al., 2012). Poetry has been utilised as a means of data collection (Taiwo, 2011), analysis, and representation (Hordyk, Ben Soltane & Hanley, 2013).

One modality of poetry, the written form, is commonly used in studies of poetic inquiry, which can include poems created by community members prior to and independent of a research project (see Sjollemma & Bilotta, 2016). These studies (see also Bishop & Willis, 2014) employ thematic and poetic analysis on written poems. Other studies prioritize the oral aspect of poetry by looking at poetic performance (see Akom, 2009; Gladney, 1995; Johnson, 2010). These studies look at the bonds created between audience and poet in terms of community building. Still other studies (see Dancer, 2009) discuss how literary devices, for example, sound, create these bonds. The oral or sound aspect of poetry is sometimes discussed in terms of its use by various groups—especially those from non-western countries—who often place an importance on orality as a means of knowledge transmission (Calafell, 2004). One unique aspect of this study is that it analyzes both written and performed poetry as important aspects of the community poetry experience in social change (reflexive journal, March 16, 2018).

Poetic inquiry is also used in studies that look at social change among those living in marginal situations. These studies are abundant and include, for example, discussions about immigrant women's housing issues (Hordyk, Ben Soltane & Hanley, 2013), working class women's issues with poverty (Foster, 2012), and Black women facing discrimination (Washington, 2009). In poetic inquiry literature, questions of what makes good poetry often focus on issues of social change and aesthetics (Faulkner, 2007). What good poetry consists of is often described in what could be qualified as a binary perspective: The criteria as to what makes good poetry either focuses on its ability to inspire social change, or it focuses on its aesthetic quality through an examination of the use of literary devices, such as sound or imagery, as well as other aspects of form (Faulkner, 2007).

Why Use Poetic Inquiry for this Study? There are several reasons why I chose to use poetic inquiry for this study. Firstly, my love of and experience with poetry played a critical role in this choice. Secondly, I strove to achieve congruency between subject matter and methodology (Prendergast, 2009). Through my own experiences with marginality, through frequenting people living in marginal situations, and through years of experience with social activism, I knew that community members' experiences, including in fights for social change, are frequently marked with intensity and emotion. Using poetic inquiry allowed me therefore to explore "the affective experiential domain" (p. xxii) that would reveal the emotional aspect of the life experiences and perspectives of people living in marginal situations in their quest for

social change. Thirdly, as poetry is a specific form of writing where literary devices,⁵ such as imagery or sound, play an important role, I wanted to explore how poetry, through these devices, mediates our emotional understanding of the world, in this case, of social change.

Another reason I chose poetry for this study is that it would enable a holistic approach to research, thereby encompassing emotional, embodied, and rational ways of knowing (Willis, 2002). By incorporating these dimensions, using poetry added depth to my study (Dancer, 2009; Faulkner, 2009; Willis, 2002). I also wanted to use a methodology that would leave room for ambiguity, ambivalence of emotion, and the possibility of revealing multiple truths (Sullivan, 2009), knowing that community members' lives are often complex and multi-layered. For example, these populations can identify with both dominant and marginalized social positions (Rich, 2003). Thus, selecting a form of methodology that was "imaginal [and] diffuse" (Willis, 2002, p. 1) seemed appropriate.

Finally, I chose to use poetry in this study because it allowed alternative viewpoints to emerge that can challenge mainstream ideas. Indeed, alternative viewpoints to dominant hegemony are revealed in many studies using poetic inquiry. For example, in some studies (see Foster, 2012; Sjollemma et al., 2012) people living in marginal situations challenge dominant discourse about poverty or homelessness, through the content of the poems. In other cases, literary devices reveal alternative viewpoints. For example, in Dancer's (2009) study, the use of alternative rhythms and sounds in poetry defy the ordered beats of machinery and the clock-time of mainstream capitalism.

Poetic Inquiry in this Study. My study looked at written and shared poetry (in the latter case, through the organizers reading the poems and through the poets reading the poems out loud in a group performance). I chose these modalities because these are the ways that poetry is generally expressed at the community level, whether it be, for example, through the publication of chapbooks and zines, through community building exercises and groups, or through public performances (Sjollemma, 2017; Sjollemma & Bilotta, 2016). In this study, I used poetry in data collection, analysis, representation, and dissemination. Written poems, created or adapted by the poets, acted as a data source, and means of analysis. The poets participated in a preliminary emotional discourse analysis (de Courville Nicol, 2011) of the poems through an interview

⁵ See Faulkner (2007) for a full description of literary devices or <https://literarydevices.net>. Poetic analysis can also involve looking at, for example, voice, syntax, grammar, and story (Faulkner, 2007).

process. A more in-depth emotional discourse analysis of the written poetry was carried out by me. I also analyzed the poems by way of thematic analysis based on the interviews with the organizers and poets. A *poetic analysis*, which consists of examining the literary devices in a poem (see Sjollema & Bilotta, 2016), was conducted by me in conjunction with the emotional discourse and thematic analysis.

The poems were also read by four community organizers who then answered interview questions based on their reading. A poetic performance occurred where each poet read his or her poem selected for this study in front of the other poets. The performance was the subject of an interview with the poets that occurred in the months following the performance. Finally, poetry was used as a means of representation in this dissertation. Firstly, I feature the five poems written by the community poets in chapter 4 of this dissertation and, at various junctures, highlight extracts from these poems. In addition, this dissertation contains found poems (drawn from interviews and material from articles) and reflexive poems written by me.

Emotional Discourse Analysis. Another feature of my methodology is emotional discourse analysis (de Courville Nicol, 2011). Emotional discourse analysis examines the emotional perspectives present in discursive and social practices, and sociologists have employed it in a variety of situations, including the analysis of the discourse used in social change movements (see, for example, Gould, 2001). A major source on emotional discourse analysis is a book written on the subject by de Courville Nicol (2011). The system of emotional discourse analysis used in this study was largely adapted from the emotional in/capacity theory described in the book. In/capacity theory represents the conceptual basis of emotional discourse analysis, which in turn represents the practical application of the theory.

In/capacity Theory. In/capacity theory views emotions as goal-oriented in that one of their major tasks is to move people from a state of emotional suffering to one of well-being. Therefore, when faced with a “relational threat” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 19), or a force that they associate as being painful and dangerous—also called an “object of fear” (p. 15)—people can seek solutions that allow them to move in the direction of security and well-being. The absence of the danger and presence of the solution can lead to an “experience of security” (p.18) also referred to as an “object of desire” (p. 17) or “relational promise” (p.18).

Emotional in/capacity theory states that to effect change to secure well-being, people must first feel their fear. Feeling this fear can motivate them—out of a hope of overcoming pain and

danger—to identify a strategy away from this fear. This first “hope response” (p. 20) leads them, in an act of agency, to conceptualize or determine the specific forms that are represented by core feelings of incapacity (or powerlessness) and capacity (or powerfulness). For example, feelings of powerlessness can be, in some cases, conceptualized as “oppression,” while a corresponding feeling of powerfulness could be identified as “emancipation” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 4). According to de Courville Nicol, fear emotions and desire emotions are intimately intertwined and are in a dialectical relationship with each other: “Fear emotions, as felt incapacities, should not be thought of outside of their relationship to desire emotions, or felt capacities, toward which they tend” (p. 3).

A second hope response—in another act of agency—can lead people from the felt capacity or feeling of powerfulness to identifying a means of exercising power or of taking action—in the example given, feelings of emancipation can lead someone to write to local officials. This action can, in turn, allow people to move towards the experience of “relational promise” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 18) and the “experience of security” (p. 18). Achieving security can be reached if certain conditions for exercising power exist. As de Courville Nicol explains:

Once the means through which it can exercise power have been identified, the self can then implement security. This is the third and final agential step, provided the means of exercising power that were identified are accessible and provided the subject chooses to exercise power through these means (p. 26).

What is key in in/capacity theory is that people have the possibility to be agents of their emotional experience and not only experience emotion in a non-intentional way (de Courville Nicol, 2011). For example, in some cases, when faced with a known threat, people can use known patterns of conceptualizing affective states and exercising power and feel confident in their ability to resolve the problem (in this case, emotions may be experienced spontaneously, and no specific effort is required to achieve security). In other cases, previous patterns made be viewed as unsatisfactory and people may need to make an effort to find alternative in/capacity concepts and a means of exercising power to achieve well-being and security. In the case of a new threat, people can identify new forms of in/capacity concepts and/or a new way to exercise power. If they succeed in this identification process, they may be able to experience the hope response in unexpected ways (Valérie de Courville Nicol, personal communication, August 18, 2018). Overall, in/capacity theory involves a transformative process of overcoming a sense of

danger and moving into desire, action and security. Hope is key to this process. According to de Courville Nicol (2011), hope is not only a basic human emotional response but also key to social action.

Components of Emotional Discourse Analysis. Based in emotional in/capacity theory, emotional discourse analysis has as its root the notion of fear, associated with felt incapacity, and desire, associated with felt capacity, as intimately intertwined, although both feelings may not be explicitly present in the discourse under examination. The key element in conducting emotional discourse analysis is to determine and identify the “emotional-norm pairs” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 4)⁶ or in/capacity feelings which are differentiated forms of the “basic feelings” (p. 27) of powerlessness and powerfulness. The identification of norm pairs leads to a second key element of emotional discourse analysis: Identifying the “exercise of power” (p. 3) that will constitute the action that will seek well-being. Other components of emotional discourse that are involved in the trajectory of change are the “relational threat” (p. 15) or “object of fear” (p.15), which represent the threat, problem, or danger to which the emotions are responding, and the “experience of security” (p. 18) or “relational promise” (p.18), which are the hoped-for results of the exercise of power.

The rhetoric of fear and desire, as well as feelings of resistance and empowerment, are other elements of emotional discourse analysis that can illuminate the in/capacity feelings and the exercise of power (de Courville Nicol, 2011). A rhetoric of fear aims to install fear as to the negative consequences of pursuing a certain course of action, or of remaining inactive. A rhetoric of desire stresses the positive consequences of a given course of action (de Courville Nicol, 2011). These two types of rhetoric can contribute to in/capacity feelings. For example, a rhetoric of fear may warn that if the poor are ignored, they will die in the streets. This may help someone who feels no responsibility, which represents a feeling of powerlessness, access feelings of responsibility, a feeling of powerfulness. This person, as a result of this feeling of powerfulness, may then decide to write a letter to local politicians, which represents an exercise of power.

⁶ In in/capacity theory, norm pairs do not refer to innate emotions that represent universal referents. They are socially constructed conceptual tools that grow out of specific contexts. They do not represent a binary (*e.g.*, oppression on the one hand, and emancipation on the other) but the dialectical interplay of feelings that are embedded in each other (Valérie de Courville Nicol, personal communication, August 18, 2018).

Feelings of resistance and empowerment may also contribute to in/capacity feelings and exercises of power. Resistance and empowerment are two emotional “counter powerings” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 76) to power or threat. In the first case, people set a limit, or push back because they have had enough (Valérie de Courville Nicol, personal communication, September 22, 2015). In the second, people feel that a situation is not good enough and seek to improve it, or push forward, and move towards an ideal (Valérie de Courville Nicol, personal communication, September 22, 2015). In the first case, subjects feel “strain (and) pain,” (p. 76) and in the second, experience “release (and) pleasure” (p. 76). For example, if someone is living in poverty due to government policies and feels that they have had enough of this situation and that they deserve a better life, they may move from feeling powerlessness, for example, feeling oppressed, to feeling powerfulness (e.g., emancipation) and decide to get involved in an anti-poverty committee to address these issues.

In/capacity Theory, Emotional Discourse Analysis and Social Issues. Academics in the field of sociology, as well as other fields of study, have employed in/capacity theory or/and emotional discourse analysis when discussing social issues, including social change. For example, Gaspar (2016) discusses in/capacity theory through elaborating on the importance of emotions, including danger, safety, and uncertainty, in the risk management of HIV prevention. Gould (2001, 2004, 2009) in her treatise about the social struggle of gays and lesbians in the 1980’s, employed emotional discourse analysis when looking at the speeches, newsletters, and other means of political discourse used by this population at this time. This analysis revealed that the discourse shifted with time, and that new norm pairs were adapted, to reflect the activists’ changing feelings about their relationship to mainstream America. Richter (2011) also conducted emotional discourse analysis when examining Montréal newspapers and other media outlets about race riots that took place at Concordia University and about other racially-provoked injustices in Montréal.

Why Emotional Discourse Analysis for this Project? Using in/capacity theory and its application, emotional discourse analysis, is fitting for this project for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it confirms the project’s counter-dominant premise that highlights the importance and validity of the role of emotions in motivating action in social life. According to de Courville Nicol (2011):

It is my hope that embodied in/capacity theory provides a viable alternative to the dominant perspective that actions are either informed by reason or malformed by emotion. I understand emotions as a structuring energy that grounds all subjective and moral actions. (p. 3)

Moreover, in/capacity theory highlights the importance of feelings in social change. According to de Courville Nicol (2011), emotional discourse analysis takes into account that social change “does not make much sense if it fails to take into account what it feels like to be treated unjustly” (p. 209).

Secondly, this theory is appropriate for this study because it emphasizes feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness. In this theory, feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness⁷ are highlighted as the core emotional state of all action and change. According to de Courville Nicol (2011), agency is defined as either fear-driven or desire-driven feelings, as well as the exercise of power, in the face of forces representing danger or security. This emphasis on one’s feeling of power (or lack thereof) confirms this project’s adoption of ideas put forth by feminists (see Deveux, 1996; Held, 1993) that an individual’s (or group’s) feelings of power or lack of power in the face of social injustice are critical to social change, and that only discussing the objective situation is insufficient. The in/capacity theory also emphasizes that an exercise of power can occur if feelings of powerfulness are tapped into and if a means of action is conceived of and is available. These notions reiterate the feminist notion of power as a positive force or agency in social change (see hooks, 1990b).

Emotional in/capacity theory is also appropriate for this study because it includes the “social emotional experience” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 80) that refers to the quality of relationships between people as well as the idea that people can feel empathy and understand the feelings of others. These social emotions can be considered “political” when the capacity to exercise power is viewed in terms of its “quality of...social distribution” (p. 83). These social emotions, based largely on social and cultural influences, can also be considered “moral” (p. 7), when people take responsibility for their emotional experiences and feel a sense of responsibility for outcomes—or when they attempt to exercise power over others’ emotional experiences, and therefore, outcomes. Social emotions can also be moral emotions because having a sense of

⁷ In her book, de Courville Nicol (2011) suggests that the core undifferentiated form of incapacity/capacity is powerlessness/powerfulness and that all other emotional or feeling states derive from this core.

one's own moral agency can lead to the belief that other people also possess this capacity (de Courville Nicol, 2011).

Conducting Emotional Discourse Analysis in this Study. In this study, written poems and interviews with the poets acted as sources for emotional discourse analysis. In interviews with the poets, emotional themes, exercises of power, rhetoric of fear/desire, resistance/empowerment, objects of fear/relational threat, and the experience of security/relational promise/object of desire were discussed in relation to the poems as a means for them to conduct preliminary analysis. Rather than looking at only one or two of these items, I chose to examine all of them because I felt that they would collectively offer a more complete picture of looking at emotion and social change in discourse. I then took the poets' analysis as a starting point for my own emotional discourse analysis of the poems.

Collaborative Research. Another key feature of my methodology, which fits with its critical conceptual basis, is collaborative research. This study included community-based participatory action research (D'Alonzo, 2010; Lee, 2009; Sin, 2006) and critical participatory action research (Ellsworth; 1989; Kemmis et al., 2014) as key elements in its collaborative approach. Both methodologies identify collaborative research as one where the research process itself is a conduit for people to express power by articulating their voice and sharing knowledge (D'Alonzo, 2010; Kemmis et al., 2014). Therefore, in addition to theoretically espousing social change, collaborative research incarnates it (D'Alonzo, 2010; Kemmis et al., 2014). Both approaches urge the participation of community stakeholders (D'Alonzo, 2010) and participants (Kemmis et al., 2014) in the research process—from initial discussions about research design to dissemination.

Community-based research highlights responding to community needs (Lee, 2009) so that the results of the research are useful and appropriate for the community under study. Critical approaches promote the researcher's involvement as an "engaged participant" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 9) and spotlight the need for researcher and participant subjectivity and reflexivity (Ellsworth, 1989). Furthermore, critical approaches assert the need for flexibility in terms of research planning, action, and reflection, which involves an iterative process of moving back and forth between reflection and action (Kemmis et al., 2014). Two other key aspects of critical participatory action research are the notions of transparency (Geiger, 1990), where the researcher is as transparent as possible about all aspects of the project with the participants, and

ownership of the research data and process by study participants (Kruzynski, 2004). An example of ownership is having the participants verify the validity of the representations about them in the study, and by doing so, they “talk(ing) back” to the representations (Brabeck, 2003, p. 253).

How my Study Incarnated Critical and Community-based Participatory Action

Research. This study incarnated many concepts espoused by critical and community-based participatory action research. For example, this study is inspired by and based on my experiences with community poetry in Côte-des-Neiges. In fact, it is my familiarity with both the content and use of poetry in the neighbourhood that led, at least in part, to my initial ideas about research questions and design. Throughout this dissertation, when applicable, I have also added to the discussions at hand by relating my own experiences with community poetry. By using poems written (or adapted), shared, performed and in some cases, published, in community prior to and independently of a research project, this study also highlighted community members’ voices and knowledge (Kemmis et al., 2014) and emphasized counter-narrative discourse (Foster, 2012) produced by community poets in their own localities.

Prior to the formal commencement of the research, I consulted with local community organizers and poets in a pre-research period (D’Alonzo, 2010) to elicit their feedback about research design and methodology. This pre-research period lasted approximately one year before the project officially began. The pre-research process also consisted of several group meetings with the community poets, who later became official participants in this study, in what could be described as a community building process where we came together, expressed our voices, and began to develop an emotional connection with each other (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Once the project got formally underway, the participatory nature of this study continued. Here are the most significant aspects of the participatory nature of this project. The poets:

- ✓ Took part in consultations and provided feedback and ideas about research design and question during the pre-research phase;
- ✓ Collaborated in the writing of this thesis by giving feedback on certain terminology (see discussion on *marginalization*) and by co-writing and revising their portraits;
- ✓ Received all major documents associated with this study five to six weeks ahead of time to review/revise them or after the interviews (consent forms, interview guides, interview transcripts);
- ✓ Were given priority in terms of being interviewed twice before the interviews with the community organizers took place;

- ✓ Offered feedback about the interview process (first interview) and the poetry performance;
- ✓ Participated in the preliminary emotional discourse analysis of the written poems and reviewed, on two occasions (in May and November 2017), the emotional discourse analysis;
- ✓ Reviewed the preliminary thematic analysis;
- ✓ Reviewed the findings section of this thesis and, especially, reviewed and revised any quotes or paraphrasing that referred to them (*i.e.*, the representations of them), and;
- ✓ Took part in a final debriefing (see Appendix K) where they gave their feedback on the process of the study and offered recommendations. These recommendations are featured in the last chapter of this dissertation.

It must also be said that I tried to make all the group meetings and interviews in the pre-research and research stage as convivial and comfortable as possible by meeting in places that the poets knew well and that they could consider “their own” (Kruzynski, 2004, p. 138). These places included the Plaza Côte-des-Neiges, the Côte-des-Neiges community centre, and Kent Park. This conviviality was also enacted by bringing snacks and drinks to share, and by poets sharing their work during our meetings.

How my Study Enacted Social Change. The community poets were empowered by their participation in this project. This increase in personal power, in turn, augmented communal power at the group and community level. According to Naples (1991), personal and communal empowerment and the increasing of power and resources of community are key aspects of community-based social change. Also, through their participation in this study, the poets engaged in community-based social change by engaging in an alternative process and by, potentially, gaining control over definitions of self (Naples, 1991).

In terms of personal empowerment, the poets commented that they gained skills in getting in touch with and articulating emotions, in public speaking, in being interviewed, and in reading about and comprehending various concepts. Avi⁸ mentioned, for example, that he appreciated the fact that he was reminded by me during the poetry performance to connect with and articulate his emotions in response to the other poets’ performances, something he would not

⁸ Avi Grenadier used a pseudonym for his surname in this study.

normally do in a group setting. Albertha⁹ mentioned gaining skills in understanding intellectual concepts and articulating her thoughts on them, for example, emotional discourse analysis and marginalization. Sana¹⁰ said that she felt good that, while feeling very apprehensive about being interviewed and of public speaking, she overcame these fears by partaking in these activities during this study. As a result, she felt more skillful in these areas.

The poets were also empowered by engaging in learning through their participation in the group meetings, and the group poetry performance (which included giving background information on one's poem, reading it, and commenting on one's emotional reactions to the others' performances). For example, Sana noted that she gained knowledge of other cultures, different social problems, and different ways of seeing the world. Albertha stated that she gained knowledge of how different people react to situations. For example, through my poem, Albertha stated that she learned that people can feel and demonstrate forgiveness to perpetrators. Through Avi's poem, she learned that one can be critical towards one's own ethnic or religious group and stand up for what is right. From Russ¹¹' poem, she learned about perseverance and resilience, and from Sana's, the length that parents go to protect their children. Also, through the response of each poet to the performed works in the group session, Albertha learned that there are myriad ways of emotionally reacting to situations. She felt this was important knowledge to have. Avi felt that he learned that, through deliberately connecting to one's emotions, one can be awakened to struggles that are not necessarily one's own and that emotions represent an entry point to this type of awakening. He also felt he learned that poetry is very accessible and can be created and shared critically and that it is an empowering and inspiring medium to speak of issues of social justice. Russ stated that he learned that community building is perhaps best brought about by expressing one's emotions in a spontaneous manner, as is what occurred in the poetry performance in this study when the five poets were asked to express their emotional reactions to the performed poems. He believed that this lack of "artifice" and "dropping of defences" lead to a more profound community building experience. While individual empowerment occurred as a result of participation in this study, many of the poets pointed out that it was the group dynamic, through group meetings and the poetry performance, that they

⁹ Albertha Rennie used her real name in this study.

¹⁰ Sana S. is a pseudonym.

¹¹ Russ Harrison used his real name in this study.

found the most meaningful because they felt a sense of solidarity and oneness with each other. This solidarity incarnated the notion of communal empowerment that Naples (1991) refers to.

Due to this new skill and knowledge base, the poets in this project are now able to augment the power and resources of the communities they belong to. For example, Avi said that due to the solid affirmation of his contribution to this project from myself and other poets, he garnered more confidence to create and share poetry in other circles. More specifically, he said that this confidence was garnered through sharing, in this study, from a place that felt genuine to him, *i.e.*, Yiddish culture. As for Sana and Albertha, they said that they had felt shy about speaking and performing their poetry in public at the beginning of the study but gained a lot of confidence in this area thanks to their participation. Indeed, Albertha said this confidence made her want to “go further” in terms of writing and performing poetry. In fact, both women ended up performing their poetry in community events in Côte-des-Neiges during the study, hence contributing their skills to these communities and augmenting their resources.

As participation in this study centered around poetry and emotions, the individual skills and learnings acquired by the poets, as well the communal empowerment that ensued, took place within what could be considered an alternative process, that both Barndt (2008) and Naples (1991) signal as being another key element of community-based social change. In overcoming lack of confidence, shyness and fear, the poets, thanks to their participation in this study, also potentially incarnated another aspect of social change: Specifically, gaining control over definitions of self (Naples, 1991, p. 479). It is conceivable that Avi, along with the two women, most likely saw themselves and perhaps defined themselves differently due to gaining the skills, knowledge and self-confidence that allowed them to take on new roles in other settings.

Subjectivity and Reflexivity. Several research frameworks include the use of subjectivity and reflexivity, including critical participatory action research and feminist research (Harding, 2004). Researcher and participant subjectivity consider that the researcher’s and participants’ social locations and life experiences shape the research process (Ellsworth, 1989). The researcher’s or participants’ social location can be described as their social position, membership in groups and identity (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), including identifying with both dominant and marginalized social locations (Rich, 1983a). In the case of the researcher, this personal perspective influences the choices made throughout the research process (Guba, 1990) that also affects interactions with research participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to

Finlay (2002), being accountable for and open about these subjectivities is an ethical requirement.

The key tool for engaging in researcher subjectivity is reflexivity. As a part of the methodological process, reflexivity recognizes that researchers are included in the social phenomenon they are studying (Schwandt, 2001). It entails engaging in explicit, self-aware analysis of one's role and a cognisant and thoughtful interjection of oneself into the process (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity therefore builds sensitivity into research design (Skeggs, 2002).

According to Dupuis (1999), not only does reflexivity consider the researcher's past and present experiences as relevant to the knowledge-building process of research, it also considers how the emotions of the researcher affect the research process and the construction of knowledge. More specifically, reflexivity can focus on the researcher's emotions regarding interactions with participants during data collection and analysis (Walkerline, Lucey & Melody, 2002). This reflective process allows the researcher to uncover any unconscious practices or uncomfortable feelings and to share them with others (Macbeth, 2001). Reflexivity also takes into consideration that knowledge is co-constructed between researcher and participants throughout the process and that the researcher's positionalities also influence this collaborative construction of knowledge (Dupuis, 1999). Finally, reflexivity must also include reflections upon the nature of power within the researcher-participant relationship (Furman, Langer, Davis, Gallardo, & Kulkarni, 2007). A principal tool of reflexivity is writing (Richardson, 2000). Reflexive writing can take the form of field notes (Furman et al., 2007), using a reflexive journal (Dupuis, 1999), or writing poetry (Sjollema & Yuen, 2016).

Subjectivity and Reflexivity in this Study. My role in this project included being an outside researcher as well as insider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kalei Kanuha, 2000) in the sense that I shared characteristics and experiences with the other poets (*e.g.*, Côte-des-Neiges resident, community poet, activist, and community member who identifies with several factors of marginalization). However, beyond the insider-outsider binary, I saw my role through what Dwyer and Buckle refer to as a dialectical approach that stresses “the complexity of similarities and differences” (p. 60). For example, in some ways I shared certain identities with some of the poets, such as being Jewish or female. At the same time, I did not share certain other identities, such as being a communist or being Black (see poets' portraits for more details). In addition, I was also a participant in this research (Corti, Reddy, Choi, & Gillespie, 2015). I made the

decision to be a participant in response to the request from the poets to do so and due to my desire to reduce the schism of researcher and *Other* (Brabeck, 2003) where *Otherness* can sometimes be romanticized (Yúdice, 1991). As such, I shared a poem I had written as part of the data collection and analysis process, took part in the poetry performance as a poet, and answered interview questions. I also took part in all group meetings and the final debriefing.

My role as insider was advantageous in the sense that I had a deep comprehension of and empathy towards the experiences of the poets (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Indeed, in the pre-research period, when a few of the community poets—who later became the participants in the study—shared economic and mental health difficulties with me, I understood from my life experiences just how painful and difficult these experiences can be. In addition, I felt that my role as researcher was being extended to one of community worker or/and confidant (reflexive journal, April 15, 2015). At the same time, the insider position led me to certain assumptions (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) and, in some instances, role confusion (Kalei Kanuha, 2000) (see reflexive notes throughout the dissertation). As an “engaged participant” (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 9) in this study, I was required to reveal vulnerability and openness through sharing my poetry with the others in the performance and through my participation in the interviews (Furman, 2005). My personal experiences as the coordinator of an arts-based community organization, L’Anneau Poétique, and as a community poet are also recounted in this dissertation, especially in the findings section, when I felt that these experiences were relevant to the conversations at hand.

In terms of reflexivity, throughout the research process, I engaged in reflection in three ways. Firstly, a general reflection took place, sometimes with the help of notes, but often by talking with my Ph.D. supervisor about various aspects of the study. These conversations especially occurred during the writing up of the findings. Here, I reflected on the comments of the poets and organizers, on themes, and on current literature about these themes in an iterative process (Spiggle, 1994). I also reflected on what had already been written in this dissertation and asked myself if it was still valid given my new reflections. In many cases, I went back into the dissertation and made changes. An example of such a change was a re-wording of the initial research question where I added the word “individual,” as in “individual power”, in the second sub-question because the data revealed that this was a better way to describe the process of empowerment that occurs in community building with poetry.

The second type of reflection involved taking reflexive notes about my role in the research, including reflections on my insider/participant status and privilege as researcher. This reflective process was iterative (Spiggle, 1994) because in reading my reflexive notes I would sometimes add further reflections about the same topic, only seen from a later perspective. As suggested by Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2002), I noted my emotional reactions to the research process and interactions with the poets, which included frustration and anxiety (reflexive journal, August 30, 2016). This process entailed constant observation and examination (Macbeth, 2001). Paying attention to my emotions allowed me to reflect on any discomfort that I encountered that resulted from my own social locations or experiences and allowed for a greater transparency of my biases. Several of my personal reflections in this dissertation include my emotional reactions. I also reflected by writing a few short reflexive poems, some of which are featured in this dissertation.

In terms of poets' reflexivity and subjectivity, the poets were asked to reflect on various facets of the project. Firstly, in terms of reflexivity, in a group meeting, poets were asked to reflect on their participation in the first set of interviews, and to give me feedback on my role in this process. In other words, we discussed the interactions that occurred. Secondly, the poets were given access to the recordings of the group performance as a reflective tool to help them think about the poetic performance. Based on these recordings and the poets' reflections, they were asked questions in the second interview about the group process and dynamic during the performance, and how their social locations may have influenced their emotional reactions to the poetry. They also took part in a final debriefing where they reflected on the research process and their role in it (see Appendix K).

Ethics Review and Informed Consent

Ethics Review. This study sought and received ethics approval from the Concordia University Human Research Ethics Committee. The first certification of ethical acceptability for research involving human subjects was issued in May 2016 and then renewed in May 2017 and May 2018.

Informed Consent. Both the poets and community organizers were sent invitations to participate (see Appendices A and B) and consent forms (see Appendices C and D), either by e-mail or in person. Both documents were sent several weeks before ethics' approval for the research project came into effect on May 16, 2016, to give them time to look it over. Due to

previous group meetings, they had already been informed verbally what the project was about and what their participation would entail. The letter of invitation, therefore, was a formality. In a group meeting on May 20th, 2016, I went through the updated consent forms orally with them, and they signed the forms (there were slight changes from the previous version sent to them). During this session, I reiterated the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their participation and data collected, the fact that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and the potential risks and benefits of participation. All but one decided to use their full, real names—and later, another decided to use a pseudonym for both her first and last name. The community organizers also received invitations to participate and consent forms in person or via e-mail and were given time to read them before signing them. I also re-iterated that their participation was voluntary and that they could change their minds at any time. All four signed the consent forms. None of them had any questions or concerns about the consent forms but one had a question or two about the interview questions and another wanted to meet ahead of time to go over the interview questions.

At a meeting with my Ph.D. supervisor in June 2017, we discussed the matter of confidentiality of the poets again, and she asked me to consider speaking to them about the possible use of pseudonyms or minimally, to use only their first names in this dissertation (reflexive journal, June 15, 2017), due to the fact that they are identified with marginalized social positions in this study, which will be published on-line. This discussion about continuous consent (Allmark & Mason, 2006) led me to speak to the poets again about anonymity and confidentiality. Because of this discussion, one of the poets, Sana, who originally was going to use her real name, decided to be identified as Sana S., which is a pseudonym. The consent form was filled out again to reflect this change.

Methods and Analysis

This part of the dissertation will describe the study's methods. Firstly, it will look at the selection of poets and community organizers and then at the portraits of the poets and community organizers selected to participate in this study. Finally, data collection procedures, and the process of data analysis, including emotional discourse, thematic and poetic analysis, will be delineated.

Selection of the Poets. This dissertation will now look at the selection of the poets. Through my experiences as a coordinator of a community poetry group and as a community

poet in Côte-des-Neiges, I had gotten to know the four other poets involved in this project years before my data collection. Overall, I knew them for five-to-ten years before the commencement of the study. In some cases, I had performed my poetry alongside them in community events in the neighbourhood. At other times, I was the organizer or co-organizer of such events.

In the pre-research stage, I started contacting community members in January 2015 by phone, e-mail or in person to tell them that I wanted to do a research project in Côte-des-Neiges that focused on community poetry. Due to previous shared experiences, I already had their coordinates. I contacted seven people who I knew were community poets who lived, or/and worked/volunteered in Côte-des-Neiges and were active in Côte-des-Neiges organizations. They were also people living in marginal situations: For example, five were on social assistance, two were immigrants, and five suffered from mental health difficulties. They had also all written, at some time or another, poems about social issues. At the same time, they represented diversity in terms of social locations. Initially, following the precepts of community-based research (D'Alonzo, 2010), I invited them to engage in exchanges with me about research design, and questions about the methodology of the project. These consultations were done to ensure that the project had some relevance to community concerns. These exchanges took place in individual face-to-face encounters.

At one point during these consultations, I decided to do the project exclusively in English rather than a bilingual (French/English) study. I knew that it would be much less time consuming and easier for me. Therefore, three of the community members were not eligible for this project because they wrote poetry exclusively in French. The other four spoke English very well and wrote or adapted poetry in English. By March 2015, they informally agreed to participate in the project. I then met with these individuals in four group meetings, between March 2015 and April 2016, to discuss in more detail the methodology of the project. During these group meetings, it was agreed that I would also act as a participant in the project. Throughout these meetings, I made it clear that they were not obliged to participate in the project if they no longer wanted to do so.

In many ways, the poets chosen for this study were very representative of the average community poet in Côte-des-Neiges or Montréal. For example, they lived in marginal situations in various ways, and had varying degrees of experience writing and sharing poetry. However, in terms of writing poetry about social justice issues, and being social activists, they were

representative of only a sector of community poets in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, as many community poets in the area in fact do not write about these issues. At the same time, in Montréal overall, there are many community poets who use poetry as a means of social action (Abdelhak, 2013). I would add that in terms of educational level, four of the five poets had either a bachelor's degree or had undergone graduate studies. As such, they were better educated than the average community poet in Côte-des-Neiges and Montréal. The political positions of the five poets in this study, generally, were also further to the left than many community poets in the neighbourhood. Finally, the fact that the poets were either anglophones or allophones is representative of only half of the community poets in Côte-des-Neiges as the other half are francophones or speak French to the exclusion of English. Of course, in the city of Montréal, francophone community poetry groups are in the majority. These estimates are based on my personal experiences of being involved in community poetry in Côte-des-Neiges, and on a few academic (see Sjollemma & Hanley, 2013) and non-academic (see Abdelhak, 2013) sources.

It must also be said that in terms of the original seven community members contacted for this project, I got in touch with people I had had positive interactions with, who I knew were articulate and reflective, whose poetry I found interesting in terms of social justice, and who had had enough exposure, except in one case, to academia to understand the nature of academic deadlines, and other academic rules and regulations. Therefore, my own biases played a role in who I reached out to in the first place and my power as a researcher was exercised in this case.

Selection of Community Organizers. I began contacting five community organizers during the pre-research stage towards the end of February 2015. They were all people I have previously collaborated with organising community poetry projects in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood. Therefore, I already knew them and had their contact information. I contacted them because I knew they had an interest in art-based community development. The five also had either interest in, or experience with, social justice issues. I also thought they would provide another perspective about possible research design and questions than the community members. Overall, they all thought the project was a good idea and thought it fit in well with the work they are doing *on the ground* (reflexive journal, April 15, 2015). They also all thought that interviewing community organizers as part of the research design was a good idea to provide another perspective on community poetry and social change (reflexive journal, April 9, 2015). Overall, they provided interesting suggestions as to how the project should develop. For

example, one highly recommended gathering a group of poets that was very diverse (reflexive journal, April 15, 2015). Some of the community organizers proposed ideas that I, in the end, did not incorporate: For example, one thought a bilingual project would better represent the neighbourhood (reflexive journal, April 15, 2015). Of the five community organizers, only three felt they understood English well enough to read poetry in English and comment on the poetry. Therefore, I extended a provisional invitation to these three-remaining people to join the project, which they informally accepted in the spring of 2015. Once again, I reassured them that they could change their mind at any point and decide to not participate.

In the fall of 2016, one of the organizers who originally said she would participate felt that she did not have the time. The other two who had originally expressed interest in participating formally accepted to do so in September 2016. At this point, I also extended an invitation to participate to three other community organizers, who I knew through community poetry events. Unfortunately, two did not feel they could comment well enough about the emotional impact of poetry on social justice issues and the third did not have the time. At this point, I decided to interview a total of four community organizers rather than five because it was obvious that finding people who would be willing and/or available to participate was more difficult than I anticipated. Also, I had decided that the role of the community organizers in the study would be a secondary or supplementary one and that the focus would be on the poets and their reflections. I then sent an invitation to participate to two other organizers that I knew and whose contact information I had through community organizing work and community poetry. In this first week of October 2016, these two individuals accepted the invitation to participate.

Portrait of the Poets. The four other poets in this study were invited to participate, firstly, because they identified with having a marginalized status (see Appendix A for Invitation to participate). In most cases, they experienced intersecting areas of marginalization and at the same time held privileged or dominant social positions (*e.g.*, in one case, the poet was an immigrant female of colour who is also married and a home owner). Together, we, the five poets, represented diversity in that we were varied ages, ethnicities, religions, and races. The other four poets were also invited to participate because they were active in writing and performing poetry in the Côte-des-Neiges area in association with local community organizations. The fact that I personally knew them from our collaborations in these organizations was also a reason they were invited to participate. Because I knew them, I knew

that they would be good candidates for this study: For example, I knew that they had written or adapted poetry with social change themes, and that they lived or had lived in Côte-des-Neiges or had volunteered and worked in the neighbourhood. Additionally, I knew that they were/are social activists who participate(d) in various social justice groups, including in Côte-des-Neiges.

General Biographical Sketch. This is a biographical sketch of the five poets. This is a general sketch done to offer some level of anonymity to them, and to be sensitive to factors indicating marginalization. A further sketch that details their experiences with poetry and activism will follow that will reveal their identities, or pseudonyms.

Three of the poets were middle-aged, one was a young adult, and one a senior. Two identified as male and three as female. Two of the poets indicated that they considered themselves to be pansexual (*i.e.*, not limited in sexual choice regarding biological sex, gender, or gender identity). Two of the poets were born in other countries, Pakistan and Trinidad, and immigrated to Canada while three were born and raised in Canadian provinces outside of Québec. Three identified as belonging to a minority religion¹²: Judaism and Islam. Four of the poets spoke English as a first language with the fifth having a very good command of English. Other languages spoken or understood included Yiddish, Dutch, Spanish, Urdu, and French. Two of the poets were receiving social assistance at the time of the study, including disability assistance, while a third had previously been on social assistance. One received a Canada pension. Four of the five poets were either full-time students, worked part-time or did contract work. Three of the poets indicated having either periodic or chronic mental health problems including obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), anxiety and depression. One had chronic physical health issues. Three of the poets were White, while one was Black and the other, South Asian. Two of the poets were divorced, one was dating, one was married, and one was in an open relationship. Two had adult children and one was a great-grandmother. Levels of education ranged from high school diploma to graduate studies. All the poets identified as social activists: Specifically, two identified as being left-wing socialists, one identified as a communist and another, as an anarchist.

Poet Portraits. Sana S. was inspired by Urdu poetry that has acted for social change in Pakistan. She had a fondness for social activist poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz whose Urdu poetry she has presented to community members in Côte-des-Neiges. Sana was a relative newcomer to

¹² These religions are minority religions within the Canadian context.

poetry and wrote her first two poems in 2013. Since then, her work was published in a community poetry anthology in Côte-des-Neiges where she also took part in a public reading. At the time of the study, Sana was active in Femmes du Monde à Côte-des-Neiges and was also a member of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women.

Russ Harrison moved to Montréal from Ontario in the 1990's. It was a trying time in his personal life, and he was adjusting to living in a new city. It was at this time that he started to express himself creatively through writing and performing poetry. He has performed his work in a wide array of venues across the city including at open mics, poetry festivals, and at community and activist events. His poems have been published in a variety of chapbooks, anthologies, and other forums. Much of his experiences with poetry took place in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, especially in collaboration with Project Genesis' anti-poverty group and with L'Anneau Poétique, the local poetic association. Russ has also taught poetry workshops with L'Anneau Poétique and, at the time of the study, was still active in anti-poverty work and poetry in Côte-des-Neiges.

Albertha Rennie has written poetry since her youth in Trinidad. She has also written song lyrics. She began to write activist poetry at the same time she started to become involved in anti-poverty work at Project Genesis in 2011. Prior to participating in this study, she began to perform her work in community forums, activist events, and public readings in Côte-des-Neiges. She also read her work on the air on a CKUT Radio McGill literary program. At the time of the study, Albertha was an anti-poverty activist and a member of the anti-poverty and housing committees at Project Genesis. She eventually returned to live in Trinidad on a full-time basis.

As a thirteen-year-old, Avi Grenadier wrote his first political poem in grade seven protesting Ontario premier Mike Harris' policies regarding education. He helped organize slam/spoken poetry events in university featuring poets from racialized communities. His major inspiration came from the poetry of the Hebrew prophets and their ethical message. Since moving to Montréal, Avi has taken part in community-based poetry workshops and public readings around workers' rights and anti-poverty themes in Côte-des-Neiges, in collaboration with Project Genesis and L'Anneau Poétique. He also acted as an organizer for migrant justice issues with Solidarity across Borders and worked to build an autonomous radical Jewish community. At the time of the study, Avi was a cook and caterer for social justice organizations. He has continued to be active with community poetry in Côte-des-Neiges.

Sandra Sjollega has written poetry since the age of ten. Originally from the greater Vancouver area, Sandy was an accomplished poet whose work has been published widely and she has authored three chapbooks. She has also performed her poetry at a wide array of readings, on community radio shows, and at community and activist events in Montréal. At the time of the study, Sandy was the coordinator of L'Anneau Poétique and in this role, organized activist-related poetry activities and events, focusing on anti-poverty, feminist, and Indigenous issues as well as Jewish-Muslim solidarity. She was also a member of Femmes du Monde and Project Genesis.

Portrait of the Community Organizers. Three of the community organizers decided to participate in an anonymous fashion and therefore the information I can give about them is limited (see Appendix B for Invitation to participate). “Gabriel” was a visual artist and poet who acted as an organizer of art and poetry activities in various community settings in Côte-des-Neiges over the course of many years. He also participated in social justice activities in the neighbourhood. “Saša,” who preferred the pronoun “they,” was a part-time community organizer who participated in community work in Côte-des-Neiges and organized arts-based activities, including poetry, that aimed at social change in community organization settings. Saša was also a visual artist, dancer and researcher. “Marie”, a social activist, was working part-time for a community organization in NDG at the time of the study. She organized many poetry activities, including in collaboration with Idle No More, an Indigenous rights groups. Marie also helped organize community poetry activities in Côte-des-Neiges. Marie had a degree in creative writing and was a poet and poetry editor. Patrizia Vinci was a community organizer at Femmes du Monde in Côte-des-Neiges and organized many community poetry events for her organization including public readings, photo exhibits accompanied by poems, poetry workshops, and popular education activities. At least two of these activities occurred on the national day against violence against women.

Of the four community organizers, two preferred to answer the interview questions in French. Their recorded interviews were translated by me into English.

Data Collection. The data in this study were collected from the following four sources: 1) written poems; 2) interviews with poets; 3) interviews with community organizers; and 4) researcher's notes and reflections. A poetry performance also took place that was recorded. The

recordings were to help the poets reflect on the poetry performance in order to answer questions about it in a second interview. Each of the sources of data listed will be described in more detail.

Written Poems. Five written poems, created or adapted by each of the poets, were collected by me either in person through a hard copy or over e-mail through an attachment. Prior to this collection, I advised the poets, both verbally and through the formal invitation to participate, that the poems needed to be written in English and needed to address social change in some way. In two cases, the poets were relatively new to poetry writing and had a limited selection of poems to choose from, as they themselves revealed in the poetic performance (reflexive journal, August 30, 2016). In two other cases, the poets had a wide variety of poems to choose from. In one of these situations, the poet presented four of her poems to me and asked me to make the final decision. She recounted this process to the other group members at the poetry performance (reflexive journal, August 30, 2016). Therefore, my own tastes and biases about what interesting social poetry consists of played a strong role in this choice (reflexive journal, August 30, 2016). My power as researcher was enacted in this situation. I chose a poem about government inaction around homelessness and poverty because I could relate to the subject matter, thought it was representative of issues in the neighbourhood, and I liked the rhyming scheme in the poem (reflexive journal, June 7, 2016).

Interviews with Poets. Two set of interviews were held with poets. The first set of interview questions (see Appendix E) were sent to the poets approximately six weeks before the interview process began, which was at the end of May 2016. These interviews were completed by the end of June 2016. I asked the poets to read over the questions and mentioned that I would be available for any questions, comments, feedback or revisions in person or over e-mail.

The one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the poets occurred in public locations of their choice and were audio recorded. In one interview, I ended up having to take breaks to explain some of the terminology to the poet (*e.g.*, the word *counter-narrative*). I had to request a second meeting with the poets, because, in three cases, I forgot to ask the last interview question and added a new question to the interview (about how their poems represented counter-narrative). I wrote up the transcripts and asked the poets if they wanted a copy. They all gladly accepted, and I sent them the copies through e-mail or in person. The motivation for providing copies was for them to have ownership of the data, to keep them informed, to help them understand the “intricacies of the process” (Kruzynski, 2004, p. 137), and to make sure I had

understood them correctly during the interview process (reflexive journal, May 26, 2016). This process of sending a copy of the written transcripts to the poets was repeated for each of the interviews conducted with them.

A group meeting was held after the first set of interviews to discuss any issues that may have come up and to reflect on the interview process (reflexive journal, July 14, 2016). I had a few concerns: Firstly, I felt uneasy that I had perhaps summarized the poets' words using my own vocabulary too frequently, and by doing so, was perhaps putting words in their mouths (reflexive journal, July 14, 2016). During the group discussion, the poets assured me that they didn't see this summarizing as taking anything away from their words and said they would have felt free to disagree with me had I misinterpreted them or if they didn't like the vocabulary I used (reflexive journal, July 14, 2016). Another issue that came up for me was that, during the interviews, some poets had commented more on the social issues occurring in the real-life situation than what was detailed in the poems. In some cases, I had to remind them to look at what was being said in the poem. I ended up feeling quite frustrated about this because in some of the group sessions leading up to the first interview, we, as a group, had discussed the fact that the first interview questions would be based on the content of their poems. I, therefore, had not anticipated their comments about real-life situations to the extent that they occurred (reflexive journal, June 13, 2016). Some of the poets responded by saying that they appreciated my reminders during the interview process.

One of the poets raised a concern in the meeting about feeling a disconnect between reading the questions as a somewhat abstract exercise, after receiving his copy of the interview questions, and answering the interview questions during the interview process. The other poets agreed that this had been, at least to a certain extent, their experience as well (reflexive journal, July 14, 2016). In retrospect, a group meeting where we all discussed the questions together may have been a good idea rather than leaving it to the poets to reflect alone on the questions (reflexive journal, September 22, 2016).

I felt somewhat frustrated that the first round of interviews had been a bit messy (reflexive journal, July 14, 2016). I realized later that I had made a few assumptions: 1) that the poets would understand the academic language used in the questionnaires (*e.g.*, counter-narrative) as well as I do; and 2) that they would be able to concentrate on the material in the poems rather than on real-life situations. It is due to my life experiences and educational background that I

have more familiarity, ease and understanding of academic terminology (reflexive journal, August 23rd, 2016). As for the ability to concentrate on the material in the poems, a group meeting specifically to go over the interview questions together would have perhaps been a good way to address this problem before the interviews took place (reflexive journal, September 20, 2016). A certain role confusion (Kalei Kanuha, 2000) was perhaps at play in that I related so well to the poets as a fellow community member and poet that I forgot about our differences (reflexive journal, September 20, 2016).

A second set of interviews took place with the poets (see Appendix G). This occurred after a group performance of the poetry in August 2016. The interview questions were sent to them at the beginning of August 2016 to give them enough time to review the questions. The interviews took place between mid September and the end of October 2016. During this round of interviews, I met with one of the poets in a pre-interview meeting to go through the questions thoroughly one-by-one and to translate any academic language that she was not familiar with into more accessible language (reflexive journal, September 16th, 2016). This greatly helped the interview the following week: It was a smoother process than the first interview with her (reflexive journal, September 23rd, 2016). I had considered my experiences and reflections in the first round of interviews and took measures to correct some of the difficulties. At the same time, because the interview questions were about the poetry performance that the poets had recently taken part in (at the end of August 2016), I did not feel that a group meeting to go over the interview questions was necessary (reflexive journal, November 11, 2016). Indeed, the poets seemed to have a significantly easier time responding to these questions than those that were asked during the first interview process.

Interview with Community Organizers. Four community organizers also participated in this study (see Appendix H for interview questions). Three of them took part in the study anonymously, and only Patrizia used her real name. I also sent the questions ahead of time to the community organizers so that they could ask me for clarifications about the questions. Patrizia and I had a brief e-mail exchange about this. I also met with Saša and we went over the questions together at their request. Interviews took place during the late fall of 2016 and were completed in January of 2017. The organizers were asked to read the five poems presented in this study. Interviews followed to gauge their emotional reactions to the poetry and to ask how they saw these types of poems as contributing to community development and social change in

Côte-des-Neiges and other communities in Montréal. The information garnered through these interviews was to supplement the information provided by the poets.

The interactions with the community organizers, overall, went well. With Marie, however, her answers to the questions were not what I was expecting, as she was very critical of several aspects of the poems. For example, she criticized the use of literary devices (*e.g.*, the rhyming scheme), grammatical errors in the poems, and what she saw as a lack of editing. This emphasis surprised and upset me, and I also felt intimidated by her expertise as a poetry editor. I felt especially protective of the other poets (reflexive journal, January 2, 2017). Her answers proved to be a “negative case” (Brodsky, 2012, p. 2) where “spontaneously appearing pieces of data that differ from the researcher's expectations, assumptions” (p. 2). In the end, I was able to integrate this material into the findings and it provided for a very interesting, if unexpected, discussion.

Researcher's Reflections and Notes. I began taking notes and reflecting on the interactions between myself and the other parties involved in this study as of January 2015, when I first started contacting community organizers and members in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood. This reflecting continued until the end of the study. Throughout this dissertation, these reflections are shared. It has been a challenge for me to know how much of these reflections and information I should share in the dissertation. Overall, I found the reflections to be an extremely important and enlivening source of data. In some cases, I have mentioned my community poetry experiences as reflective notes to supplement the findings if I found that they were relevant to the discussion and perhaps could add some supplementary information about community poetry.

Other Sources of Information: Poetry Performance. A poetry performance took place on August 30, 2016 at the Côte-des-Neiges community centre where the five poets performed their poetry and gave feedback as to their emotional reactions to the other poets' poetry. This performance and discussion lasted approximately two and a half hours and was recorded. Although not a source of data, this performance and its recordings served as a means of reflection for the poets to answer the second interview questions concerning performed poetry and social change.

I reflected on the dynamic of the performance in my journal. More so than during the interviews, the split I encountered between my role as a poet/participant and that of a researcher was keenly felt during the poetic performance (reflexive journal, August 31, 2016). I felt

anxious to read my poem in front of the others, as it was highly personal and yet, in the role of facilitator, I had to keep track of the time, and remind the poets to keep their focus on their emotional rather than intellectual reactions concerning the performed poetry (reflexive journal, August 31, 2016). In retrospect, it perhaps would have been advisable to have an outside party act as facilitator, to free me from this responsibility. On the other hand, the poets knew and trusted me and may have felt uncomfortable with someone who they did not know in the role of facilitator (reflexive journal, August 31, 2016). After completing the second set of interviews with the poets, it became evident they felt a high level of safety and comfort during the performance, which, I believe, allowed them to open up and share honestly (reflexive journal, November 23rd, 2016). Although the process was a difficult one for me, the performance, overall, was a very rewarding experience:

People seemed very engaged, concentrated, and connected to all the performances. All the poems were intense, emotionally provocative...and about...painful subject matters. What was very clear was a feeling of great respect, trust, solidarity, and empathy between the group members despite having sometimes-differing reactions to the poems (reflexive journal, August 31, 2016).

Data Analysis. In preparation for analysis, I organized data by creating verbatim transcripts from digitally taped interviews. This process involved listening and re-listening to the material to capture all the words spoken. In two cases, I carried out spontaneous translations from French into English as I listened to the interviews. I later reviewed the translations and made some adjustments. I carried out the emotional discourse analysis first, followed by the thematic and poetic analysis (*i.e.*, analyzing the literary devices). I often went back, in an iterative process (Spiggle, 1994), to review and change aspects of the analyses.

The process of analyzing the data for this project turned out to be a very involved endeavour that demanded a lot of reviewing of the research questions and data collection material—an in-depth reflection that I initially found to be overwhelming (reflexive journal, February 20, 2017). This process at first had me jumping from one set of data to another, from one set of interview transcripts to another, and was rather disorienting (reflexive journal, February 20, 2017). I began data analysis in January 2017. It took me at least a month to settle down and concentrate on the first aspect of my analysis: Looking at the emotional themes and other elements of emotional discourse analysis present in the poems. This section of the

dissertation describes the preliminary analysis conducted by the poets, and the emotional discourse, thematic and poetic analysis conducted by me.

Preliminary Emotional Discourse Analysis. Each of the poets conducted a preliminary emotional discourse analysis of his or her poem. Each answered questions concerning the emotional themes¹³ and the other aspects of emotional discourse analysis present in his or her written poem. Concerning these other aspects, they were asked questions that led to reflections about objects of fear/relational threat, resistance and empowerment, and the rhetoric of fear and desire. They also looked at the exercise of power and experience of security/relational promise/object of desire. The questions were, for the most part, stated in laymen's terms but the answers yielded addressed these elements or concepts. Their answers served as a preliminary emotional discourse analysis of the poems. These questions had been sent to the poets approximately six weeks before the one-on-one meetings began, which was at the end of May 2016. I invited them to read over the questions and to give me feedback if they so desired. Given the fact that they were conducting analysis of the poems, I felt it was important to give them the chance to reflect on their answers before the meetings if so desired. The meetings (*i.e.*, interviews) were digitally recorded and took place in public locations of their choice. After the meetings, I wrote up the transcripts and sent them to the poets to give them a chance to reflect on their answers.

A few issues came up during the meetings. For example, some poets had a hard time describing the poem's emotional themes or what emotions they thought the poem was expressing. I had to remind them to look at the emotional themes in the poem rather than discussing the narratives of the poems or the real-life social injustices that the poems reflected (reflexive journal, May 23rd, 2016). I felt a certain level of frustration in having to remind them because the emotional aspect of the research project had been discussed several times in previous group sessions. It also made me think that people may just not be used to, or may have difficulty, describing emotional themes or discussing emotions in general. I was reminded of this later when one of the organizers stated that she felt uncomfortable talking about emotions in

¹³ The emotional themes concerned what emotions the poet thought the poem was expressing. How a poem evokes emotion or emotional evocation, on the other hand, refers to how people react emotionally to the poem. To illustrate the difference, I identified one of the emotional themes in my poem as "forgiveness" whereas some of the other poets did not feel forgiveness when listening to the poem, but irritation or anger that a perpetrator was being offered forgiveness. Therefore, the use of the word *emotional theme* is synonymous with emotional expression.

a rational way (reflexive journal, January 17, 2017). Another issue came up about the emotional themes: One of the poets, in a later group meeting, said he wasn't clear, when answering the preliminary analysis questions, whether he was to talk about his emotional reactions to the poem or what he thought the poem was expressing emotionally (reflexive journal, July 14, 2016). I reviewed the questionnaire (see Appendix F) and saw that the questions could have been clearer in this regard. I also made the mistake of assuming that the other poets were as emotionally literate as I was: That is, I presumed that they could name and discuss emotions as easily or that they would be as familiar with academic vocabulary, such as *emotional theme*, as I was. Still, their analysis ended up constituting the foundation of my emotional discourse analysis of the poems and overall, I was very pleased with the role they played in this regard, as their analysis, in the end, was well thought out and articulated (reflexive journal, March 17, 2017).

Emotional Discourse Analysis: My First Step. Data analysis began in earnest in February 2017. I started conducting emotional discourse analysis of the poems, using the preliminary analysis as a starting point. I re-read the preliminary analysis transcripts and the poems several times first over a period of a few weeks¹⁴. The emotional discourse analysis I conducted was inspired by the themes and concepts in de Courville Nicol's book (2011). The poems were analyzed individually, that is, each of the poems was analyzed separately from the others. In each poem, I looked at the following elements of emotional discourse analysis: The problem, danger, relational threat (*i.e.*, object of fear), notions of resistance and empowerment, rhetoric of fear and desire, and the emotional themes. Analysis also involved looking at exercises of power and "object of desire" (p.17), "relational promise" or "experience(s) of security" (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 18) as the sought-after results of the exercises of power.

The procedure for each of the elements or concepts of emotional discourse analysis was the same: As a first step, while reviewing the preliminary analysis, I looked at the poem in question at the same time and wrote down the concept on the side of the page (in the commentary box in Microsoft Word) of the excerpts of the poem that represented the poets' analysis. In some cases, the poets cited certain passages of the poems that their analysis was pertaining to. In other cases, where they did not do that, I found excerpts of the poems that matched the theme or concept being described. In other instances, I summarized their words in

¹⁴ I also re-read the interview transcripts conducted with the poets and community organizers. Although questions about emotional themes were not asked during these interviews, some of the participants commented on this topic as part of their answers to other questions.

the preliminary analysis into the elements and concepts of emotional discourse analysis and then looked at the poems to see where these concepts fit. I also re-read the poems to see if the poets had overlooked any themes or concepts. If so, I made note of them in the commentary box. Overall, when it came this first part of the analysis, I did not change anything from the preliminary analysis, but added elements to it. Some of the additions I came up with included emotional themes such as *doom*, *affinity*, and *isolation*.

Second Step: Creating and Modifying Norm Pairs. The second step in my emotional discourse analysis involved taking the emotional themes found in each of the poems and transforming them into norm pairs. Again, this was done for each of the poems individually. Norm pairs illustrate the feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness in their differentiated or specific forms¹⁵. To transform emotional themes into norm pairs is an essential step to conduct emotional discourse analysis. As de Courville Nicol (2011) states: “Fear emotions, as felt incapacities, should not be thought of outside of their relationship to desire emotions, or felt capacities, toward which they tend” (p. 3). Finding the norm pairs allowed me to see how each feeling of powerlessness described in the poems were coupled with a feeling of powerfulness. These norm pairs are primarily articulated in the appendices and not in the body of the dissertation.

This second step was a very intricate and detailed process. My first task here was to review the emotional themes in the poems to see if they expressed powerfulness or powerlessness. For example, in Sana’s poem, *dependence* clearly indicates an incapacity of the women in Pakistan to take charge of their lives. In the same poem, *defence or defending* is a powerful feeling expressed through the poem to protect Islam against potential attack. Once I determined if the emotional themes in the poems expressed powerfulness or powerlessness, I looked at the emotional norm pairs listed in de Courville Nicol’s (2011) book, which acted as guiding concepts. Later, when revising the rough draft of the thesis, I re-read Gould (2009) who states that emotions are fluid in that they can be both mobilizing, that is, powerful, or demobilizing, (*i.e.*, representing powerlessness) depending on the context. I therefore decided to re-read the transcripts from the preliminary emotional discourse analysis and the poems. As a result, I once again revised the emotional themes and norm pairs in the poems, especially in

¹⁵ Feeling of powerlessness and powerfulness are general categories that contain specific emotions. For example, oppression can be considered a feeling of powerlessness and its pair, emancipation, can be considered a feeling of powerfulness (de Courville Nicol, 2011).

terms of determining whether they represented powerlessness or powerfulness. For example, I allowed for the fact that some emotions, such as fear, could represent powerlessness in some of the poems and powerfulness in another.

In some cases, there were no norm pairs listed in de Courville Nicol's book (2011) that corresponded to the emotional themes derived from the first step of the analysis. Some of these emotional themes included: *Solidarity, alienation, protectiveness, and shaming*. In these instances, I took the emotional themes, and with Dr. de Courville Nicol's help, reviewed them to create a new set of norm pairs (see Appendix I). The need to create new norm pairs was something I had anticipated having to do but had not given a lot of thought to prior to commencing the data analysis and felt somewhat daunted by the task (reflexive journal, January 30, 2017).

To create the new norm pairs, I searched the definition of the emotional theme in the dictionary, for example, *alienation*, as well as potential antonyms that could be used to form the norm pair. This process ended up being iterative (Spiggle, 1994), where I reflected on the words, their meanings, and potential antonyms, and in some cases, revised either the original word or the antonym. Even after analysis was completed and while writing up the findings of the emotional discourse analysis, I revised and added new norm pairs based on further reflection (reflexive journal, July 10, 2017). In some cases, I modified the norm pairs found in de Courville Nicol's (2011) book because, when analyzing the emotional themes, I saw that they fit only with one side of the norm pair listed. For example, the independence part of the *dependence/independence* norm pair (p. 36) did not fit in Avi's poem, because the poem did not suggest that the Palestinians should become independent in their struggle but rather should find support from the outside world. I therefore changed this norm pair to *dependence/support*. I also changed the original definitions of some of the norm-pairs, including *mourning/grieving*, to better fit what I thought the poem was expressing.

Third Step: Identifying Similarities and Differences in the Poems and Conducting Poetic Analysis. At this point, I created a description of all the new and modified norm pairs (see Appendix I) as well as a table (see Appendix J) where I elaborated on the similarities and differences between the poems in terms of the identified norm pairs. These appendices were revised numerous times. I also conducted a poetic analysis (see below) of the poems and this information was added to Appendix J.

Appendices I and J do not contain information about the other concepts of emotional discourse analysis previously described in this dissertation: For example, objects of fear, rhetoric of fear/desire, or resistance. I felt that the addition of this information would make the appendices too cumbersome. In addition, these elements acted as supplementary information in this study. However, I did write up, for each poem, a detailed description of these elements to be reviewed by the poets.

A Note about Poetic Analysis within Emotional Discourse Analysis. Poetry represents a specific form of discourse, with its own specificities, in this case literary devices, such as imagery, rhythm, and metaphor. These devices can contribute to the expression of emotion in poetry (Prendergast, 2009). After completing an initial emotional discourse analysis and conferring with Dr. de Courville Nicol (personal communication, March 22, 2017), I decided to conduct a poetic analysis of the poems, which consisted of examining the literary devices in the poems to see if and how they contributed to the feelings of powerfulness and powerlessness that I had compiled. For this, I had to look at the comments made by the poets that concerned literary devices and emotional expression. I also re-read the poems. In some cases, new emotional themes and norm pairs were created. For instance, looking at the use of rhythm in Russ' poem, I devised the emotional norm pair of *giving up/perseverance*, which had not previously been identified.

Fourth Step: Consulting with the Poets. I consulted with the poets at two junctures regarding the emotional discourse analysis, in May and November 2017. In May, once I had completed an initial analysis of all the elements of emotional discourse analysis, I brought these analyses to the poets in a group discussion (at this time, the poetic analysis was not yet completed). They reviewed the table (see Appendix J) on emotional norm pairs. They also reviewed (and kept) the summaries of the other elements of emotional discourse analysis, such as the objects of fear, the rhetoric of fear and desire, and the exercises of power. A few items were changed in Appendix J. For example, all the poets whose poems included *shaming* believed that in a social change context the pair for this emotion should be *enabling*. I initially agreed to this and changed the norm pair from unsuccessful/successful shaming to *enabling/shaming*. I later changed this norm pair to *complicity/shaming* as I felt that *complicity* with the dangerous or problematic status quo is a more potent way of expressing the feeling state of inactivity of officials or third parties who do not help those being oppressed. In the second meeting with the poets in November, I presented this change as well as an updated version of the

table on emotional norm pairs (Appendix J) to them that included the poetic analysis. They agreed with the change concerning the shaming pair, the emotional themes/norm pairs assigned to their poems, and to the literary devices mentioned as part of the poetic analysis. Each was given a hard copy of the table and was invited to get back to me with further comments if so desired.

Fifth Step: Incorporating Emotional Discourse Analysis into the Thematic Analysis. As complicated and involved as the emotional discourse analysis of the poems was, the challenge of how to present the findings was equally daunting (reflexive journal, July 11, 2017). I discussed this task with my Ph.D. supervisor at different intervals during the summer of 2017. Minimally, I knew that I did not want to isolate these findings from those garnered through thematic analysis (reflexive journal, July 11, 2017). Given that the data connected to the emotional discourse analysis concerned the written poems, and that an aspect of the data derived from the interviews also featured the written poems, I decided to combine these two sets of data and analyze them together thematically (see more under *Thematic analysis*)¹⁶.

Sixth Step: Writing up the Findings. In writing up the findings, I combined information from the thematic analysis with the information found in Appendix J, which is a summary of the emotional discourse analysis. Many of the results of the emotional discourse analysis are categorized in this dissertation under the following emotional themes: *Fear and related emotions, despair and depression, anger and related emotions, and hope*. The results of analyzing the elements of resistance and empowerment, as well as those of the rhetoric of fear/desire, are also categorized under these four themes. In the findings, although feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness are mentioned, emotional themes (such as *disgust* and *shaming*) are generally not presented in norm pairs: This was due to my desire to present the material in the way that it was expressed by the poets (they did not elaborate on norm-pairs). However, there were a few instances where I did find it appropriate to discuss norm pairs in the findings, as well as some of the similarities and differences between the poems in terms of emotional themes and norm pairs. However, the elaboration of norm pairs and the discussion of the similarities and differences between the poems in terms of norm pairs are primarily discussed in Appendices I and J.

¹⁶ Although certain elements/concepts of emotional discourse analysis, such as objects of fear, resistance, or exercises of power, do not appear in Appendices J and K, they are included in the thematic analysis.

Reflections about Emotional Discourse Analysis (reflexive journal, May 11, 2017).

Overall, the procedure of analysing the poems for the elements of emotional discourse analysis was very intricate, detailed, trying and exciting. The process was iterative (Spiggle, 1994) as I went back to re-read the poets' analysis and poems on numerous occasions throughout the data analysis procedure and while writing up the findings. I ended up changing the results of the analysis and the writing up of the findings at numerous junctures.

Of course, personal factors and assumptions influenced my analysis (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In my interpretations of the poets' words or from my own reading of the poems, I was not only influenced by the emotional themes in de Courville Nicol's book (2011), but often searched for and came up with what I believe are social change-oriented themes such as *alienation*, *exploitation*, and *solidarity*. In this process of emotional discourse and poetic analysis, I believe that the activist, academic and poet in me came to the fore. I did not feel a sense of conflict between these different aspects of myself but rather an interesting mixture and balance between them. I also related to many of the poems personally, for example, as a Jew, a former welfare recipient, and as a woman. I found that I agreed with the politics of some of the poems more than others. Some of the poems irritated me because I felt uncomfortable with their politics. To my knowledge, this did not affect my analysis of the poems as I strove to give each one equal attention and effort. In earlier drafts of my dissertation, I gave less attention to my own poem and more to that of the other poets, to not focus too much on myself. In revising the findings section, I ended up citing myself and my poem more often than in earlier drafts, to obtain more balance.

I also believe that my role of insider, community member and participant led me to be very careful not to change anything originally stated by the poets in their preliminary analysis, but rather to add to it. I did this to put as much emphasis as I could on their voices. Also, I thought their analyses were very good! As not all the poets were equally articulate in naming emotional themes or discussing literary devices, my own interpretation of the poems at times played a bigger role. In addition, I had the privilege and power accorded to me by my position as researcher to interpret their analyses and words, and to conduct my own analysis of the poems. I did not always feel comfortable with this power, even though the preliminary analysis was conducted by the poets, and that two meetings with them took place to seek their feedback on my analysis,

Thematic Analysis. When I started the thematic analysis, which began at the end of March 2017, I used the transcripts from the interviews featuring the words of the poets and community organizers. As a first step, this analysis consisted of using open coding (Kolb, 2012) of the transcripts. In some cases, coding used on one set of transcripts influenced coding on other transcripts. After reviewing the codes and revising some of them, I proceeded to the next step of coding, axial coding (Kolb, 2012) that looks for categories or themes. At first, the categories or themes I arrived at contained material that was associated with both the written poetry and the sharing of poetry (*i.e.*, the reading and the performance of the poems). These themes were reviewed by the poets in a group meeting in May 2017 and they thought they all made sense given their recollection of the interviews conducted with them and their knowledge of the poems.

After reflecting on the thematic analysis, I decided to extract the information concerning the written poetry and looked at this information in conjunction with the results from the emotional discourse analysis, which also concerned the written poems. The original open codes concerning the material about the written poetry had been sub-labelled “written poetry” so this extraction was easily carried out. The results of the emotional discourse analysis were then open coded, keeping in mind the open codes from the extracted material. Adjustments were then made to some of the open codes from both these sources of data. An axial coding process (Kolb, 2012) led to the formation of a general theme: Individual acts of poetic resistance.

The decision to combine the two sets of data in thematic analysis occurred for a few reasons. Firstly, as mentioned, I did not want to isolate the findings of the emotional discourse analysis but rather wanted to integrate them, minimally, into some of the other material. Combining the two sets of data in thematic analysis enabled the information to build upon each other, thus deepening understanding. Also, as emotional expression is a means of resisting or challenging dominant perspectives that highlight rational thought (de Courville Nicol, 2011), I suspected that the material from the emotional discourse analysis would complement some of the data garnered from the interviews that also looked at emotions and written poetry, in this case, as counter-narrative discourse. Eventually, I came to see that discussing the written word as individual resistance would be a necessary stepping stone to examining the sharing of poetry. In this way, a clear picture of what exactly was being shared would be in place. Finally, this set up reflected the research questions which separate the written poetry from its shared aspect.

The remaining material associated with shared poetry was reviewed again and some of the codes were adjusted to account for the absence of the material concerning the written poetry. It became obvious reviewing and rewriting the codes that some of the material pertained to the community building process through shared poetry (either through performance or reading it) while some of it detailed activities or ideas pertaining to poetry carried out in community organizations or pointed to larger social implication in some way. Therefore, another major split occurred in the remaining material that was eventually divided into two major themes: 1) Community poetry in interaction: Individual and collective power and 2) Poetry and emotions: Social change in community and beyond. The material in each of these categories was reviewed again as several sub-themes were identified.

Poetic Analysis within Themes and Thematic Analysis of the Poems. Poetic analysis within themes refers to the fact that after arriving at each of the themes and sub-themes, I looked at the literary devices in the poems to see if they were contributing important information to the specific theme. This procedure was largely based on the comments made by the poets and organizers as well as my own analysis of the poems.

Thematic analysis of the poems refers to my analysis of the poems to see if their content contributed in some way to the thematic analysis I was undertaking and if I could code any of their content in a similar fashion to the interview material. In some cases, this was possible. This was the very last step in the analysis process because I wanted the comments of the poets and organizers, coded and organized into themes and sub-themes, to guide me in my review of the poems. An example of the thematic analysis of the poems is when I looked closer at the poems to see the links between personal and political meanings, which was one of the themes I had articulated from analyzing the interviews.

To incorporate social change and critical principles into its research design, this study used methodological frameworks that included poetic inquiry, emotional discourse analysis, collaborative research and reflexivity and subjectivity, all considered to be research methodologies that encourage knowledge and knowing from alternative perspectives. Linked to these methodologies were specific data sources and data analysis methods. For example, poems created by community poets in their own localities (prior to the poems being used here) were the main source of data in this study. Data analysis methods included poetic analysis and emotional discourse analysis. Using such methodologies and methods ensured that the voices of the

participants in this study, specifically the community poets, would come to the fore in a unique and alternative fashion. These voices will be featured in the next chapter of this dissertation through the presentation of the five poems under investigation for this study.

CHAPTER 4: Community Poems

This chapter presents the five poems submitted by the poets and under investigation in this study¹⁷. Each poem will be followed by a brief description of the circumstances in which the poet wrote the poem as well brief comments about previous publications or performances of the poem in activist or community settings. The order in which the poems are presented is as follows: *We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders*, *Dreams*, *My Daughter's Freedom*, *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo* and *It's Burning/Es Brent*.

We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders

I implore you today
In this venture, you're about to take
You have to make good use of each day
To accomplish the plan as they say

You say that you understand
The problem that's on our hand
Homelessness, poverty, shame and pain
That is driving us insane

It's not easy on our gut
To have empty plates and cups
Winter's snow and sleet
Our bodies can't defeat

We need a roof over our heads
And a comfy bed
Not in the metro or under a bridge
Or on the pavement
That's a degrading statement

We need to get around
To other parts of our town
But the bus fare is so high
All we can do is decide
Just stay close to home and walk around
In our own corner of town

No one seems to accept blame
For causing such disdain

¹⁷ All the poets gave permission for their poems to be reproduced in this dissertation. Each signed release forms allowing for reproduction of the poems.

It's time more than time for a turn around
That we can hold our heads high in this town
The ship is going down
We need a captain that is strong
We're tired of the merry go round
Lead us to safer shores where we belong

We want committed leaders with dignity
Integrity and empathy
We're depending on you to get us there:
Where?
Out of despair.

"Don't just hear but listen.
Don't let us down
Let our votes count¹⁸

Albertha Rennie wrote *We plead for integrity from our leaders* in 2014 to call political leaders to task about doing something about chronic problems of social injustice, including poverty and homelessness. The poem recounts the harsh plight of the poor and homeless in an urban setting which includes sleeping under bridges, hunger, and not being able to pay for public transportation. Throughout the poem, she puts the responsibility of the suffering of the poor squarely on the shoulders of the elected officials, who are described as both negligent and, potentially, being the ones to save the day. Albertha stated that she included herself as one of the poor described in the poem. She performed the poem at numerous community and activist events. The poem was published in a local, community poetry anthology in 2014.

Dreams

dreams last week crush me as I dive to hide
nightmares rip me open
and expose me to suicide
my suicide
as I jumped in front of metro trains
or choked on a rope
deep blue turned my brains

thank you, capitalism, for the dysfunctional memories
the poison of the madman flows in his arteries
with alienation stamping flickering creativity until it dulls

¹⁸ Rennie, A. (2014). See reference page for full reference.

with no escape in daydreams
or muses in sleeping skulls

who owns you?
who owns me?
do you own?
did your stock, your futures witness prosperity?
or did you sell out, sell dear, sell high
leaving fresh dealt humanity high and dry to die?
when does the running end if one cannot escape?
without hearing a starter's gun
and with no conception of the tape?

this race is being run
and without cranial walls to flee this class madness
I am the done...
unless I fight and grab the freedom I am due!
to build the new world that can ensue
one with all
no want
or walls to hold hope away
with everyone able to seize humanity's day¹⁹

Russ Harrison wrote the poem presented for this project, *Dreams*, in 1993 shortly after moving to Montréal. At this time, he was also involved in a variety of social movements and political groups. His participation in these groups provided for ongoing political discussion that helped him view personal issues from a social and collective perspective. *Dreams* recounts the struggle of the main character (Russ himself) who is having dreams about suicide due to feeling under siege by the class system. The poem critically questions and harshly condemns those who are profiting from the capitalistic system and calls out to all those suffering to join in solidarity to create a world where oneness and plenty are the order of the day. Russ found empowerment and empathy in face of these personal struggles by performing this poem approximately twenty times in public, including at a talent show at a local food bank in Côte-des-Neiges.

¹⁹ Harrison, R. (1993). See reference page for full reference.

My Daughter's Freedom

Where I'm from
in Pakistan,
some women
pushed out of the family:
Old women in shelters,
unmarried sisters.
Or they can stay,
take care of the children,
work as a maid.

They can live and die like that.

But my daughter, she moved with us
to Québec, to Canada.
She is twenty-three,
on-line business owner.
She has lived almost half of her life here.

In Pakistan,
in some villages,
women forced into marriage
-not by Islam-
by rural custom,
by their families.
For land, for money, for a dowry.
Girls of ten
engaged to older men.
A widow of twenty
engaged to a boy,
her late husband's brother.
She must stay in the family.
He can marry other women,
she is stuck there.

She can live and die like that.

But my daughter lives in Québec, in Canada.
She is twenty-three,
can choose whom to marry.
She has spent almost half of her life here.

In Pakistan,
some women
taunted by in-laws,
beaten by husbands.

Some women,
acid thrown in their faces
if they refuse to marry.
Some women
gang raped, used as pawns
-not according to Islam-
according to rural tradition,
in games of revenge.
If suspected
of illegitimate relations:

They can be hunted down and killed for that.

But my daughter studies in Montréal,
in Québec, in Canada.
She is twenty-three,
completing a business degree.
She has lived almost half of her life here.

Some Pakistani men
want to marry
Pakistani-Canadian women,
for immigration,
to become a citizen.
Leave women alone with children

who can live the rest of their lives like that.

But my daughter, here
in Québec, in Canada.
We've screened marriage proposals.
We've refused them.

My daughter is twenty-three.
She lives here.
We must protect her²⁰.

Sana S. wrote *My Daughter's Freedom* in preparation for a public education workshop about violence towards women that used poetry as the central feature of the discussion. This discussion took place in December 2013 at the Côte-des-Neiges women's centre, Femmes du Monde, on the National Day against Violence against Women, in commemoration of the Polytechnique massacre. The poem moves back-and-forth between the hopeful fate of Sana's

²⁰ This poem was written in 2013 by Sana S. It is an unpublished poem.

(real life) daughter in the west to that of dismal prospects of the women of rural Pakistan. As Sana mentioned, the daughter figure also acts as a metaphor for hope. However, even though the poem portrays the daughter's life in a much more hopeful light, she still requires protection from her parents to not fall into the hands of ill-intentioned suitors. This poem was originally written by Sana in the Urdu language. She had help in translating it into English and writing the English adaptation.

Kaddish for Mr. Ringo²¹
(from the women of Côte-des-Neiges)

In a blink
We remember
Your muscles, lean,
Volcanic under taut black shirts.

Against the hits
Of a needle, sharp
Your arms unbolted,
Spread as wide
As the sky
To the cracks of night.

Barclay, Goyer, Plamondon.
These streets: the backdrop as undertow
That sucked, held, released us
Into battle:
White powder, firewater,
Bruises and fists.

Like a snap
We remember
Your banged-up hands,
The clench
That threw ours
And other bodies.
Against walls, doors, and mirrors
We landed,
tight.

²¹ The Kaddish is the Jewish prayer to honour the dead M. Ringo: 1965-2002.

Spurts of abstinence,
Surges of hope
Like sprouted green weeds,
You did not sustain.
Some of us did sustain.

Wringing hands in lieu of tears
We found you there
saw your face in calm,

Rub our own scars that breathe
Despite.²²

Sandra Sjollemma wrote this poem in 2006 and it was published in a local community group's poetry anthology. It was performed at an anthology launch in December 2006, and again in 2013 for a public education workshop about violence towards women. This discussion took place at the Côte-des-Neiges women's centre, Femmes du Monde, on the National Day against Violence against Women, in commemoration of the Polytechnique massacre. The poem recounts a personal story, and at the same time a community struggle, against the violence of a male perpetrator who has since died: The *Kaddish* is a Jewish prayer to honour the dead. The poem also recounts a personal and collective struggle against alcoholism and addiction.

It's Burning

It's burning, sisters! It's burning!
Oh, our poor village, brothers, burns!
Evil winds, full of anger,
Rage and ravage, smash and shatter;
Stronger now that wild flames grow –
All around now burns!

And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms
And you stand there looking on –
While Gaza burns!

It's burning, brothers! It's burning!
Oh, our poor village, sisters, burns!
Soon the rabid tongues of fire
Will consume each house entire,

²² Sjollemma, S. (2006). See reference section for full reference.

As the wild wind blows and howls –
The whole town's up in flames!

And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms,
And you stand there looking on –
While Gaza burns!
It's burning, sisters! Our town is burning!
Oh, God forbid the moment should arrive,
That our town, with us, together,
Should go up in ash and fire,
Leaving when the slaughter's ended
Charred and empty walls!

And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms,
And you stand there looking on –
While an olive tree burns!

It's burning, brothers! Our town is burning!
And our salvation hands on you alone.
If our lives are dear to you,
Grab the buckets, douse the fire!
Show that you know how!

Don't stand there, brother, looking on
With futile, folded arms,
Don't stand there, sister, douse the fire! –
Palestine is burning!

Es Brent

Es brent! Shvesterlekh, s'brent!
Oy undzer orem shtetl, nebokh, brent
Beyze vintn mit irgozn
Raysn brekhn un tzeblozn
Shtarker nokh di vilde flamen
Altz arum shoyn brent!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
mit verlegter hent
un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Vayle Ezhe brent!

S'brent, briderlekh, s'brent!
Oy undzer orem shtetl nebekh brent
S'hobn shoyn di fartzungen

S'gantze shtetl aygenetzungen
Un di beyze vintn hudzhen
S'gantze shtetl brent!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
mit verlegter hent
un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
Vayle Ezhe brent!

S'brent, shvesterlekh, s'brent
Oy skon kholile kumen der moment
Undzer shtot mit undz tzuzamen
Zol oyf ash avek in flamen
Blaybn zol, vi nokh a shlakht
Nor puste shvaze vent!
Un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
mit verlegter hent
un ir shteyt un kukt azoy zikh
A masline boym brent

S'brent briderlekh s'brent!
Di hilf iz nor in aykh aleyn gevendt
Oyb undzer leben zenen aykh tayer
Lesht mit ayer eign blut
Bavayzt az ir dos kent

Shteyt nit brider ot azoy zikh
Mit farleygte hent
Shteyt nit shvester lesht dos fayer
Palestina brent!²³

Avi Grenadier adapted *Es Brent*, the poem he chose for this study, in 2014, during the Israeli siege of Gaza. The original poem recounted the rising anti-Semitism in Europe in the 1930's through the description of the burning and imminent destruction of a fictitious Jewish village. Avi replaced a few key words in the poem to adapt it to the destruction and bombing of Gaza, and the ongoing occupation of the West Bank. He was responding to a call out from community organizations to present art at pro-Palestinian demonstrations. He performed the poem twice during the summer of 2014, including at the Canadian Jewish Federation building in Côte-des-Neiges. The protest was directed at the Canada-Israel Jewish Affairs group who have

²³ The original version of this poem was written in 1938 by Mordecai Gebirtig (See https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/music/before_holocaust_es_brent.asp). The original version is considered to be in the public domain. The adaptation here is an unpublished poem written in 2014 by Avi Grenadier.

their office in the building. Although the poem does not recount Avi's personal life experiences, the content of it is of great personal concern to him, as a Jewish activist and anarchist.

The next chapter of this dissertation will present the findings of this study, including the results of the analysis of the five poems presented. The findings will be framed as the following three themes: 1) *Individual Acts of Poetic Resistance*; 2) *Community Poetry in Interaction: Individual and Collective Power* and 3) *Poetry and Emotions: Social Change in Community and Beyond*.

CHAPTER 5: Circles of Knowledge

*These are my words
this is my voice
these are the voices*

*community poetry means dropping defenses
emotional vulnerability generates kinship*

*grassroots hopes, dreams, desires,
frustrations come to the surface*

oh! this is how people feel in our community

*engagement is fundamental
wellspring to anything
done on the external*

(found poem adapted from Russ' interview excerpts)

This chapter presents the findings of the iterative data gathering and analysis process. It focuses on the starting places of social change, as witnessed through the community poetry experience: In the individual heart and mind and act, among small groups or individuals sharing words, concerns, and emotions, and in community organizations, where such feelings and words can be incorporated into planned and/or ongoing activities. This chapter also briefly touches upon how these community activities can act as a launching pad to implication in larger social change. Very significantly, this chapter examines the role of literary devices in community poetry. For example, imagery, sound, and metaphor are presented as essential components of the poetic form (Faulkner, 2007).

The knowledge gained through the data analysis process about these starting places were principally inspired by Foucault's (1980) ideas about social change that occurs at individual, group, and local levels²⁴ which Horsfall (2008) refers to as the "microsocial level" (p. 13). This knowledge was also informed by ideas about consciousness raising and awareness (Freire, 2004), emotions as means of change (de Courville Nicol, 2011), poetic counter-discourse or narrative (Gaylie, 2002; Foster, 2012), and community building (Kruzynski, 2004; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Naples, 1991;) and community development (Bhattacharyya, 2004) as social change.

²⁴ Of course, larger social movements can also influence consciousness at the local levels and in this sense, they not only influence larger social change but are influenced by them.

In this chapter, three themes are presented: 1) *Individual Acts of Poetic Resistance*; 2) *Community Poetry in Interaction: Individual and Collective Power* and 3) *Poetry and Emotions: Social Change in Community and Beyond*. Each represents a stage in the social change process that builds on the other and that can include previous stages. As seen in *Figure 1* below, these stages can also be conceived of as concentric circles, where the larger circles contain the smaller ones:

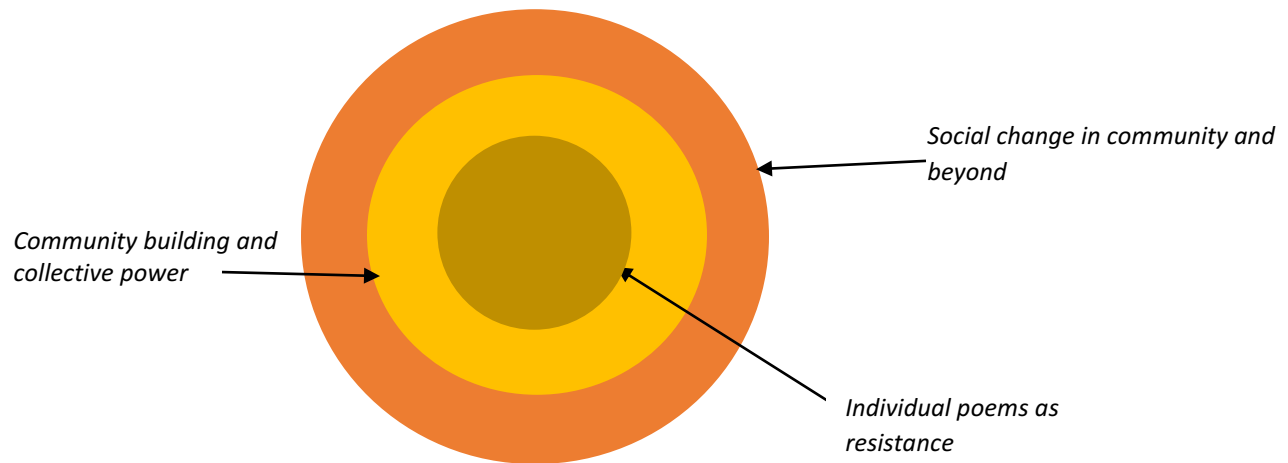


Figure 1. Concentric circles of community poetry and social change

The smallest level, the individual act of resistance (Allen, 1996), in this study is represented through individual written poems.²⁵ Here, community poetry is in written mode. These poems, through both content and emotional expression, can be considered as counter-narrative or counter-discourse (Foster, 2012; Gaylie, 2002) that challenges the knowledge and perspectives expressed through dominant or mainstream discourse and practices (Peters & Lankshear, 1996).

Written poems are an essential aspect of the next stage of social change, the community building process (Horsfall, 2008), in this study represented by the sharing and performing of written poetry. Here, community poetry is in interaction, or in interactional mode. In this mode, through feelings of connection and divergency, community poets “augment personal and communal empowerment” (Naples, 1991, p. 479). Moving to the level of community organizations, this stage contains both the use of written poems as individual acts of resistance and the sharing and performing of poetry in community building. Here, community poetry is in

²⁵ Although collaborative art (see Clover, 2007) can be a part of research or community practice, in this study it was not. All the poems featured in this study were written or adapted by individuals.

organizational mode. At this third level or stage, community poetry activities are part of the community development process. Here, community poetry as social change is “the capacity of people to...create, reproduce, change, and live according to their own meaning systems” (Giddens, 1984, p. 13).

Individual Acts of Poetic Resistance

The first theme discussed in this chapter consists of an analysis of written poetry as acts of resistance. Resistance is a way for people living in minority or marginal situations to challenge power relations and seek social change (Clover, 2007; Fisher, 2009; Kubayanda, 1987). The power contested in the written poems represent structural oppression at the society-wide level, but also its manifestations at the level of local and personal settings and interactions. Community poetry can work to raise consciousness, and bring about awareness about oppressive conditions (Freire, 2004). In some cases, the written poems also express the relationships between the powerful and less powerful in complex ways that recognize power as multi-dimensional (Foucault, 1980). Community poetry as resistance can be seen as a response to power that, in turn, enacts and represents power (Pietrykowski, 1996). In this study, the written poems act as resistance to the power of dominant discourse, ideas, practices, and structures. Key aspects of community poetry as resistance can be enacted through its literary devices, such as metaphor, sound, and imagery (Faulkner, 2007) and its ability to express and evoke emotion (Leggo, 2008b). The theme of *Individual acts of poetic resistance* is broken into four sub-themes: *Community poetry: Challenging dominant discourse; Personal and political meanings as resistance; Emotions as resistance: Feelings and social change; and Straightforwardness and complexity: Possibilities for resistance.*

Community Poetry: Challenging Dominant Discourse. This section examines some of the characteristics of dominant discourse and how community poetry, including the five poems featured in the project, can resist or contest dominant discourse, ideas, practices, and perspectives—also expressed as normative or mainstream ideas and messages—and provide alternative messages or practices to them.

Dominant discourse describes experience from a specific social location, that of the establishment, while representing these experiences as universal (McLaren, 2002). Expressed through the mass media, institutions, advertising, political speeches and discussions, to name but a few avenues, it is often criticized and seen as having negative effects on people (Terdiman,

1985). The poets and community organizers in this study also regarded dominant discourse negatively, and as being both insufficient and detrimental. For example, Albertha saw the mass media as discussing social issues in a superficial manner: *“The mass media are not doing...in-depth exposure of what is going on about poverty.”* Sana believed that media only discusses certain issues if something very dramatic happens:

Not all the incidents [about abuse against women in Pakistan] are reported and they don't come in the media all the time so there are a few. If something happens really bad, only then...otherwise many incidents that happen in the different areas of Pakistan are not reported.

Saša believed that certain realities and truths are obliterated altogether in mainstream messages: *“Truths...are erased by dominant images and discourses that are transmitted by the media, and the political elite.”*

Some of the poets criticized dominant discourse for trying to push or manipulate people into conformity. As Avi stated: *“In dominant discourse... consent is manufactured hash tag Chomsky.”* Russ regarded dominant messaging as trying to enforce certain ways of living and behaving:

I am thinking... ‘what did I just see?’, it could be anything on TV, it could be anything I read, and I feel that it's something that is socially enforced. You know it's an ideological thing: You know ‘you have to do this’, ‘you have to live like that’, ‘you have to act like this.’

The poets and community organizers also noted that mainstream messages can have the effect of making people fear and judge each other. As Russ put it: *“Mainstream messages can be very alienating, sort of pitting people against each other.”* Saša noted that generalized portrayals of people in mainstream messages can lead to divisiveness between people: *“Mass media can generalize and objectify how certain people and communities are. For example, Islam is a violent and oppressive religion, and by doing so, brings about fear of difference and the unknown.”* I noted that mainstream messages can portray certain populations in unsympathetic ways that do not encourage empathy: *“Many mainstream ideas...paint addicts as ‘bad’ people who deserve what's coming to them.”* Finally, Saša stated that the mass media often encourages certain lifestyles over others, hence creating schisms between people:

Mass media and advertisements endorse the idea that heterosexual and monogamous relationships are normal. So, if I meet someone that I learn is in an open relationship I may judge this person based on what media has fed my mind and heart: I will see this difference as strange or repugnant.

The poets and community organizers observed that community poetry can challenge and provide alternative messages to mainstream discourse. Some of the poets and organizers, for example, thought that poetry allowed for more profound descriptions than mainstream sources. As Albertha stated: *“Poetry does something different than the media and other forms of reporting and other forms of complaining. Poetry can go into depths about these [social] issues, that is one of its strengths.”*

Community poetry can also offer alternative messages by describing the truth and reality of people’s lives. As Saša noted, when discussing *My Daughter’s Freedom*:

They [the poems in the study] reveal truths that are erased by the dominant images. My Daughter’s Freedom does just that. First, this poem explores a mother’s reflections on her daughter’s life and the wounds inflicted onto women in Pakistan. But it also fights back against the racist belief that Islam is to blame for these injustices.

Community poetry can also allow people to describe their daily reality of marginalization, which contests dominant or normative messages. As I stated: *“Often just saying the truth of what it’s like to stand in line at the welfare office, or at the soup kitchen, for example, can provide for an alternative view on mainstream thought about these issues.”*

In addition, community poetry as counter-discourse can bring about a shared sense of empathy and humanity. As Russ noted: *“Poetry on the other hand can be a unifying force that gets people to empathize with each other and see the humanity in each other and that’s why it’s an effective means of counter-narrative.”*

Another aspect of community poetry as counter-narrative can include taking an older poem, historically used for social justice purposes, and adapting it to bring awareness to a current social injustice. For example, for this study, Avi chose a poem, *Es Brent*, originally written in the 1930’s to protest the mounting Anti-Semitism in Europe and adapted it to the current oppression of the Palestinians. Avi saw this act of adaption of an older poem as counter-narrative: *“You know you take older Yiddish poetry and maintain the messaging in it, maintaining but adapting it*

or adopting it to be about current social justice struggles: It's being part of building alternative discourse."

Literary Devices. Literary or poetic devices, such as imagery, sound, and rhythm are key aspects of the poetic form (Faulkner, 2007). As such, literary devices can contribute to the fact that community poetry acts as a means of challenging dominant discourse and offers alternative perspectives. Even choosing to write in a specific language can be a means of challenging dominant ideas. One crucial aspect of community poetry in challenging dominant discourse is the fact that it can go into a lot of detail. In this sense, imagery is primordial because it exposes truths and realities of people whose lives are often rendered invisible or are rarely discussed in mainstream sources. In this study, this phenomenon was revealed through the example of Sana's poem concerning the lives of women in rural Pakistan. In *My Daughter's Freedom*, Sana employs detailed imagery that poignantly reveals what is happening to these women that exposes the truths of their lives:

*In Pakistan
some women
taunted by in-laws,
beaten by husbands.
Some women
acid thrown in their faces
Some women
gang raped, used as pawns*

Imagery can not only highlight the reality of people who are ignored in the mainstream but can express emotion that potentially awakens people into action. As Avi noted about *Es Brent*: "*I think the imagery around fire, I think it's effective in terms of painting this picture of different ways that fire consumes the rabid tongue with ash. It's not painting an emotionless picture of disaster...it has a sense of urgency...kind of like a call to action.*" The imagery of fire is seen in the following excerpts of *Es Brent*:

*It's burning, sisters! It's burning!
Oh, our poor village, brothers, burns!
Evil winds, full of anger,*

*Rage and ravage, smash and shatter;
Stronger now that wild flames grow –
All around now burns!*

Other literary devices that can help community poetry be resistant to dominant messages are repetition, sound, and rhythm. For example, Sana stated that it is the repetition of the words ‘not by Islam’ and ‘not according to Islam’ in her poem that represent a fight against Islamophobia: “‘Islam’ is there [in the poem] because a lot of people say about Islam ‘oh they are more violent towards women because Islam tells them to’ and it’s not [true], so that’s why I used it over here a couple of times.”

Sound can also be an important device in poetry that can reveal the truths and realities of people’s experiences and can act as a message to those in power, who may in turn be able to understand at an emotional level what people are going through. As Albertha commented about the role of sound in her poem:

When I use words like ‘disdain’ like ‘shame’ the situation driving us ‘insane’ the sound and rhyming make it [the poem] stronger. It shows them [the political leaders] the pain that we [the poor and homeless] are going through. It’s letting them see, where they could feel.

Sound can also express the complex realities of certain people that may confront more generalized portrayals found in the mainstream. In my poem, *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*, for example, the sound and rhyming of the words ‘night’ ‘tight’ and ‘despite’ intertwine the fates of the perpetrator and the women, even after the perpetrator has died: ‘Night’ is associated with the perpetrator, ‘tight’ with the women and their experience of abuse, and ‘despite’ with the fact that the women’s scars—presumably caused by the abuse—are still breathing, despite the abuse and in contrast to the dead man. The notion of fates being intertwined, even after death, is not a common theme in mainstream thought about abuse towards women.

The rhythm found in community poetry can also be a means of challenging dominant discourse. Russ pointed to the pacing and rhythm of his poem, *Dreams*, as contributing to its power as resistance: “It does have a certain rhythm to it like for me the third stanza ‘Who owns me?’ ‘Who owns you?’ ‘Do you own?’ These are unsettling questions. These are very sharp short questions.” According to Russ, mainstream messages contain a different type of rhythm: “There’s a lullaby rhythm to how things are represented to us in terms of a mainstream song, in terms of

any television program that supports the dominant system.” According to Marie, ‘*Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*’ also contains rhythms that act as counter-narrative:

The rhythm of ‘Kaddish’ is taut and expressive. These are hard-hitting thrusts that help us feel Mr. Ringo. It’s hard to feel that from a non-poetic description and that’s why poetry works well as counter-narrative to a prosaic means of expression.

Choosing to write poetry in a specific language can also be a means of resistance and alternative discourse. For example, I have sometimes performed poems in Scottish Gaelic—I am of part Scottish heritage—as a means of protesting the historical oppression of this language by the English (reflexive journal, March 6, 2018). In this study, Avi believed that the fact of using the Yiddish language in his poem represents an act of alternative discourse:

Yiddish is itself part of an alternative discourse because it’s been so marginalized by virtue of the pressures of assimilation; The genocide of Yiddish speakers in World War Two on a mass scale and then the evolution of normative Zionist ideology being pushed where Yiddish and other diasporic languages were marginalized in Israel. They were largely replaced in favour of Hebrew in educational settings in the broader Jewish world.

Personal and Political Meanings as Resistance. The next sub-theme, *Personal and political meanings as resistance*, examines the idea that community poetry as resistance and counter-narrative can recount personal experiences and situations that can be linked to social or political realities. Four of the five poems featured in this project, selected and written by the poets, describe personal experiences and realities²⁶.

Expressing personal experiences and truths through community poetry can act as resistance to challenge mainstream ideas. As stated by Saša: “*Because the poems [in the study] are grounded in people’s personal experiences, they can reveal truths that are otherwise erased... by the media.*” More specifically, community poetry that is from a personal perspective can allow people to relate to each other in emotional, humble, and humane ways that challenge dominant discourse. As Saša explained:

A poem shares information in a way that is personal, emotional and spiritual and, because of this, I think poems challenge people to see others through a more

²⁶ *Es Brent* does not recount a personal experience or situation.

humbling lens. When you can access the core of someone through a poem, you connect to the humanness of that person so the labels, stereotypes, and expectations that would usually form your perception of this person can melt away. I think it is through this sharing that people get the opportunity to see each other's subjective experiences and realities.

Just by the fact of describing their personal lives and experiences through community poetry, people, especially those living in marginal situations, can touch upon social or political issues in a way that contrasts mainstream messages. As I noted: “*People get the idea that they can just talk about their daily lives and experiences, which if one is writing from a marginalized perspective, is often counter-discourse in and of itself.*”

Four of the five poems in the study explicitly combine the poets' personal experiences with social or political issues. According to Foster (2012), this linking is an essential aspect of community poetry as counter-narrative, especially among those who are living in marginal situations, as it permits a view on issues that goes beyond generalizations. Patrizia commented on what she regarded as the advantages of the personal-political link in community poetry:

Universal social justice issues are seen through the eyes of one person and therefore become more powerfully expressed. You associate the theme and the poem with the person, and you can see the person in the poem. The poems have that force to go from the universal to the personal or individual and vice versa, to give a personal account to something bigger and more distant. It [the personal] gives it [the political] 'a body' and it's a body full of emotion.

One important aspect of the personal-political link often seen in community poetry is that poets can “move outward from their own stories to the world around them” (Horsfall, 2008, p. 5). For example, the recounting of a personal story can intentionally aspire to make connections between the poet's struggle and those of the audience. In his poem, *Dreams*, for example, Russ recounts his personal struggle dealing with the psychological effects of capitalism. He stated that he aimed this message at those hearing the poem: “*I am...pointing out to people who are listening [to the poem] that 'you are not alone.'*”

In other cases, community poetry can express personal experiences of oppression that are blended into the collective ‘we.’ For example, Albertha, when asked about who the *we* represents in *We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders*, replied that it is “*we, the poor of Montréal*” and

included herself in this description. The following excerpt of her poem clearly describes the collective experience of being poor in the city:

*We need to get around
To other parts of our town
But the bus fare is so high
All we can do is decide
Just stay close to home and walk around
In our own corner of town*

My poem, describing violence against women, is also recounted in the first-person collective voice, from the ‘we’, where I recount my own and other women’s experiences with the same perpetrator. This shared experience is seen in this excerpt from *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*:

*Like a snap
we remember
your banged-up hands,
the clench
that threw ours
and other bodies.
Against walls, doors, and mirrors
we landed,
tight*

In other cases, community poetry can be written in the first person singular ‘I’ or ‘my’ and simultaneously recount larger social oppression occurring in the poet’s (former) social and cultural milieu. In Sana’s poem, for example, the personal story of the daughter is juxtaposed with the social or political situation of the deplorable fate of women in rural Pakistan:

*In Pakistan,
where I am from
some women
gang raped, used as pawns
-not according to Islam-
according to rural tradition,
in games of revenge.*

*But my daughter studies in Montreal,
in Quebec, in Canada.
She is twenty-three,
completing a business degree*

Literary Devices. Literary devices can play a key role in linking the personal to political and social in community poetry. Imagery is the most frequent literary tool used, in addition to metaphor and simile. The use of imagery, for example, is demonstrated in Russ' poignant portrayal of his psychological struggles linked to capitalism in *Dreams*:

*Dreams last week crush me as I dive to hide
nightmares rip me open
and expose me to suicide
my suicide
as I jumped in front of metro trains
or choked on a rope
deep blue turned my brains
thank you, capitalism, for the dysfunctional memories*

Other literary devices used are metaphor and simile. In Albertha's poem, for example, she and others living in poverty (*i.e.*, the collective 'we') cry out for social change using the metaphor of 'a captain that is strong':

*We need a captain that is strong
we're tired of the merry go round
lead us to safer shores where we belong*

Albertha explained that the use of this metaphor in her poem (*i.e.*, *a captain that is strong*) acts as a stand-in for political leaders who are seen as the means to social change: "'We need a captain that is strong' because we want committed leaders with dignity, integrity and empathy. We are depending on you [them] to get us...out of despair." In other instances, a person described as an actual person in the poet's life is at the same time used as a metaphor for social change. As Sana noted about her poem and the figure of her daughter: "*She is my daughter, but also she is the metaphor of the hope that things will improve.*" In my poem, the hope of social change, in the

way of abstinence of formerly addicted and abused women, is compared through simile to 'sprouted green weeds':

*Spurts of abstinence
surges of hope
like sprouted green weeds,
you did not sustain
some of us did sustain*

However, while revealing personal truths in community poetry—and combining them with political perspectives—may have many advantages, there may be some downsides to writing and expressing counter-narrative this way. As Marie stated: “*The power of poetry is often found in our translating the lines that are too personal into something that is more accessible to others.*”

In retrospect, it is surprising that I did not ask the poets to select poems for this study that included a personal-political link, seeing that this link is an important part of my community poetry experience, as a poet and community organizer (reflexive journal, October 11, 2017). I was so focused on social change as a component of the poems that I forgot about the personal aspect. That the poems linked personal experiences and concerns with social and political matters made me feel like I had hit the jackpot as they talked about important political and social issues in a very personal, moving, and emotional way (reflexive journal, October 11, 2017).

Emotions as Resistance: Feelings and Social Change. The next sub-theme, *Emotions as resistance: Feelings and social change*, examines written poetry as a means of emotional expression. This theme considers why emotion is significant in community poetry and how emotion is connected to notions of poetry as counter-narrative and as a means for resistance and social change. This discussion also describes four categories of emotion expressed in the five poems in this study and that can be found in community poetry.

Significance of Emotion in Community Poetry. The fact that community poetry can be a tool for emotional expression is very significant. In this study, Russ discussed the importance of expressing emotions through poetry as an act of vulnerability:

If you don't have that ability to understand your vulnerabilities and let them out you really are going to lose people in terms of 'oh it's just something written on a napkin who cares'. I think I think the best stuff is always something that is expressed from the heart.

Albertha also commented on the significance of emotions when asked about their role in community poetry: *“If you don’t have any emotions, you don’t feel anything. If the emotion is not there, what does it matter?”* Emotions as expressed through community poetry are also meaningful because they can help people discover themselves. As Patrizia stated: *“Poetry goes deeper by going to the emotions, and people can feel things without knowing why and this can help them open themselves to new aspects of themselves that they hadn’t thought about.”*

Emotions expressed through community poetry can also be significant as a means of challenging dominant or mainstream discourse, perspectives, and relations. One characteristic of dominant ideas and messages is that they encourage rational ways of perceiving and understanding the world that often disparage emotions. According to de Courville Nicol (2011), looking at emotions is therefore “a viable alternative to the dominant perspective that actions...are malformed by emotion” (p. 3). Avi reiterated these ideas:

It [community poetry] is a different way of expressing oneself that is already opening up to something different. You don’t have to just speak in this quote unquote rational logical manner. It operates from a different logic than other types of discourse, by being more open to emotions.

Russ commented on how community poetry can be a means of direct feeling in comparison to dominant sources: *“It [community poetry] is direct contact, it’s different than something that you hear on the radio or on TV where you have a buffer, where there is an element of emotional detachment.”* Saša stated that community poetry, through emotion, can also challenge the numbness brought about by dominant perspectives and relations:

Dominant structures and social relations urge us to move away from...feeling. Poetry can challenge and break this numbness and inspire people to connect to their wounds and those of others. I think poetry has the power to enable people’s connection to raw emotion.

In addition to challenging or resisting dominant discourse and relations, emotions expressed through community poetry can be a significant tool for social change. For example, the expression of these emotions can act as a motivation to address social problems. As Albertha stated when asked why emotions in community poetry are important to social change: *“To get emotional means you want to get that problem fixed. If it is not emotional, it won’t hit home.”* In

addition, emotions in poetry can be an effective tool in raising consciousness about social problems. As Sana commented:

Emotions and emotional expressions when expressed in written poetry become very powerful weapons. Emotions and their expressions play a vital role in bringing awareness and sensitivity among people for those who are facing injustice.

Finally, emotion can inspire people to want to take down what separates people and to build bridges between them. As stated by Saša: “*The poems [in this study] evoke an anger and frustration in me that brings the desire to smash through everything, to dismantle the barriers...that divide.*” And as Avi commented: “*We won't build bridges across differences if we cannot connect to each other's oppression on an emotional level, through an emotional kind of knowledge. We can never be theoretically or purely intellectually in solidarity with each other.*”

Emotions Expressed in and through Community Poetry. A variety of emotions can be expressed through the narratives of community poetry about social change written by people living in marginal situations (see Appendix J as an example)²⁷. This section presents four categories of emotion found in the five poems under investigation in this study: Fear and related emotions, despair and depression, anger and related emotions, and hope. Each of these categories of emotion are also described as representing either feelings of powerlessness or powerfulness, because, according to de Courville Nicol (2011), these are the two fundamental emotional states involved in (social) change.

Fear and Related Emotions: When people perceive a threat, or when they sense danger, fear is a common reaction (de Courville Nicol, 2011). In the poems in this study, danger is described as social threats of various kinds. In the poems, these threats, or *objects of fear* (de Courville Nicol, 2011), are often expressed through acts of aggression and injustice. As Avi stated when asked about what the social threats in his poem represent: “*The consistent incursions of the Israeli military and government, the bombing, a flattening of Gaza, the ongoing injustice related to the occupation of the West Bank.*” The poems in this study also express fear in the face of danger or threat. As Russ commented about his poem: “*Most of the poem is fear, it's the fear*

²⁷ Appendix J describes the basic feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness as specific norm pairs.

of why is this [abuse by capitalism] is happening, I think that's really the thing." I also explained that my poem demonstrates fear, in a few different ways:

The fear in the poem is indirectly expressed, I think. Being tossed against a wall, or even the possibility of it, is a very fearful experience, but I think the biggest fear in the poem is that of letting substance abuse do you in, and the images of sprouting green weeds is a delicate one, a fragile one, we are not talking about a big strong oak tree here. The perpetrator is dead at the end of the poem, a sort of warning that this eventuality, death by substance abuse, is very possible.

Another emotion related to fear that can be expressed in and through community poetry is feeling that one's life is threatened. As I stated about my poem: "*The women are being thrown around. There is violent aggression, you know hitting walls. Obviously, there is a feeling of danger, of threat, possibly for one's life. I mean in a situation like that, the threat of dying is there.*"

Fear in community poetry can also be expressed through the notion that if something is not done to rectify or change the social threats, the situation will worsen. This scenario is also referred to as a *rhetoric of fear* (de Courville Nicol, 2011). According to Russ, his poem expresses the fear that, if nothing is done to change the way the system works, the outcome could be catastrophic, both for him personally and for the social environment: *[I'm]saying I am done if this [system]doesn't change: That's on a micro level, but I do think that that is on a macro level too.*" The following lines of *Dreams* express the social threat (*i.e.*, capitalism) and the fear that if nothing is done to change it, the consequences can be dire:

*When does the running end if one cannot escape?
without hearing a starter's gun
and with no conception of the tape?*

*This race is being run
and without cranial walls to flee this class madness
I am the done*

Fear in this study was considered to be a feeling of powerlessness²⁸ (see Appendix J). At the same time, in one case, it was interpreted by the poet as being a powerful or motivating force. As Avi explained about *Es Brent*: “*The tone of urgency that has kind of turned into panic. It’s really a lot of alarm. A call to action.*” The tone of panic is witnessed in the following excerpt of the poem:

*It’s burning, sisters! Our town is burning!
Oh, God forbid the moment should arrive,
That our town, with us, together,
Should go up in ash and fire*

Despair and Depression. Feelings of despair can also be expressed in community poetry, as was the case in the five poems in this study. For example, Albertha, when asked to comment on the use of the word ‘*despair*’ found at the end of her poem, stated: “*Despair, you reach a point where you don’t see any light, they say there is always a light at the end of the tunnel, but we [the poor in the poem] are not seeing the light, not even seeing the tunnel.*” The following excerpts of *We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders* and their poignant imagery portray this despair:

*It’s not easy on our gut
To have empty plates and cups
Winter’s snow and sleet
Our bodies can’t defeat*

Russ also believed that his poem expresses this emotion: “*I think it [the poem] is despairing for the present [moment].*” Certainly, the opening lines in his poem describe his personal despair:

*Nightmares rip me open
and expose me to suicide
my suicide*

²⁸ In in/capacity theory, even feelings of powerlessness contain within them the possibility of feelings of powerfulness (de Courville Nicol, 2011). In this sense, even in powerlessness hope for change is possible. In this study, fear was coupled with courage (see Appendix J), that was also expressed through the poems.

Sana, for her part, believed that her poem expresses depression: “*It [the poem] expresses the depression of those women that are really going through such miseries.*” The depressive and despairing conditions are described vividly in the poem, where it is obvious that women are stuck in subservient conditions:

*Girls of ten
engaged to older men.
A widow of twenty
engaged to a boy,
her late husband’s brother.
She must stay in the family.
He can marry other women,
she is stuck there
She can live and die like that*

In this study, emotions of despair and depression were considered to be feelings of powerlessness that contain within them the possibility of hopeful feelings (see Appendix J). Hope will be discussed later in this section.

Anger and Related Emotions. Anger is often considered an essential emotion in resistance and social change as it is often seen as being able to fuel people into action (Summers-Effler, 2002). It can also be present in community poetry. For example, in this study, Russ saw his poem as expressing anger: “*I think it [the poem] is just pissed off like when we have this stage when you are a young child and you say ‘why? why why why?’*” Looking at *Dreams*, the following excerpt expresses not only anger, but outrage. As Russ stated: “*I am calling out people that certainly know that they are benefitting from the system through financial gain:*”

*Did your stock, your futures witness prosperity?
or did you sell out, sell dear, sell high
leaving fresh dealt humanity high and dry to die?*

Other emotions that can be expressed in community poetry that can be regarded as being related to anger are feeling fed up (*i.e.*, that one has had enough) and feeling disgust and shaming (others). The feeling of having had enough and that a limit must be set, or, as de Courville Nicol refers to it, a “push(ing) back” (personal communication, September 22, 2015) against unfair

conditions is seen in Albertha's poem. As Albertha stated: *I would say it's [the situation of homelessness in the poem] shown to be intolerable. It has reached a point of being intolerable and it has to stop.*" The line in her poem 'We're tired of the merry go round' is indicative of this feeling of having had enough.

Feelings of disgust and shaming others can also be expressed in community poetry. These feelings are often related to holding others accountable for their inaction. As Albertha stated about her poem: "*We the poor citizens [are] feeling disgusted that nothing is happening. We want leaders more committed to the important matters of pulling people out of poverty.*" Albertha repeated the two lines: 'No one seems to accept blame' and 'For causing such disdain' as indicating disgust in the poem. Another emotion related to anger is shame, in the sense of shaming someone else. For example, Avi said that in his poem there was "*shaming happening for the lack of action from the outside world, in terms of Israel. Palestine shouldn't be an exception to our moral responsibility...to call out injustice.*" This feeling of shaming others is evident in the poem's refrain²⁹ where onlookers are accused of doing nothing:

*And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms,
And you stand there looking on –
While Gaza burns!*

In this study, anger and its related feelings were considered to be emotions of powerfulness (see Appendix J) that were present in most, but not all, of the poems.

Hope. According to Freire (2004) and de Courville Nicol (2011), hope is essential to resistance and social change as it can move people from feelings of fear and powerlessness to those of powerfulness, that, in turn, can inspire action that leads to well-being. Hope can be found in community poetry and can be manifested in several ways. One very significant way is by portraying people surviving the threat of death. In the five poems in this study, for example, despite severe oppression, people are surviving or are struggling to survive, and in some cases, taking specific actions to ensure their own, and other people's, survival. The call out to others, through the act of writing the poems, can also be seen a way to fight for the survival of the

²⁹ A refrain is a repeating of a line or a stanza in poetry (Wisegeek, n.d.).

victims described in the poems. I said the following about survival in the poems: “*I think survival is the root of all hope, obviously. I mean if you are dead there is no possibility for anything else to happen. I think all the poems show people surviving and fighting for survival.*”

Hope in community poetry can also be expressed as the idea that a situation is not good enough, and should be improved, or what de Courville Nicol (personal communication, September 22, 2015) refers to as a “pushing forward.” This idea was reiterated by Albertha: “*It [the situation of the poor in her poem] has to be improved for us, for dignity to be given back to the people.*” This idea of pushing forward was illustrated in her poem by the lines ‘*It’s time more than time for a turnaround*’ and ‘*Lead us to safer shores where we belong.*’

Another way that hope can be expressed in community poetry is through desire for certain actions to take place that can lead to positive outcomes, otherwise referred to as a *rhetoric of desire* (de Courville Nicol, 2011). Russ stated that his poem demonstrates that if positive social change occurs, then his personal well-being can improve: “*It [the poem] shows that I desire to be better and I think the only way I can be better is in a better society.*” This idea is expressed in the following excerpt of *Dreams*:

*I am the done...
unless I fight and grab the freedom I am due!
to build the new world that can ensue
one with all
no want
or walls to hold hope away
with everyone able to seize humanity's day*

Community poetry can also express hope by revealing or pointing to actions that move people or that can move people out of unjust, dangerous, and oppressive conditions. De Courville Nicol (2011) refers to these actions as *exercises of power*. For example, I stated that in my poem, it is the abused women who take action (*i.e.*, become abstinent) to solve the problems of abuse and addiction:

The poem suggests that some of the women became clean and sober and stayed that way so this action seems to be a contributing factor to them prevailing and to social justice being attained meaning that they no longer are subject to abuse.

Hope in community poetry can also be illustrated through scenarios where social threats are prevented or overcome and where ultimate well-being, or relational promise, *i.e.*, experience of security (de Courville Nicol, 2011), takes place. For example, Sana stated that in her poem “*acid throwing happens [to women in rural Pakistan] when a marriage proposal is turned down.*” In contrast, when asked if her poem demonstrates an ultimate state of well-being, Sana replied: “*Freedom, My Daughter’s Freedom [where] she will find a husband of her own choice, she will not be forced to marry.*”

However, the expression of hope can be less than straightforward in community poetry. As Saša explained after reading the five poems presented in this study: “*Hope feels murky and confusing in the poems...they leave me wanting to feel and know hope.*”

Literary Devices. Many literary devices can be found in community poetry that accentuate emotional expression (see Appendix J). In this study, imagery was the most common literary device that carried out this function. For example, danger and oppression are poignantly portrayed in Sana’s poem through its imagery:

*Some women
acid thrown in their faces
Some women
gang raped, used as pawns*

In another example, some of the images in my poem, (*e.g.*, the scars breathing at the end) convey, as I put it: “*A possibility of hope:*”

*Rub our own scars
that breathe, despite*

Metaphor can be another important device used in community poetry to express emotion. For example, in this study, the metaphors of a ship in Albertha’s poem (*i.e.*, the ‘*Ship going down*’) and a race being run in Russ’ poem (*i.e.*, ‘*When does the running end if one cannot escape? Without hearing a starter’s gun and with no conception of the tape?*’) express feelings of despair and humiliation. Avi, for his part, described the scenes in his poem as using symbolism: [*The*] *olive tree is representative of the attempt to push Palestinians off the land and annex more*

land to the state of Israel. It's symbolic." The combination of the symbol of the olive tree and the image of it burning in the poem heightens the feelings of oppression and panic expressed. In Albertha's poem, the metaphors of the ship and shores found in the lines: '*Captain that is strong*' and '*Safer shores where we belong*' emphasize feelings of safety, hope and well-being.

The use of a repetition, and more specifically a refrain, can also contribute to the expression of feelings in community poetry. For example, the repetition of the word '*that*' combined with images of life and death, as in '*Hunted and killed for that*' '*She can live and die like that,*' in Sana's poem in this study highlights feelings of danger and the threat of death. The refrain in Avi's poem concerning the progressively consuming '*burning*' has an effect of intensifying emotion, in this case, a sense of hopelessness. As Patrizia explained:

This refrain ['it's burning, it's burning'] creates a cycle, a going around in an endless circle, back to where we started from, nothing is resolved, even though new elements are introduced in the poem, a cycle which is very representative of the crisis itself.

Another literary device that can be used to amplify expression of emotion is grammar. As Avi stated about how the use of punctuation in his poem highlighted the tone of the poem: "*It has that kind of in the moment urgency ending with exclamation marks pretty much in every paragraph.*"

*It's burning, brothers! It's burning!
Oh, our poor village, sisters, burns!
The whole town's up in flames!*

Grammar combined with word choice can also impact the expression of emotion: For example, in *Es Brent*, the title is employed in the present gerund tense (i.e., *It is burning*). According to Avi, the choice of having it in this tense is significant in terms of the poem's emotional expression:

The title is very much in the present as well so Es Brent It's Burning. It's not called 'the fire' 'the fires' which could be seen as past present or future. It's in the present so with that imagery you feel that you are consumed.

Likewise, the title of my poem, *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*, emphasizes certain emotions. The Kaddish is a prayer in the Jewish religion to honour people who have passed on. I had this to say

about choosing the word *kaddish*: “*The poem has a feeling of forgiveness or compassion to it, I mean it talks about the Kaddish which is about forgiveness because how else would you manage to honour someone who was an abuser?*”

Rhythm can also be a fundamental tool in expressing emotion in community poetry. For example, this is what Russ had to say about the rhythm in his poem:

It does have a certain rhythm to it: ‘Who owns me?’ ‘Who owns you?’ ‘Do you own?’ These are unsettling questions. I think the meter catches that these are very sharp short questions... I didn’t stop writing it’s just a one-shot deal... You find the rhythm. You can find your way in in creating something and finding how you can fight back, by not stopping and that this person persevered... So, I look at it [the rhythm] and say well, I don’t think it [the system] broke me or it hasn’t broken me yet.

The rhythm in the poem therefore expresses feelings of unsettledness, spontaneity, perseverance, and hope.

In community poetry that speaks of social change, diverse poems can express similar emotions and ideas. In this study, Gabriel reiterated this notion: “*If you want people to be aware of the suffering of people, these poems would be useful for that. There is a link between them in that sense that they express suffering.*” And as noted by Patrizia: “*I felt that the poems were about similar topics: The search for freedom, justice and change. They expressed similar emotions of anger, rage, fear, hope and so on.*” The five poems in this study were observed as sharing feelings of fear and courage, despair and hope, oppression and emancipation, threat of death and survival, and danger and safety (see Appendices J and K). At the same time, differences in emotional expression between them were evident (see Appendices J and K). The most notable one is the lack of anger or outrage in my poem towards the abuser, who is seen, at least in part, as being worthy of compassion. As Avi noted, community poetry must express a variety of emotions to be effective:

I appreciate it [the rage in his poem] more in the context of the breadth of different...tones of social justice-oriented poetry. I would honestly get pretty bored and uninspired if this [the feeling of rage] was all that there was...and I think a lot of people would too you and I don’t think it would be that effective.

Straightforwardness and Complexity: Possibilities for Resistance. The sub-theme *Straightforwardness and Complexity: Possibilities for Resistance* is inspired by the work of Orr (2008) who offers two ideas about what poetry as resistance, or counter-narrative, can look like. On the one hand, poetry as resistance can represent straightforward discourse where the narrative is clear, accessible, transparent, coherent, and above all, can express certainty in both emotion and content. According to this perspective, poetry written in “simple direct speech” (Orr, 2008, p. 979) represents “truly revolutionary works” (p. 979). On the other hand, another perspective espouses the idea that poetry that is “properly resistant” (p. 980) does not have a pre-determined message, and expresses ambiguity and complexity, whether in emotional expression, literary form, or message. Here, poetry, to be truly resistant, must go beyond the straightforward, simplistic, and certain messages of dominant discourse (Orr, 2008). This sub-theme analyses community poetry according to these two perspectives.

Straightforwardness in Community Poetry: Community poetry can consist of narratives that suggest straightforwardness, clarity and certainty about resistance and social change. For example, one way in which community poetry can express clarity and certainty is through describing obvious and extreme situations of abuse perpetrated by the dominant class towards those who are their victims. As Sana explained about her poem:

*The poem is about the social injustice against women. They are second class citizens.
The poem shows the worst violence and the most aggressive behavior that can ever
happen to a woman. The perpetrators are the men of the society.*

In Sana’s poem, images of women being ‘*beaten by husbands*’ and ‘*gang-raped*’ lend themselves to this notion of extreme abuse by men.

Certainty can also be present in community poetry in terms of emotions being expressed in clear and contrasting ways. For example, Albertha’s poem presents vivid and clear descriptions of the despair of homelessness, as found in the following lines:

*We need a roof over our heads
And a comfy bed
Not in the metro or under a bridge
Or on the pavement
That’s a degrading statement*

Towards the end of the poem, in contrast, images of a ‘*captain who is strong*’ and ‘*safer shores*’ portray a sense of hope. As Albertha said about her poem: “*I am still trusting the leaders to listen, as I pick up on at the end [of the poem]. What I am saying is that there can be hope.*” In Avi’s poem, the use of the refrain concerning the onlookers ‘*standing with futile folded arms*’ reinforces and clarifies the feeling of shaming and who is being held responsible for the injustices at hand.

Community poetry can also display clarity and certainty in terms of one’s response to an injustice. This response can include actions taken to address and rectify the situation, or what de Courville Nicol (2011) refers to as *exercises of power*. In Russ’ poem, for example, the abuses of capitalism must be responded to by very strong measures:

I fight and grab the freedom I am due!

As Russ stated about his poem: *I have to fight and if you are talking about do I have to struggle, yes.*” Russ’ poem also suggests social justice occurring through large-scale, unified, collective acts that will overcome the present system, as seen in the following lines of *Dreams*:

*To build the new world that can ensue
one with all
with everyone able to seize humanity's day*

Community poetry can also suggest certainty and clarity through images of well-being and security—or what de Courville Nicol (2011) refers to as *experiences of security* or “relational promise” (p. 18)—that are the result of the social threat being resolved. This type of certainty is most poignantly expressed in Russ’ poem where the result of the struggle and fight is ‘*no want*’ or ‘*walls to hold hope away.*’

Literary Devices. Literary devices in community poetry can contribute to the clarity and certainty of its message, in terms of both content and emotional expression. As previously mentioned, the use of the refrain in Avi’s poem serves to intensify and make absolutely clear the feeling of shaming (other people). Gabriel commented on other literary devices in *Es Brent* in terms of it being a straightforward poem:

It's Burning is a simple poem that deals with a straightforward subject. The poem is very straightforward with the repetition of the image it's burning, it's burning. Also, the image of the olive tree. Everyone knows this is the symbol of freedom for the victims, that is, the Palestinians.

Other literary devices that can suggest certainty and clarity are word choice combined with sentence structure. While some poems contain questions or exclamations, for example, as seen in the poems of Russ and Avi, others contain assertions. Assertion as a literary device is “a strong declaration, a forceful or confident and positive statement” (see <https://literarydevices.net/assertion/>). Assertions are very present in Albertha's poem, as seen in the title, '*We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders*,' and in the line '*I implore you today*'. Using words such as *pleading* and *imploing* as well as making them assertions add to the poem's feeling of supplication. As Albertha commented on the title of her poem: “[*There is*] the feeling of crying for help, there is a cry for help.” Later in this poem, assertions are made through the repetition of the words ‘*we need*’ or ‘*we want*,’ as in ‘*we want committed leaders*.’ These assertions express a demand on behalf of the poor that are not half-hearted requests.

The expressions of certainty and clarity outlined here can be said to fall into modernist ideas of social change that express certitude and that encourage large-scale social action in order to bring about change (Aggleton & Whitty, 1985).

Complexity in Community Poetry. While community poetry can be said to be straightforward, it also can consist of elements, in emotional expression and content, of complexity, ambivalence and uncertainty. Saša had this to say about the ambiguity of poetry: “*Poetry has the power to challenge...binary notions of right vs. wrong, just vs. unjust, oppressed vs. oppressor.*”

One way that community poetry can express complexity and ambiguity is found in the relationship between perpetrators and victims. As Gabriel noted about my poem: “*Kaddish for Mr. Ringo is perfect for making people conscious of the complexity of misery and of violence done towards women because writing a poem dedicated to a perpetrator shows forgiveness.*” Another way my poem reveals complexity is by having the abused women share problems of violence and addiction with the perpetrator, who, in this poem, also all live in the same neighbourhood. These points are seen in the following excerpt:

Barclay, Goyer, Plamondon.
these streets: the backdrop as undertow
that sucked, held, released us
into battle:
white powder, firewater,
bruises and fists

The poem also describes the complex relationship between perpetrator and the abused in the way the women respond to the perpetrator's death. As I explained:

In my poem mainstream ideas about male violence are put aside in favour of a more nuanced portrayal. The fact that the women don't know how to respond to his death allows for a more nuanced reading of their situation: That is, it's not black and white. They are fellow addicts/alcoholics who have survived but he still was their abuser.

The women's response to the death of their perpetrator is illustrated in the following lines:

Wringing hands in lieu of tears
we see your face in calm

Another way that community poetry can express complexity is through exploring different ways that social injustice, or threats or *objects of fear* (de Courville Nicol, 2011), can occur and through describing various avenues or exercises of power that can counter them. For example, in Sana's poem different ways of (potentially) abusing women are illustrated. As Sana explained about the images of women in rural Pakistan in her poem: "Women are very dependent on the authorities they are bound to obey the orders of whatever is being told of them to do. Those women are stuck within the boundaries of their system, of their abusers." And as she explained about the possible exploitation of Pakistani-Canadian women for marriage: "There are some men whose main goal is to find their way in to Canada or the west through marriage." This last situation is seen through the following lines of *My Daughter's Freedom*:

Some Pakistani men
want to marry
Pakistani-Canadian women,

*for immigration,
to become a citizen
leave women alone with children*

In terms of actions taken to counter these abuses or potential abuses, the poem suggests a few alternatives. Firstly, moving to and living in Canada is seen as a way for young Pakistani women—in the poem, represented by the daughter—to find independence. As Sana noted:

In the poem I said that ‘She has lived almost half of her life here’ means that she [my daughter] has spent many years in Canada, she has received the academic and cultural exposure of the Canadian environment and that allowed her to become independent.

As for the possible exploitation through marriage, Sana commented on the line ‘we must protect her’ found at the end of the poem: “*The end of the poem says we must protect her [my daughter]. We should not let her go into the hands of those people who can abuse her. We as parents screen the proposals.*” Finally, according to Sana, the poem itself is a means to call out the injustices happening to women in Pakistan and urges people to take action: “*The poetry can express how sad those women are. It is important to bring awareness among people that this is happening and that they should do something for these women these women need help.*” Unlike Russ’ poem, where large-scale social action is called upon to confront and overcome injustice, in Sana’s poem, individual actions and consciousness raising are the tools to either prevent, avoid, or confront/overcome³⁰ abuse and oppression.

Another aspect of complexity in community poetry can be found through its emotional expression. As Marie commented on ‘*Es Brent*’: “*‘Es Brent!’ expresses both grief and rage as the poet’s part of the world is consumed in the fires of destruction. While it is a lament, it is more than a lament, through its rage, it is also a call to action.*” Avi agreed that in his poem “*there is mourning going on*” and also saw it as expressing “*an urgent rage.*”

Another ambiguity or complexity in community poetry can be seen through the expression of the experience of security or relational promise (de Courville Nicol, 2011). De Courville Nicol

³⁰ In de Courville Nicol’s (2011) in/capacity theory, the three main emotional orientations to respond to threat and danger are confrontation (the threat is overturned), avoidance (the threat is contained), or prevention (the threat is not allowed to come into being).

describes this experience as one where well-being results when social threats are overcome, avoided or prevented. Generally-speaking, in modernist versions of social change, a utopian end where everything is finally resolved, and where harmony prevails, is envisioned (Freire, 1971). This kind of resolution was seen in Russ' poem (see above). However, according to Avi, a clear and hopeful resolution was not the case in his poem:

What kind of hope there can be on the brink of annihilation? I think the main thing [about the poem] is just survival. I mean it is not really going into what makes life fulfilling, meaningful really, what makes a thriving life.

Literary Devices. Literary devices can also contribute to community poetry's complexity. Specifically, imagery, word choice, assertion, the place in the poem occupied by the literary device, and the use of repetition or refrain, can account for instances of complexity in community poetry.

Imagery plays a significant role in my poem, for example, as the image of the women's 'wringing hands' at the end is unclear: Are the women upset, relieved, sad, or angered as they see the perpetrator's 'face in calm' (i.e., the dead perpetrator)? The assertion 'we must protect her' at the end of Sana's poem also brings about the complexity of the fact that, far from the extreme dangers haunting women in rural Pakistan, women—especially young women pursued for marriage—are still not completely safe, even if they are much more independent in the west. The fact of this assertion's place at the very end of the poem also gives weight to this idea that protection and preventing abuse is necessary. Repetition in community poetry can also add to complexity in feeling. As Marie noted about repetition in Sana's poem: "In repeating 'not according to Islam' the poem presents the...use of repetition which builds tension within the poetic narrative. Here a tension between resisting oppression and hope." The use of and change in refrain can also provide for complexity. For example, in Avi's poem, the shaming refrain repeated throughout:

*And you stand there looking on
With futile, folded arms
You stand there looking on
As Gaza/Palestine/an olive tree burns*

in the last stanza is changed to the following:

*Don't stand there, brother, looking on
With futile folded arms
Don't stand there – sister, douse the fire!
Palestine is burning!*

Also, the refrain involving '*it's burning, it's burning*' at the end includes '*Grab the buckets, douse the fire!*' '*Show that you know how!*' In the first instance, the feeling of shaming is combined with a directive that demands immediate action and in the second instance, the images of the ever-dangerous and consuming fire—involving feelings of panic—are also combined with a directive that calls for immediate action. The poem shifts, therefore, to some sense of hope. At the same time, the images of passivity and besiegement, as well as feelings of shaming and panic, are still present.

Community poetry, represented by the five poems in this study, can enact individual acts of resistance to dominant discourse, ideology, perspectives, practices, and ways of seeing the world. Community poetry can resist this hegemonic power, and can assert a new power, by its detailed descriptions and imagery about people who are often silenced and about social issues that are often treated in a superficial manner. Community poetry can also express personal truths or concerns that link up with social and political issues, hence moving beyond stereotypes often portrayed in the mainstream. Also, as Avi suggested, community poetry operates by a "*different logic...by being more open to emotions,*" which can allow for a deeper understanding of social change (Gould, 2004) that considers "what it feels like to be treated unjustly" (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 209). Overall, community poetry in its written form, can help community poets to gain "control over definitions of self and community" (Naples, 1991, p. 479) and to increase personal empowerment.

Community poetry that describes social threats of injustice and oppression, as witnessed in this study, can express emotions of fear, anger, despair, and hope. It can also express both similar and divergent emotions (see Appendix J). Community poetry can enact resistance and be considered counter-narrative by describing situations and social change in ways that are straightforward and express certainty, and in ways that express complexity and ambiguity. Intertwined with and essential to many of these attributes that make community poetry a tool of

individual resistance are literary devices, such as imagery and metaphor, that can, for example, enhance emotional expression and reinforce straightforwardness or complexity.

While acts of resistance may start out as works of individual consciousness of the poet who created or adapted the poems, these acts can be regarded, in community poetry, as stepping stones to a shared or interactional process involving other people. The first level of interaction often involves other individuals reading the written works and/or community poets performing them, by reading them aloud in a group process or group experience with other poets, and sometimes with community organizers (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013). In sharing community poetry, the message of resistance in the individual poems, both in terms of content and emotional expression, is imparted to other people, such as readers or listeners, and therefore can become a collective consciousness raising experience. This next stage in the social change process will be looked at in the following theme: *Community Poetry in Interaction: Individual and Collective Power*.

Community Poetry in Interaction: Individual and Collective Power

*Poetry is made to have people commune with their emotions
it gives beauty and nobility to those who are struggling*

(interview excerpt from Gabriel)

The second theme discussed in this chapter concerns the sharing of community poetry and emotions. By sharing poetry and emotions, social change can occur through community building, which can be defined as identifying with a community and participating in community affairs (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013). Community building can also result from the creation of *discursive space* (Mair, 2002) where the order of power in society can be resisted (Mair, 2002).

The community building experience is a process where community poets can express a voice to others, where they can be validated in their concerns and truths, and where they can experience emotional connection with themselves, others, and with the poems. This community building can occur in a group process consisting of performance and exchange and through reading community poetry. These experiences characterize a process where similarity, divergence, and ambivalence in emotional reaction to the works can occur and where diverse reactions can be debated in terms of their usefulness to social change. Finally, sharing poetry in a group, specifically, is representative of the fact that community building, whether the result of

connection and unity or divergence, can lead to a sense of individual and collective empowerment. This theme is broken down into three sub-themes: *Powerful Experience: Coming to Voice, From Emotional Connection to Collective Power*, and *Not so Simple: Emotional Divergence and Complexity as Community Building*.

Powerful Experience: Coming to Voice. This section examines how community poets come to give voice to their experiences and emotions by sharing them with others. This idea of coming to voice and having community poets see “that they had (have) something worthy to say” (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013, p. 7) is seen in a few studies (see also Foster, 2012) that feature community building among community members and poets. Coming to voice in community building is a process. The first step in this process is accessibility. Due to the low cost of practicing poetry, either individually or in a group or community setting, many community members can have access to writing and sharing poetry. As I mentioned: “*Poetry is cheap to practice...you just need paper and some pens ...it’s easy enough to change locations for a poetry group, which sometimes occurs or is needed.*” These ideas are in line with the notion that “poetry is a portable form of art” (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013, p. 9).

Once the sharing of community poetry has begun, the experiences and emotions of community poets can emerge. As Russ stated: “*The grassroots hopes, dreams, desires and frustrations come to the surface, saying ‘oh this is how people feel in our community.’*” Patizia compared this emergence to “[a]calling out, the poems are a plea to be heard and to be listened to. They [the poets] feel that urgent need for emotional expression.” Coming to voice can be significant in many ways. One potential reason is because many people living in marginal situations have been silenced. As Patrizia explained:

Community poetry gives a voice to people, and when you are talking about social change, you are often talking about people who don’t have a voice, who are not given a platform who don’t have ways to express themselves to give them the opportunity to construct their narrative to express their feelings.

Russ described people being left out and coming to voice in the following way: “*These are voices that are often not brought to the fore in the mainstream because...the person or the poem itself... is not marketable, it’s not a good commodity.*” I noted that coming to voice was especially important because people can speak for themselves: “*A lot is said about people who*

are minorities or living in marginal situations by others, but it's rare that they get a chance to speak for themselves and do it in a way that is very creative and empowering."

Sharing poetry can also create the circumstances where people will feel that what they have to say is worthy and where they feel empowered (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013). According to Saša: *"The truth and specificity of people's subjective life experiences can be validated, it can be honoured."* Russ spoke of this validation in the following way: *"What the community is saying is legitimate. We have a legitimacy."* Patrizia singled out immigrant populations, for whom coming to voice can be especially important: *"For immigrant people who wrote poetry in their country of origin, it's a very validating experience because these people are so devalued in North American society. This type of community building allows them to find themselves."*

What can be especially empowering is the process of performing poetry and expressing one's emotional reactions to others' performed works. As I noted: *"The poets are empowered twice, first by expressing emotions through performing poetry and then by expressing how they feel about the other performed poems."* When asked how she felt about her involvement in performing poetry and sharing emotions in the group process, Albertha also commented on the powerful and validating effect of this experience:

The [emotional] reactions of the people, it builds you up to realize the situation we are definitely in. To see other people's situations and how they deal with it and the feedback you get from the group, it strengthens you and encourages you to keep on pushing forward.

In terms of empowerment, sharing community poetry about social issues, especially, can be a validating experience for people. As I noted: *"It's a chance to validate these social issues from the side of those who are living through them and to hear exactly how they feel about it."* In coming to voice, community poets can experience empowerment on an individual level that, at the same time, connects them to others. As Avi explained: *"Poetry is a tool for people to express themselves in terms of how self-expression can be part of liberation but also to break isolation to connect with people."*

The phenomenon of coming to voice is one of the most satisfactory and rewarding aspects of the work I do as an arts-based community organizer (reflexive journal, March 20, 2018). Often when community members first partake in community poetry activities, they are very shy and insecure. Some will come to poetry exchanges, where people share their poetry with each other,

and not read their own work, but just listen. After a while, they may gain courage and share their own poetry. Eventually, some gain enough confidence to partake in community readings, publications, and other events. To see them go through this process is enthralling. They gain confidence in their voice and share it with others. They feel empowered. Their voices, emotions and lived experiences are validated (reflexive journal, March 20, 2018). In this sense, the findings noted here echo many of my experiences with coming to voice in my community work.

From Emotional Connection to Collective Power. Sharing poetry can inspire and generate a felt sense of connection. This felt sense of connection between people is considered a key element in the community building process (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Community poetry, specifically, has been singled out as a means of building intimacy between people (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013) to the extent that “the kind of intimacy and depth...by sharing poetry... [is] ‘enthralling’” and “would be hard to replicate...by other community building means” (p. 10). This sense of connection can be even stronger when a group experience includes sharing one’s emotional reactions to performed poems. The felt sense of connection between community poets can also lead to feelings of solidarity and collective power.

*Poetry weaves
threads of connection
so heartfelt, clearly
sense of unity
inspires responsibility*

(found poem based on interview extracts)

The poets and community organizers interviewed for this study agreed that sharing community poetry can allow for emotional connection to occur. Listening to performed poetry, especially, can promote a feeling of connection. Upon reflecting on the bonding experience of performed poetry, I stated:

It really is in the performed version that the emotions can come out because you really hear the rhythms of the poetry in this way, the person’s voice also influences the emotional charge of the poem. You can really feel connected to what is being spoken.

In the same regard, Russ noted that he sees the performance of his poetry as means of reaching out to others in similar situations: “*I am also pointing out to people who are listening that ‘you*

are not alone'. I think that this [the personal situation described in his poem] is something that billions of people experience from time to time in their lives."

Sharing community poetry can help those reading or listening to the poems feel a sense of embodied connection to their own lives and emotions. As Saša noted: "...*The poems had a visceral effect on me. Sometimes because the imagery captured parts of myself and reality.*"

Albertha, for her part, commented on her reaction to hearing Russ' poem in the group process: "*In Russ' poem, his dreams were dashed because of bad experiences from the system that brought him to the point of despair [that] I can identify with. I was in that same situation.*" And Sana reported that "*the poems touched my heart because some similar type of instances, like homelessness, depression, occur in the part of the world I come from.*"

The sense of connection can also be due to the empathy and solidarity felt for, and anger on behalf of, those described in the poems as victims. For example, Albertha had the following to say about the other poets' reactions to her poem: "*They felt frustration... from what I wrote in my poem depicting the behaviour of the government. It could be empathy...towards the people who are suffering social injustice and lack of human rights being administered by the government.*" Russ, for his part, felt "*a sense of solidarity with the struggle in Gaza*" through listening to Avi's poem.

The feeling of connection achieved through sharing community poetry can be especially directed towards the (other) poets. In some cases, this connection can happen regardless of whether the poems, per se, are experienced as appealing. As Avi explained about his reactions in the group process:

What stood out was the feelings I had for the poets themselves before, during, and after their performance. Their connection to the content was so clearly heartfelt and sincere that, regardless of what I thought intellectually about the poems, whether I liked them or not, I was moved to empathize with the righteous indignation that seemed to drive each person's poetry.

The sense of connection to the poets can also occur because the people feel compassion or empathy for the poet—when the poems are highly personal, the compassion for the people described in the poems as victims translates into empathy for the poet. Patrizia described her reactions to the poems in this sense:

You associate the theme and the poem with the person [the poet] and you can see the person through the poem and feel empathy towards that person. You can connect and identify with what that person is feeling, so if the person is worried or scared, and you feel worried and scared along with them.

In the group performance, I noted the reaction of the other poets to me through my poem: *“I did notice a common empathy and sense of respect among the other poets towards me as the [my] poem recounted a personal situation I had lived through. I was very moved by this.”* Even if a poet does not recount a personal story in his or her poem, empathy towards the individual can still occur for the simple fact of performing the poem. As Russ explained his reaction to Avi’s performance: *“It was empathy for him [Avi] as an artist. To have the courage to take something that had a particular message and to be able to find resonances in today’s situation like what is happening in Gaza was amazing.”*

Literary Devices. Literary devices can play an important role in the felt sense of connection experienced when poetry is shared. These include imagery, rhythm, repetition, and choice of language. Of these, imagery can play a central role. For example, Gabriel, when asked if any of the literary devices in the five poems presented in this study made him feel connected to the material, replied: *“Kaddish for Mr. Ringo, the imagery: The volcano imagery ready to explode, the arms and muscles of the guy dressed in black, and the imagery of the needle. I thought it [the poem] was very rich in imagery and provides material to be meditated upon.”* Saša also reported feeling very connected to the imagery in some of these poems, for example, the following images in Albertha’s poem:

*No one seems to accept blame
For causing such disdain
It’s time more than time for a turn around
That we can hold our heads high in this town*

Saša explained the significance of the imagery in the poems in terms of connection:

The imagery... had a visceral effect on me... because it gave me a strong visualization of someone else’s truth. Imagery done in this way allows you to move beyond the words that are in front of you, and to a place of feeling.

Another important literary device that can have an impact and develop a sense of connection to poetry is rhythm. For example, I commented on the rhythm of Russ’ poem: *“In one*

particular poem, the poet asked a series of questions. This had an effect of intensifying the subject of the poem and of intensifying the anger the poet was expressing. Its emotional impact [was] very intense and strong.” Patrizia also commented on the rhythm in Russ’ poem: *[There are] a lot of questions in this poem. It makes it very urgent, so you feel that intensity, that urgency. You feel called out to.”*

A combination of literary devices can occur in the same poem, with the result that the performance of the poem allows people to connect with it. Repetition, choice of language, and rhythm are examples of such devices. As Russ noted: *“Avi’s poem with the Yiddish and the repetition. It had a particular rhythm to it that really connected with me. I got this feeling of bombardment.”*

Due to the felt sense of connection, sharing poetry can be a very meaningful experience. As Avi noted about the group process: *“I found the group process to be profound and genuine. All the poets were closely connected to the content of what they wrote, and other people saw and valued that.”* Ultimately, as I stated: *“sharing poetry is a very powerful experience.”* The felt sense of connection from sharing community poetry can lead to a sense of community, collective empowerment, and solidarity. As Russ noted about the group experience:

There is a kinship there. I really got the collective dynamic that the entire exercise brought. The space that performance can create allows people to be open about their feelings, I think it gives them dynamism in terms of how things move.

Albertha also commented on the group process: *“[It was] like a collective spirit between us. It was pushing forward to show human activities and human emotions and empathy. There was solidarity. Like [a] oneness.”* Marie agreed that sharing poetry in community, specifically listening to it, can create a special group feeling: *“It is important to share poetry in community. There is synergy in community, there is the inexplicable importance of hearing the spoken word.”* According to Saša, feelings of connection and oneness are essential to social change: *“Connecting to individual and collective forms of pain is fundamental to mobilizing against the status quo. Connection brings the magic and power needed to effect change.”*

Not so Simple: Emotional Divergence and Complexity as Community Building. The third sub-theme, *Not so Simple: Emotional Divergence and Complexity as Community Building*, examines the fact that while sharing community poetry can evoke unifying emotions, primarily through feelings of empathy, it can also generate divergent feelings among people. Community

poetry can also evoke complex feelings, that is, emotions that are ambivalent and multi-faceted as experienced within one person. That these divergent and complex responses can also be a tool for community building (Horsfall, 2008) dispels the myth that only unity and agreement are valid in terms of forming and feeling a sense of community.

Sharing Poetry: Beyond Similar Emotions, Looking at Divergence. Sharing community poetry can evoke similar emotions among those reading or listening to the performed works. The poets' emotional reactions to the community poetry performed in the group process in this study echoed this notion. As Avi stated: "*I found that, overall the emotional responses were similar.*" Both Sana and I pointed out specific emotions that we believed were shared by the poets. As I stated: "*[The] major two reactions to the poetry were anger or outrage at the injustices being portrayed in the poetry and empathy towards those being portrayed as victims in the poems.*" And as Sana commented: "*Emotionally all the poets mutually felt angry [and] sad...for the deprived.*"

At the same time, the poets' emotional reactions to the performed poetry diverged at various intervals. These divergent emotions were, at times, due to the level of discomfort experienced by some of those listening. As Avi explained about the group process: "*There were times where one or two people felt some discomfort around the content and/or tone of some of the poems, while the one or two others in the audience did not express feeling such discomfort.*"

In the group experience in this study, one of the most poignant examples of divergent reactions were in response to Albertha's poem. On the one hand, as Albertha noted when asked how the poets reacted to her performance, the poets expressed "*disappointment, frustration...like the government has no consideration for righting the wrong.*" On the other, Sana expressed sadness regarding the situation of the homeless portrayed in the poem: "*[I was] sad with the thought that people feel so dependent on others. I thought the homeless should also help themselves, that one should depend on oneself and not on handouts.*" I also reacted differently to the poem: "*I felt wary of asking the government to intervene on behalf of the poor. They haven't done a lot so far.*"

Another poem that elicited varying emotions was mine: For example, Sana reported the following reactions to my poem:

I felt upset, annoyed, concerned, and frustrated. They [the women in Kaddish for Mr. Ringo] are the ones putting themselves in that position to be abused through their

search for alcohol or drugs. Why should women put themselves at risk just to be able to drink?

Avi reported other reactions to the poem: *“As the poem unfolded, I opened up to compassion for the women who survived the abuse, and even compassion for the abuser for his pains.”*

Sana’s poem also evoked varying reactions. Avi, for example, reported feeling unease: *“Sana’s poem evoked discomfort for me partly because I thought about how it would be received by various Canadian audiences who already see places like rural Pakistan in one dimensional ways.”* I stated that I felt a sense of annoyance: *“I felt irritated that Canada and Quebec were seemingly glorified as havens for women. I found this unsettling and was concerned about it.”*

In sharing community poetry, divergent emotional reactions can be due to the people’s social locations. This phenomenon occurred in this study, for example, in the very different reactions to my performed poem as expressed by Sana and Avi. As Sana noted about her reaction to my poem:

I think the fact that I am a woman played into my reaction to Sandy’s poem, being angry that women were being treated this way. Also, I believe my cultural background, being from Pakistan, influenced my response to her poem. In my culture, women generally do not have problems with drugs or alcohol and would not find themselves in the position that the women in Sandy’s poem found themselves.

And as Avi explained:

For Sandy’s poem, I experienced a wide range of emotions based on my social location. I went from feeling empathy for the perpetrator of violence in the poem... since I’m a Jew and the poem was called a Kaddish for a Jewish man. I then went to feeling guilty for having felt this empathy for a man who was an abuser, which might be connected to my own history as an abuser who is Jewish and who wrought abuse on Jewish women.

However, having different social locations may not always cause people to experience divergent reactions to community poetry. As Patrizia stated: *“I think that most people would have similar reactions to these poems [in the study] regardless of their backgrounds. In some cases, social justice issues are bigger than individual differences.”*

In response to the varying emotional reactions to their poems, community poets, in turn, can experience a variety of emotions. For example, Albertha reacted in the following manner to

Sana's statement about feeling sad that the homeless do not do more for themselves (see quote on previous page): "*I can't lie. I was irritated. Some people...cannot walk a mile in a person's shoes who is in poverty. They don't seem to understand.*" As for Sansa's reaction to my poem (where she stated that she did not understand why women would put up with abuse just to drink), I reported "*feeling miffed. I am not sure she knows enough about the dynamics of women's addiction in Canada to say these things.*"

Sharing Poetry: Complex and Ambivalent Reactions. In addition to divergent reactions that can occur among people when sharing community poetry, people can also feel complex or ambivalent emotions within themselves in reaction to the poetry. In this study, this complexity of emotional reactions occurred in response to the performances in the group process as well as to reading the written poems. In terms of responding to the four other performances in the group experience, for example, Sana stated: "*My reaction to all the poems was...sadness, empathy, concern. The poems made me feel distressed, angry and empowered.*" Gabriel, for his part, experienced ambivalent and complex emotions in response to one poem, *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*. As Gabriel noted:

I felt anger at the subject of the poem, towards Ringo who is being violent. I felt anger towards the poet for writing a poem that gives attention to this perpetrator. I saw an admiration for Ringo in this poem, so I felt anger toward the person who wrote the poem. I saw it as an injustice that the poem was written for the abuser. But I felt a forgiveness towards the perpetrator and to the person for writing the poem. I felt revolt, anger and at the same time I approve of this poem, so my emotions are mixed. This poem brought out the best and worst in me.

In many cases, complex and ambiguous reactions within oneself as a response to shared community poetry can be due to the listener's or reader's social locations. As I explained in terms of my reactions to the other four performances in the group process:

My social locations played an important role in my reactions. I related to the poems as a woman, a born Canadian, a Jew, and a poor person, and someone who has close associations with very poor people. I felt anger as a woman towards male violence and misogyny, shame as a Jew vis à vis the actions of the state of Israel towards the Palestinians, anger at the restrictions that poor people live under in Canada, and irritation that one poem seemed to idealize the state of women in

Canada, and I know as a Canadian woman who has lived through violence that it's far from perfect.

Gabriel, for his part, described social locations that played a part in his reaction to *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*: “My old identity as an activist and new one as a Christian were intermingling and were mutually upset with each other.”

Divergence and Complexity in Community Building. Feelings of connection and oneness, primarily based on shared feelings of empathy, are often associated with a collective spirit and community building (Horsfall, 2008) that, as has been noted, can be considered a part of social change. Likewise, similar, shared and straightforward emotional reactions to performed poetry, such as anger, can be stepping stones to further action. As Avi put it: “*Similar reactions help mobilize people collectively.*” Conversely, divergent emotional reactions may act as obstacles or present difficulties to establishing a sense of kinship and hence, to social change. As Gabriel stated: “*If you are going from one emotion to another, is it really useful? In order to fight injustice, I think emotions need to be unified.*” Albertha, for her part, demonstrated concern about divergent emotional reactions and social change: “*I think it's problematic. While you see those reactions as being understandable, we need to put them [the complex or divergent emotions] aside in order to continue the fight for social rights.*”

Divergent and complex emotional reactions to shared community poetry can also be seen as positive and may be useful stepping stones for resistance and social change. For example, such reactions can be a sign that people feel at ease with expressing discord. As Avi stated about the group process:

There were instances in which I wasn't sure how comfortable I was bringing disagreement with a poem's content into the conversation. But, in at least two cases, Sandy opened up the space for honest answers by stating that she felt uneasy or in disagreement with some of the other poets' works. Because of this, I felt more comfortable expressing my own disagreement.

In addition, as Russ suggested, divergent emotional reactions may be necessary as they can genuinely reflect how people feel:

People are not going to approach things the same way, so it's going to be heterogenous, not homogenous. That is expecting too much, too much of people that have been held back either emotionally or artistically...to say all of a sudden 'gee, I

really like that poem’, and ‘gee, I agree with you’. I think that it is a very artificial way of looking at things.

Also, divergent emotion expressed by people of different backgrounds does not necessarily deter community poets from experiencing positive feelings. It can, conversely, help people question their suppositions, and connect to other poets or poems. As Russ noted about the group process:

We had a multitude of voices from a multitude of faiths so it’s good. You can see where people are coming from and much more so if you can drop the defences, so you drop that assumption that we are programmed or conditioned to have that our or my experience is more valid. It does confront you with things that you wouldn’t ordinarily look at. The group experience went from person to person poem to poem so that’s an exciting thing too because it’s spontaneous, it’s improvised in that respect there’s no artifice...For the first time in a long time... I felt every poem had a connection to me.

Divergent or complex emotional reactions can also be useful stepping stones to further discussion. As Sana noted: *“These different reactions may allow for people to sit down and discuss how they are feeling. Minimally, it can be a door for further discussion to see where people can go from there.”* Divergent reactions can also help people identify differences and be an important step in resistance. As Avi stated: *“Divergent responses could highlight pre-existing differences of identity or political stances that are always there anyway and are probably best brought to the surface and worked through. This process could be a positive step in building collective resistance to injustice.”* These ideas echo Barndt (2008) who states that community art is a good tool to uncover differences between individuals.

In my community poetry experiences, I have encountered differences of opinion and divergent emotions in response to the content of community poetry (reflexive journal, March 21, 2018). At L'Anneau Poétique, we have developed guidelines for giving feedback to other poets: For example, it's fine to state how one feels but people must do it respectfully by using “I” statements. In a multi-ethnic environment such as Côte-des-Neiges, differences of opinion and feeling in community poetry encounters are not unusual (reflexive journal, March 21, 2018). Based on the findings of this study, I would say that a sense of trust and respect must be first established between people in order to investigate emotional reactions in an in-depth way, especially about social issues that may be controversial (reflexive journal, March 21, 2018).

Community poetry, through sharing it, can be experienced as a means for community building that acts as social change. This social change process firstly involves community members, whose concerns are often silenced, coming to voice where their emotions and experiences expressed through poetry—in this study, concerning social change—can be validated and honoured. Social change can also involve the creation of a sense of collective empowerment and solidarity that is achieved through feelings of kinship, oneness, and connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) that stem from sharing poetry, and especially, performed poetry in a group process. Here, literary devices can play an important role in the sense of connection to the performed poems. At the same time, social change can also be achieved through divergent and complex emotional responses to community poetry that occurs when poetry is shared. This aspect of social change can be achieved by revealing and honouring differences and complexity (Horsfall, 2008), bringing them into the open and potentially, using them as a platform for discussion and resistance. In both similar and divergent and complex emotional reactions to poetry, people's social locations can play a very important role.

Incorporating the individual act of resistance of the written poems and the sharing and performing of poetry as social change are the poetry activities that take place in community organizations. Here, poetry can be shared with other poets, community organizers, community members and the public at large (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013). At this level, both individual written poems and shared poetry are formalized in community activities that can be used for social change. These community activities can also be stepping stones to implication in larger social change movements. This next stage in the social change process will be looked at in the following theme: *Poetry and Emotions: Social Change in Community and Beyond*.

Poetry and Emotions: Social Change in Community and Beyond

Community poetry can be carried out in community organizations in a variety of ways (Sjollema, 2017) and is a popular form of art in these settings (Sjollema & Hanley, 2013; Wanamaker & Walsh, 2009). However, like other forms of art, it often remains a marginalized form of community development (Kay, 2000; Sjollema & Hanley, 2013). Those who participate in such activities are, for the most part, community members who identify with marginalized social locations (Sjollema & Bilotta, 2016). In community organizations, poetry activities can include publications, public performances, reading poetry at demonstrations, and popular education workshops where both the expression and evocation of emotion occur. Here, poetry

can act as a means of counter-narrative (Foster, 2012), consciousness raising (Freire, 2004), and community building (Horsfall, 2008) in a community development process. Community development can be defined as “the capacity of people to order their world, the capacity to create, reproduce, change and live according to their own meaning systems, to have the powers to define themselves as opposed to being defined by others” (Giddens, 1984, p. 13).

At the community level, emotions and poetry can be devalued given the fact that most community organizations value logic and rationality (Sjollema, 2012). At the same time, there can be advantages to using community poetry, including its emotional effects, in various community activities. The place of shared, straightforward, complex and diverse emotions, as experienced through specific community activities, can also occur and can be relevant to social change. Undertaking poetry activities in community organizations can also raise questions as to the importance of aesthetics and its relationship to emotions and social change. Finally, community poetry used in organizations can be viewed as leading to further inspiration, reflection or action on social change. The theme of *Poetry and Emotions: Social Change in Community and Beyond* is broken down into three sub-themes: *Poetry and Feelings in Community Organizations, Aesthetics, Emotions, and Social Change*, and *Community Poetry: Mobilizing Inspiration, Reflection, and Action*.

Poetry and Feelings in Community Organizations. This sub-theme examines the role of emotions and poetry as tools for social change in community organizations and in the community development process. In general, community organizations function according to a rational logic in terms of planning and organizing activities or approaching social change from a rational perspective (Sjollema, 2012) that can often objectify community members who are expected to conform to development end-goals (Bhattacharyya, 2004). As such, emotions can be downplayed in organizational settings. As I stated about the relationship between community organizations, rationality, and emotion:

Emotions in our society are generally speaking not welcomed. This can also be true at the level of community organizations. I think community organizers see emotions as being too volatile and uncontrollable, like a Pandora's box of sorts. For example, it's easier just to talk about the latest statistics around poverty and keep the conversation 'to the facts.' It might be safer. But emotions are there, and if strong enough, will come out anyways.

More specifically, the rational approach taken by community organizations is not easily reconciled with emotions as experienced through poetry (Sjollema, 2012). Gabriel reiterated these ideas:

I don't believe that community organizations, overall, take poetry or emotions seriously enough. I think that poetry gets discredited and is cast into the domain of the irrational or the aesthetic that are not seen as valid, especially compared to the ideology of rationality that community organizations adhere to. But I think poetry represents the logic of emotion and the intelligence of the heart.

At the same time, using poetry in community organizations can be advantageous. Gabriel, for example, contrasted the use of emotion to manipulate people and the emotional nature of poetry:

Community organizations do the same things as politicians, they manipulate and want to manipulate emotion because people are motivated by emotions, so they often use slogans of various kinds. But poetry invites people to listen to it, it provokes feeling things so that change can take place. It has the capacity to evoke emotions in people rather than being used to manipulate emotions in people.

Patrizia, for her part, noted the advantages to community members of using poetry and emotion as a means of discussion about social change, and specifically, within the context of popular education workshops:

With poetry, community members may feel more comfortable and open speaking up about their emotional reactions than in a rational debate about social justice because in the latter case, they may feel they have to argue with factual information which they might not be able to do. In the context of a popular education activity, poetry allows for a lot more freedom than taking part in a political discussion, which is an exchange of information or opinion. Poetry goes deeper by going to the emotions, it allows for reflection and there is a great freedom of interpretation.

Gabriel also commented on the advantages of using poetry, rather than other forms of communication, in community activities. As he stated: *“I think that if poetry was used more in demonstrations about social justice instead of using slogans it would give a certain beauty and nobility to the demonstrators as well as a solemnity and credibility to the event itself.”*

Using poetry in community organizations can highlight its straightforward and unified expressions and evocations, as well as its divergent and complex ones. Depending on the activity, both sets of emotional expressions and evocations can be useful. For example, while the use of poetry in demonstrations can highlight straightforward emotion, its employment in popular education workshops can underline complex emotion.

Demonstrations are an important activity carried out by community organizations (Project Genesis, 2012). In some cases, poetry is read out at demonstrations to fight for social rights and against injustice. Here, individual poets read their works before the crowd assembled. Straightforward and unified emotions can be useful in this type of activity. Gabriel commented on this usefulness and linked it to the nature of demonstrations and crowds:

To work for social change, I think they [emotional reactions] would better be unified. It's this type of unity which allows us to form a common wave against the adversary. A simple message can unify people around the cause. But it depends on what you mean by social change. Generally speaking, demonstrations are there to fight for one thing, one cause...in a crowd, complexity is missing.

Patrizia also commented on the need for unified emotions, specifically at demonstrations:

A unified emotional response to a poem would be needed in the case of a demonstration or a protest march where you would want people to feel the same emotions as others present. It's not the time for a controversial poem.

While straightforward and unified emotions may have their place in some community organizational activities, in other instances divergent and complex emotions can be more useful, for example, in popular education workshop—which consist of activities where people give and exchange information about social issues. As someone who has organized popular education workshops about social justice issues using poetry and participated as a poet in these activities (reflexive journal, March 26, 2018), I can attest to the fact that they do elicit a wide variety of emotional reactions from those present. According to Patrizia, this divergence is necessary and advantageous in this setting:

If you are using poetry in a popular education workshop where you have more time to discuss things, you want people to express their feelings and allow for a variety of emotional responses. You don't want unanimity. It's empowering especially among

marginalized people to ask everyone how they reacted and to show a respect for difference.

Overall, community organizations may still need to be mindful to encourage complexity and divergence of emotion in their activities (poetry activities or other ones). Saša stressed the necessity of community organizations to address divergent feelings in their approach to community development and social change:

If a community organization only represents one experience of emotion, then it will fail at achieving social change. It risks continuing the divisiveness that plagues our world. A community organization that gives voice to a variety of people requires humility, otherwise those who have more access to...power will give more weight to their own personal experience and marginalize the rest.

Saša pointed to L'Anneau Poétique as an example of a group that succeeds in linking together divergent feelings: *"I think the existence of L'Anneau Poétique is testament to poetry's and people's capacity to weave threads of connection through an array of emotion."*

Aesthetics, Emotions, and Social Change. Aesthetics, in interaction with emotions, can be an important factor in the use of poetry in community organizations. Literary devices, specifically, have been described as rendering art emotionally powerful, hence strengthening its message and use as social change (Bell & Desai, 2011). In this study, the use of literary devices was revealed to be a key component in the potency of the poems' emotional effect, both in written poetry as resistance and in shared poetry in community building.

At the same time, the mastery of aesthetic features is often associated with quality poetry or what makes it "good" (Faulkner, 2007). Specifically, good poetry is often associated with the effective use of literary devices, effectual use of voice and ambiguity, and correct use of grammar, and syntax (Faulkner, 2007). Clarity and coherence can also be considered as making for good poetry (Faulkner, 2007). Finally, emotional effect and inspiring social change are often considered as criteria in the quality of poetry (Faulkner, 2007).

In many community organizations, a split has arisen between what is considered true art and community art (Barndt, 2008; Sjollem, 2012). This split is based on the idea that an ideal or standard of what good art or poetry consists of, exists, and that community or social art does not, but should, meet these standards (Barndt, 2008). Certain community organizers have also been cautioned to not put too much emphasis on aesthetic standards and outcomes (see Brown, 2009)

that would turn community artists into producers of “good” art, to meet organizational goals. Different perspectives prevail on the importance of aesthetic standards in community poetry. For example, some value aesthetic standards and see them as potentially lacking in community poetry. In this study, Marie reiterated this idea and associated it with a lack of re-working the poems:

I think we prefer the rawness of our own poetry as it first comes into being, but it seems to me that what is lacking in these poems [in the study] is the fine-tuning, the compulsive desire to find the precise word, and place it in the place where it belongs.

More specifically, she criticized the poems for several reasons pertaining to their aesthetic features. For example, she felt in one poem that “*the syntax inverted to accommodate rhyme is off-putting*” and believed another poem “*could have been made stronger with more intentional line breaks.*” Marie also criticized the poems for a perceived lack of revision, which many believe can also add to the quality of poetry (see Faulkner, 2007). More specifically, Marie believed that one of the poems “*hasn’t been revised for grammatical errors*” and that “*the poems could be made stronger by revision and editing.*” She also saw the act of revision as being linked to emotional detachment: “*The shaping [revision] of a poem allows [a] detachment as one works upon the form or the structure of the poem, while its content allows for...expression.*”

Others view the aesthetic role in community poetry differently. For example, some encourage community poets to see “great value in the unpolished nature of their work” (Bishop & Willis, 2014, p. 21). In this study, Russ noted the unpolished nature of his poem: “*The emotions in the poem are raw. It was spontaneous...I didn’t stop writing it’s just a one-shot deal.*” Russ also believed that community members and artists, rather than emphasizing aesthetic features or revision, should keep the focus on social change. As he explained:

If you are looking at the whole thing about academic poetry and the analysis of the form rather than the content, I think it’s more skewed that way people are going to read something or listen to something and say ‘well, that doesn’t move me because I have a perspective on what the ideal poem is.’ In community poetry you are not dealing as much in that situation. You are dealing with ideas about how we live, how we struggle, how we want to have a better world.

Ultimately, when community poetry is associated with social change, the ability to reach out to others may be key in terms of the need—or not—for aesthetic standards. As Marie stated:

To utilize poetry in affecting change, it might become necessary to decide what is most important. Do people prefer the raw sound of putting down images or are they willing to be critiqued for the sake of clarity...so that the poem is more universally understood and appreciated?

Russ, however, felt that rawness, specifically in his poem, was helpful in having others understand it. As he stated: “*I was basically expressing those things [rawness, spontaneity] into something that people could understand.*”

As the coordinator of L'Anneau Poétique, I have always been in favour of offering writing workshops to our members (reflexive journal, March 27, 2018). I think that people should be given the chance to understand how to use literary devices and how to revise. At the same time, participation is always voluntary and if people are not interested in writing workshops, they are still welcome to take part in our other activities. In some cases, poems have been included in our anthologies, even if in a “raw” or “unpolished” state. Some poetry is very appealing even if raw, or even because it’s raw. The discussion in this study about aesthetics, although unexpected, made me reflect on the approach L’Anneau Poétique takes on this matter, which I believe is a balanced one (reflexive journal, June 10, 2018) that could act as a model for other community groups (see Recommendations and Future Considerations chapter).

Community Poetry: Mobilizing Inspiration, Reflection, and Action. According to a study cited by Maton (2008), it is often through participation at the community level that community members get involved in citizen mobilization. In this study, participating in poetry and emotions in a community group setting was seen as a very powerful experience that can act as an incentive to being further inspired, to reflecting on, and to acting or recommitting to action for social change. For example, when asked what she thought about the group poetry performance and social change in this study, Albertha replied that she saw the potential for social change occurring if community poetry could grow in importance:

It [the poetry group performance] was good because we have to have a start. This is our beginning and it’s in us and we have to keep going, so other people will hear it [community poetry] and then the news will spread. Getting human rights and social justice in place: It will spread and then if we could get it to our communities, our municipalities to hear it, our ministers. I think maybe one or two of them it may

touch their soul and they may be able to stand up and say, 'look this is going on too long, let's do something about it'.

Involvement in community poetry and emotion can also help people see the possibilities for mobilization at the neighbourhood level. As Saša stated: *“After reading the poems, I do believe that poetry can be used to mobilise diverse groups of people in Côte-des-Neiges, and other areas, by inspiring emotional and spiritual connection and appreciation of difference.”* For Marie, the empowerment at the neighbourhood level was linked to the act of revising poetry: *“Low-income neighbourhoods can find empowerment through naming injustice...and revisioning [poetry]. You can see this potential for social change in the five poems presented here.”*

Hearing the powerful message of community poetry and experiencing its emotional effects can also encourage people to reflect on social change. As Saša commented:

They [the poems in the study] are a reminder that the current economic structures and social order inflict pain onto many of us, if not all of us...and pushed me to reflect more critically about my responsibility to myself and to social justice causes. They also pushed me to look at how we are all upholding systems of oppression.

Finally, community poetry can inspire people to take action, or to recommit to various causes. Avi commented on the nature of his recommitment to social causes, specifically in terms of his reaction to *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*:

I was inspired to renew my commitments around challenging patriarchy in the Jewish community and to find ways to respond compassionately and critically to people, who like myself, experience chronic mental illness, but who also harm others and cause trauma through violent behaviour.

In my experiences with L'Anneau Poétique, I have witnessed people who already have commitments to social change and social movements become even more engaged in these causes, due to their participation in our activities (reflexive journal, March 27, 2018). Moreover, they begin to understand and experience the strength and power of community poetry to address social issues, to gain a voice and a sense of power in group activities, and to use poetry as counter-narrative and consciousness raising. In many cases, the use of poetry is complementary to the social activism they are already engaged in. These results led me to think that perhaps other studies could be undertaken that look at arts-based social justice activities carried out in community as a complement or adjunct to mainstream social justice activities of community

members and activists to see how emotions and aesthetics can strengthen their inspiration, reflection and commitment to social change (see Recommendations and Future Considerations chapter) (reflexive journal, June 10, 2018).

This found poem, garnered from the interviews with the poets, summarizes the link between poetry, emotion, and the ability to look towards greater implication in social change.

The Poets Said

*The poets said
emotion in poetry
moves people to do things
they said
outrage and empathy
towards injustice
expressed in poems
feelings of solidarity
among community poets
are good places to start
for social change
the poets said
it's an emotional engagement
a human fight
it's not statistics
they said
letting go of privilege
undoing oppression
must start with connection
we cannot build bridges
across difference
without emotion
they said
we can never purely
theoretically
intellectually
be in solidarity*

Reflections about the Analysis and the Findings (based on reflexive journal entries, August 10 – October 24, 2017).

The data analysis, in addition to the writing up of the findings and discussion, was very intricate and detailed work. A lot of reflection occurred while I was writing and, in some cases, I revisited the initial codes and coding and revised the themes. Therefore, the writing and analysis were iterative. I also looked up a fair bit of academic information to support some of the material.

I was surprised at some of the eventual themes, and especially, sub-themes. I had not counted on talking about the personal and political elements in the written poems, for example, nor about the complex, ambivalent and multi-faceted aspect of emotional expression and emotional response that can occur in one poem or in one person listening to or reading poetry. I had also not counted on discussing the overall place of feelings and poetry in community organizations. Also, as previously noted, Marie's comments about the quality of the poems was not something I had anticipated, but in the end, I was glad she emphasized this point as it provided for very interesting questions about the place of quality and aesthetic standards in social change in community poetry, *e.g.*, to what extent are aesthetic standards needed, appropriate or relevant?

Overall, I found data analysis and writing up the findings to be a very creative, if not lonely, process (reflexive journal, August 10, 2017). At one point, I sent the poets a rough draft of the findings to have them read them over. I did this for a few different reasons. Firstly, I wanted to be transparent and to be sure that I was not misrepresenting them in any way. I knew that transparency and having participants "talk back" (Brabeck, 2003, p. 253) to representations are fundamental aspects of the participatory process. As such, I asked them to especially pay attention to how they were represented and to review the quotes or paraphrasing that mentioned them. Secondly, I sent them a copy of the findings because I had gotten used to being in interaction with them during the earlier stages of the study (pre-research meetings, interviews, preliminary analysis) and during the time I was writing up the findings, they were not. This produced in me a lonely and isolated feeling (reflexive journal, August 10, 2017). I eventually met with the poets to look at the areas where I quoted or paraphrased them and to go over these passages together. In each case, clarifications and slight changes to the original comments were made. The poets reported enjoying this process very much and feeling a sense of ownership over

the work. I also greatly enjoyed this experience as it broke the isolation I had been experiencing (reflexive journal, October 23, 2017).

There's no doubt that my personal experiences with community poetry played into the way the themes were broken down. This was especially true in terms of the themes about how poetry is used in community organizations. As my Master of Social Work at McGill focused on community development and poetry, there was some overlap here in terms of what was discussed, particularly how community organizations tend to downplay emotions. At the same time, analyzing written poetry, especially in terms of the emotions it expresses, was not something I had done in my previous work and I felt uncomfortable about making declarative or definitive statements about the emotions emitted by the written poems. In the end, I re-wrote the findings from a conditional perspective, *i.e.*, using "can" or "could" statements. Also, my natural reflex, based on my experiences in community, was to open up discussion about poetry with others. At the same time, it was thrilling to use my knowledge of poetry and the poetic form to conduct this type of analysis. I felt like I was back in poetry class at the English department. I found the discussion about written poetry as resistance to be very validating, especially the idea that writing about one's own life, and linking it to bigger social issues, is a form of resistance and counter-narrative. Although I had encountered this link in my community practice, to label it as resistance to hegemony made me feel that it was a very significant act, and that it was a very meaningful exercise to undertake for social change. I also found the discussion about resistance as straightforwardness or unification vs. complexity and divergence, and the debate about aesthetic standards and social change to be truly fascinating. I was enthralled (reflexive journal, October 20, 2017).

Considerations: Community Poetry, Emotions, and Social Change

The intertwining of content and emotion can be considered central to community poetry and social change. While the content about social change is essential because it describes personal or/and collective experiences in the context of social issues and injustice, the emotional expressions and evocations of the community poetry experience can encourage people to care about and understand at a deeper level what is being described. The emotional aspect of community poetry can allow people to feel a profound connection to themselves, to others, to the poems, and to the world and its problems. Central to the emotional effect of community poetry are literary devices, such as imagery, rhythm and rhyme. Issues of complexity, ambivalence,

straightforwardness, difference, similarity, social location, and personal perspectives are important factors in how community poetry and emotions can work as resistance to hegemony, and as a means for the development of individual and collective power of community poets in community building. These factors can also be manifested in community poetry activities carried out in community organizations. In these settings, the importance of the quality of the art can be debated in terms of the impact of aesthetic standards on social change. The experience of community poetry and emotions can also facilitate further inspiration, reflection and a recommitment to social change for community poets and organizers.

To broaden the understanding about the relevance of emotion in social change, the following chapter will look at Gould (2004) and Burkitt (1987) who, among others, discuss the necessity and integration of emotion in social life and change. The importance of emotion in social change will also be further discussed by analysing what have been thought of as essential emotions in inspiring social change. In the following chapter, the discussion about the complexity of emotion in social change will also be deepened: By examining, for example, how uncertainty in emotions, as characterized by their spontaneity, can work for social change. A closer look at the relationship between aesthetics, emotions, and social change will also take place by analyzing Faulkner (2007), as well as other authors, who discuss these factors in terms of what “good” poetry consists of and of the role or/and necessity of aesthetic standards in community and activist art.

Finally, the following chapter will foster greater understanding about group experiences of community building and social change by focusing on the work of Hemingway (1996), who discusses the concept of *participatory democracy*, a democracy where people living in marginal situations have access to and participate in community and social life through specific spaces and practices that encourage their active citizenship.

CHAPTER 6: Larger Spheres of Understanding

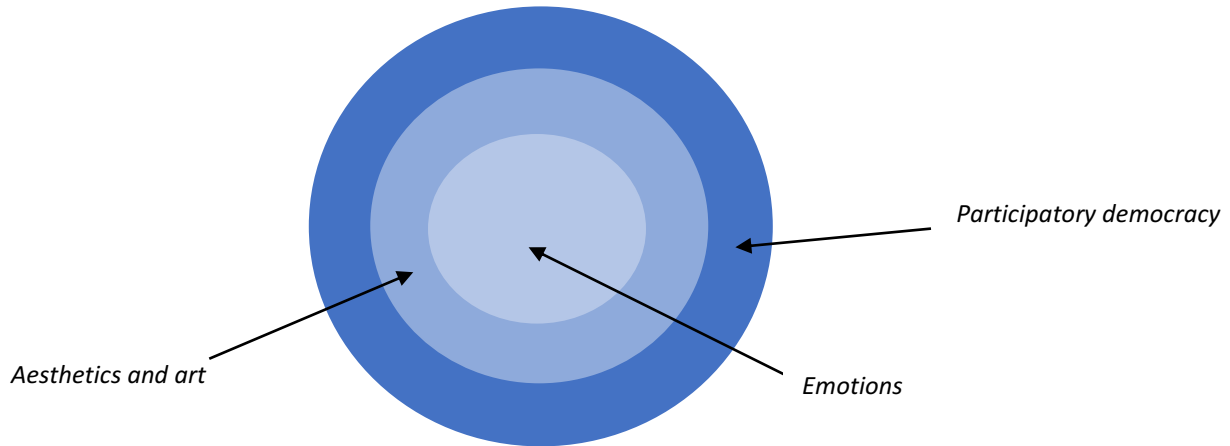
Findings of this study emphasized community poetry as a means for social change at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Emotion, and the complexity of the emotional experience in social change, as well as the importance of personal perspectives and social location, were revealed to be key factors in the community poetry endeavour in this study. In addition, findings revealed the important role that literary devices can play in the emotional experiences of community poetry.

In this chapter, knowledge garnered from this study will be examined to confirm and question existing understandings about the place of emotions, art, aesthetics, poetry, and community in social change. Additionally, new insights or considerations resulting from the findings of the study concerning these areas of social change will be elaborated upon to deepen understanding about these subjects.

The expanding of knowledge garnered from this study will occur, firstly, by looking at the findings in the context of ideas concerning the necessity, variety, and uncertainty of emotions in social change, primarily articulated in the field of sociology of emotions/social movements. Secondly, the results of this study will be analyzed according to perspectives that discuss the intertwining of emotions, aesthetic features and social change in the quality of art and poetry. How this interaction is relevant to discussions of the role of aesthetic standards in community art will be delineated. These ideas will be derived primarily from the field of arts-based research as well as the community arts. Finally, the findings will be examined in the context of participatory democracy (Hemingway, 1996), a notion that highlights the necessity to social change of the participation in social life of people living in marginal situations, and that focuses on the specific spaces and processes that can empower those who participate. The discussions about participatory democracy are articulated principally in the field of leisure and community development and the arts. In these deliberations about emotions, aesthetics, and participatory democracy, notions of complexity, diversity, divergence, personal perspectives, and social location will be addressed when relevant. Implications for social change will also be examined.

Emotions, art/aesthetics, and participatory democracy can be conceptualized as concentric circles (see *Figure 2* below): Emotions, the smallest circle, are experienced through aesthetics and art, the second circle. Both take place in the spaces and through the practices which constitute participatory democracy.

Figure 2. Spheres of understanding: Emotions and art in participatory democracy



The Necessity, Variety, and Uncertainty of Emotions in Social Change

*Structures of profit
linear power
our feelings, not meant to survive*

(adapted from Lorde, 1985)

The first section of this chapter examines the findings of this study in light of the importance and integration of emotions in social life and change. This section also investigates a few emotions, such as hope and anger, considered by many to be essential to social change (Burkitt, 1987; Gould, 2004). Discussions also focus on questioning the centrality of these emotions and considering how they can be expressed in subtler and less-than-straightforward ways. The variety of emotions, as expressed by the combination of emotions found in various expressions, are also analyzed. Another discussion focuses on how emotions can be uncertain (Gould, 2009) by examining spontaneous, constructed, and intention-based emotion in social change (de Courville Nicol, 2011). New considerations derived from the findings, such as viewing writing as a means of survival, are also introduced. A final deliberation as to the implications to social change of these discussions will also be presented.

The Integration of Emotion in Social Life. Emotions, rather than being an appendage to reason, or inferior to it, are regarded by many as being essential to social life. For example, Jasper

(1998) affirms that “emotions do not merely accompany our deepest desires and satisfactions, they constitute them” (p. 399). Emotions are also thought of as being necessary to the understanding of social change. Gould (2004), for example, remarks that emotions allow for a “thicker and deeper understanding” (p. 173) of the social change process, while de Courville Nicol (2011) states that that social change “does not make much sense if it fails to take into account what it feels like to be treated unjustly” (p. 209). Community poetry, as illustrated in this study, confirmed the central place of emotions in community life and social change. Indeed, as stated by Albertha and Russ, two poets in the study, it is the emotional component of community poetry that incites people to care, and that renders the poetry meaningful. According to them, emotions in community poetry leads people to move beyond potential sentiments of indifference to being motivated to take action to get social problems and injustices fixed. In some cases, it is the emotional connection that poets have to their material that helps others form an emotional bond to them. As another poet, Avi, suggested, this emotional connection can occur regardless of whether the content of the poems is experienced as appealing or not. In the social change that occurred in this study, emotions, as experienced through poetry, were considered by the poets and organizers to be profound and forceful. For example, Patrizia, one of the community organizers, noted that she felt the poems represented an intense need to be heard, and that using poetry was a means of going deeper into emotions than conversations based on factual information. These findings echo Gould’s (2004) thoughts on the depth that emotions can bring to social change. Community poetry in this study also poignantly articulated “what it feels like to be treated unjustly” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 209) as the plight of the victims of oppression and injustice was powerfully expressed in the poems, primarily through the use of literary devices, such as imagery and repetition.

While emotions in social life can be said to be essential, they are not isolated from other aspects of life (Burkitt, 1987). De Courville Nicol (2011) and Jaggar (1989) discuss, for example, the interlacing of emotion, knowledge, language, and discourse. Sayer (2011), for his part, underscores the relationship of emotion to values or ethical considerations. De Courville Nicol describes feelings linked to ethical considerations as “moral” emotions (p. 7). These moral emotions mean that people feel a sense of responsibility for their feeling states, actions, and outcomes and, because they are aware of this sense of accountability in themselves, they assume that others can feel it too.

In this study, emotions were integrated with language and discourse (Jaggar, 1989) by being expressed through poetry, a language-based art, as well as through the spoken expressions that described emotional reactions in the poetry performance. As emotions can be considered knowledge (de Courville Nicol, 2011) and knowledge is imbedded in language and discourse (Hamilton & Sharma, 1997), this study also highlighted the intertwining of emotion, language, discourse, and knowledge. Emotions experienced in community poetry in this study also exemplified the connection between emotion and values, or ethical considerations (Sayer, 2011). Notably, emotion was associated with responsibility through the outrage, shaming and disgust expressed in the poems of Russ, Avi and Albertha. In these poems, various parties are held responsible for injustice and are called to feel certain emotions and, consequently, to take action to bring about justice. In addition, Sana, another poet in the study, stated that she wanted people listening to her poem to feel solidarity with the abused women of rural Paksitan, to feel responsible for the plight and to take action to help them. This coupling of emotion and responsibility was also exemplified in Avi's feeling of renewed responsibility to combat sexism and patriarchy in the Jewish community in reaction to listening to *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*, a poem about male violence. In addition, Saša, a community organizer in this study, stated that they felt a renewed sense of responsibility to address injustice after reading the poems.

I felt a great sense of pride and satisfaction that this study exemplified the importance of emotion in social life and change (reflexive journal, June 24, 2018) and that it countered “the dominant perspective that actions are...malformed by emotion” (De Courville Nicol, 2011, p.3). As beliefs in the inferiority of emotion are still promulgated and accepted in North American society (Barbalet, 2001), the findings here were a testament to the fact that emotions, on the contrary, can give meaning and energy to social life and change and that they can be integrated with other aspects of life, *e.g.*, knowledge and ethics. Also, the mutual empathy and solidarity experienced by the poets, who represented marginalized social positions, countered the notion that the emotions of these populations are pathetic, a symptom of weakness, or a sign of a lack of self-control (Narayan, 1998). Strong emotions were expressed in this study by the poets, who, at the same time, showed respect and caring for each other (reflexive journal, June 24, 2018).

The next section of this chapter discusses two perspectives on emotion and social change: One that views specific emotions as central to social change and another that stipulates that any emotion or combination of emotion can be useful to the social change endeavour.

Specific Emotions as Central to Social Change. Emotions, central to and integrated with social life, can also be looked at in terms of how essential they are in inspiring (or mobilising) social change. The role of emotions in motivating social change is a central question among many authors (see Summers-Effler, 2004). In some cases, authors (see Eyerman, 2005; Freire, 2004; Summers-Effler, 2004) single out emotions, specifically anger, hope, threat of death and survival, as being central to inspiring social change.

Among oppressed groups, anger and outrage are often regarded as being particularly inspiring for social change (Freire, 2004). Often considered deviant emotions (Thoits, 1989), anger and outrage are often thought to be not only a means of breaking free from subordination in social life but, through the sharing process, as an energizing force to resist the status quo and to take action (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007). Indeed, de Courville Nicol (2011) sees outrage as being able to “promot(e)...assertiveness-based and vindication-based...security” (p. 136). Anger can often also be associated with shaming other people, and in fact, vilifying them (Vandreford, 1989). In this study, anger and outrage played an important role and were effective in inspiring the social change process. For example, in four of the five poems, anger and outrage were expressed³¹ (see Appendices I and J). In most of the poems, a clear enemy was the target of this outrage: Negligent elected officials and the capitalistic system, for example. Anger or outrage also represented a shared and straightforward reaction of the poets to the injustices described in the poems. As such, in this study, anger acted as a unifying emotion among them that contributed to feelings of solidarity (Jasper, 2014). Reading the poems and feeling anger as a response to the injustices described, also acted as an inspiration to one of the community organizers to want to take down barriers that divide people.

I felt a sense of pride that anger was expressed in the community poetry experience in this study (reflexive journal, June 24, 2018). As people living in marginal situations are often chastised for expressing anger (Gould, 2004), and can be easily dismissed as irrational for doing so (Ellsworth, 1989), I was happy to witness the shared anger experienced in this study and, specifically, to observe that no one reacted negatively to the strong anger expressed in some of

³¹ In Sana’s poem, anger is not expressed with the same force as in three of the other poems. In her poem, the repetition of the lines “hunted down and killed for that” “live and die like that” “live the rest of their lives like that” were interpreted by me as expressing anger. In addition, the Sana stated in her interview that in her poem “there is anger, resentment to the system where women are pulled into forced dependency.”

the poems. Instead, people reacted with anger and empathy and some felt energized to take further action towards social change.

Other authors (see de Courville Nicol, 2011; Freire, 2004; Summers-Effler, 2004) single out hope as an emotion, that, like anger, can energize and mobilize people and can allow them to take action. According to Freire, hopelessness is the result of inaction. For him, hope requires both a change in awareness, resulting from consciousness raising efforts, and action. He does not believe that new awareness necessarily leads to action, and if no action is taken, the execution of hope is not realized. De Courville Nicol (2011) states that hope is necessary to connect to and conceptualize feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness and to engage in “exercises of power” (p. 3) that can lead to change. Summers-Effler (2004) connects anger and hope: She explains that anger, which risks turning into cynicism and inaction, can lead to hope if it is anticipated that “struggle will produce positive results rather than making the situation worse” (p. 53). In this study, hope was an important aspect in inspiring social change. Indeed, all the poems expressed deep despair, but all either demonstrated or alluded to hope. Some described former or potential victims taking action to begin a new life, while others expressed hopeful conclusions if certain parties take action. The act of writing the poems can also be interpreted as hopeful, one that corresponds to the idea that feeling hopeful is not enough but must be concretized in action. While hope was not singled out as an emotional response to the poems, the fact that the poets felt a sense of collective empowerment and solidarity may be interpreted as them having a sense of hope: Their shared and combined anger at the injustices described in the poems did not lead to a collective feeling of “cynicism” (Summers-Effler, 2004, p. 53).

Of the two emotions often regarded as essential to inspiring social change, hope and anger, in this study hope played a more central role. While all the poems expressed hope, one poem did not express anger or outrage, and another did in a less direct way than the other three poems (see footnote above). At the same time, anger can be an easier emotion to identify and express, as seen when the poets clearly expressed anger in response to the injustice in the poems, but hope, as mentioned, can be expressed in a less straightforward manner.

Other emotions have also been singled out as being very important in inspiring social change, notably the threat of death and survival (see Eyerman, 2005; Gould, 2001). These feelings may be especially relevant in the emotional experience of social change for people living in marginal situations (Gould, 2001). Surely, survival as a basic human instinct carries a lot of

raw power and feeling (Walker, 2013). In this study, the threat of death and survival were expressed in all the poems (see Appendices J and K). The poems in this study described people on the edge where their fate hung in the balance between life and death. The threat of death was poignantly expressed, for example, in one of the poems, *My Daughter's Freedom*, where the lives of women in rural Pakistan are endangered:

They can live and die like that

They can be hunted down and killed for that

At the same time, the poems presented oppressed or minority people enacting survival. This was perhaps most obvious in my poem, where, in contrast to the perpetrator, the formerly-abused women were still alive and remained rubbing their scars, despite everything. According to Eyerman (2005) feelings of “we have survived this together” (p. 43) can generate positive shared emotions between people, and, as such, can be very conducive to social change. This feeling, as well as a slight modification of this sentiment (*i.e.*, we can survive this together) were found in the poems in this study. For example, Russ’ poem described his personal survival and pointed to the potential survival and triumph of the working class, of which he is a part. These accounts of life and death are re-iterated in many scholarly works where oppressed groups are described as living on the edge and where social change is imperative. For example, Gould (2001) in her treatise about the gay and lesbian social struggle in the 1980’s, describes a situation where the imminent threat of death from AIDS signaled an urgent need for social change.

In this study, three of the poems made the personal-political link in a way that included the poets in the threat of death and survival situation. These poems revealed that each of the poets had been caught in a life and death situation, due to personal situations of marginality, which produced a great deal of personal suffering. The threat of death in two of the poems, my poem and Albertha’s, was described as a physical threat due to violence, neglect, or oppression from outside sources. At the same time, in my poem and Russ’, the threat of death was (also) seen as potentially occurring through one’s own acts, for example, through suicide or substance abuse. In these cases, feelings of despair may also have been connected to the threat of death. These potential harmful acts can be seen as illustrating “the self- destructive effects of...power” (De Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 210). While Russ was the only poet who signaled vulnerability as an

emotional expression of his poem (see Appendix I and J), vulnerability was present in the other two poems as well due to the recounting of personal suffering. All three poets achieved, to one degree or another, what Pelias (2004) refers to as “an emotionally vulnerable poetic voice” (p. 1). Vulnerability, therefore, through the personal disclosure found in these poems, was also associated with the threat of death and survival.

According to Browdy de Hernandez (1994), the survival of the collective can be viewed as a form of resistance to oppression. This study echoed this notion because many of the poems were not simply accounts of personal survival, but people surviving collectively in the face of life-threatening domination, neglect, and oppression. In one of the poems, for example, it was the women of a specific community who were communally surviving male violence and in another, it was the poor and homeless as a collective who were surviving harsh conditions and neglect. And yet in another poem, the poet’s personal tale of survival acted as an inspiration to those in a similar situation. These poems resembled, to some extent, the texts of the resistance movement of the *testimonio* (Yúdice, 1991) in Latin America and the autobiographies of Indigenous women (Browdy de Hernandez, 1994) where the popular masses and colonized Indigenous females described their personal and collective survival through a variety of life-threatening circumstances, caused by state oppression and other injustices.

New Considerations: Writing as Survival. Writing, while describing the threat of death and survival, can also be a means to enact survival. Here, the act of writing, especially writing that combines personal and political considerations, allows writers living in marginal situations to survive (Browdy de Hernandez, 1994). Browdy de Hernandez refers to this as “performatively enacting-the survival of the individual and the...collective self” (p. 56). Here, the act of writing can express the idea that “we were not defeated and eradicated...we were seriously harmed by them, but we survived, and we live” (p. 58). The act of writing here would be akin to de Courville Nicol’s (2011) notion of an exercise of power, where feelings of powerlessness and powerfulness—here, the threat of death and survival—through a hope response, lead to an action—here, writing—that can help achieve a sense of well-being or security. Of the poems in this study, Russ’ poem, and his act of writing it, best exemplified this point. Russ’ poem, *Dreams*, described his despair and survival in the face of relentless and brutal capitalism. As he mentioned, the poem was written to reach out to those who may find themselves in similar situation. According to

Russ, the very act of writing this poem enhanced his ability to survive and served as an example to others:

I didn't stop writing it's just a one-shot deal... You find the rhythm, you can find your way in creating something and finding how you can fight back by not stopping and that this person persevered, and this person is anybody. So, I look at it [the rhythm in the poem] and say well, I don't think it [the system] broke me or it hasn't broken me yet.

The idea that writing can be a means of survival also was also highlighted by one of the organizers in the study, who saw the poems in the study as representing an intense and urgent plea to be heard and listened to on behalf of people who have been silenced. While the threat of death in the case of people who have an urgent need for self-expression may not be a physical one, it may more closely resemble the loss of hope and feelings of despair that the poems in this study illustrated.

My experiences in community poetry echo the notion of threat of death and survival as important emotions in people living in marginalized situations fighting for social change (reflexive journal, April 2, 2018). I have especially witnessed this emotional theme in the writing of people who are low-income and of women who have lived through abuse. In many instances, where people are writing about their personal experiences of marginality, for example of being on social assistance, they will describe the hardships in detail. Sharing this poetry can encourage the notion of “we have survived this together” (Eyerman, 2005, p. 43) as many others involved in the group may have had similar experiences. Such sharing can account for collective feelings of anger and empathy, as seen in the community building process in this study. Perhaps by describing their own lived experiences through the act of writing itself, this writing, and those of others, also represents an act of survival. My experiences with community poetry in this study reinforced my conviction that writing and sharing poetry, primarily due to the community building and individual and collective empowerment that can occur, can help people who are living in marginal situations fight off despair and helps them to survive (reflexive journal, June 24, 2018).

New Considerations: Questioning of Key Emotions. The following discussions illuminate the ways in which this study brought nuance to the ideas about the role of specific emotions, notably anger, hope and survival, in inspiring social change. Specifically, these discussions

outline how the study questioned the necessity of anger in inspiring social change, and how it asked if subtle or less-than-straightforward expressions of hope and survival can also inspire social change. Considering the study's adherence to in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011) (see Methodology section), the very notion of "key" or "essential" emotions in inspiring social change can also be called into question.

In questioning the necessity of specific emotions, this study suggested that the expression or feeling of anger or outrage may not always be essential to social change. For example, my poem, unlike the other four in the study, did not express anger or outrage at the perpetrator or other parties, but rather demonstrated compassion towards the abuser and feelings of survival and perseverance regarding the women. Can this poem inspire social change without expressing anger? The answer, I believe, lies, at least in part, in the emotional responses to the poem. For example, Sana, one of the poets, felt anger that the women in the poem were being abused, even if some of them were described as achieving sobriety and potentially freeing themselves from abuse. Therefore, while the poem itself did not explicitly express anger, perhaps through its vivid descriptions of abuse, evoked anger in others. At the same time, Avi, another poet, who felt compassion for the abuser and the victims, did not describe feeling angry in response to the poem. Nevertheless, he felt inspired to reengage in fighting sexism and misogyny in the Jewish community as a result of hearing it. This response suggested that feeling anger in response to a poem where abuse and oppression are clearly happening—but where anger is not directly expressed—is not always needed in order to be inspired to engage in social change. At the same time, my poem, by portraying the victims of abuse as those exercising power by becoming sober and surviving, is inspirational and hopeful. Notably, in the poem, the abuser dies of an overdose and is no longer a threat, so perhaps this is another reason why the expression of anger was not required. What these last two elements suggest is that it might be under specific circumstances (*e.g.*, victims taking control of their lives and perpetrators no longer being a threat) that anger is not necessary. This discussion re-iterates the notion that emotional experiences derive from context-specific circumstances (see Wetherell, 2012) that may not be replicated in other situations.

Another way this study added to the discussion of specific emotions being essential in inspiring social change was by suggesting that subtle or nuanced expressions of these emotions may also be mobilising for social change. For example, this study illustrated that hope and

survival can be expressed in less than clear-cut ways. Specifically, Avi, another of the study's poets, questioned the role of hope in his poem: "*What kind of hope can there be on the brink of annihilation?*" He thought that the best outcome alluded to in the poem is survival, not as any kind of meaningful or thriving life. In addition, according to Saša, one of the organizers, the poems represented hope in a murky or confusing way. In terms of survival, in Avi's poem, the continuing existence of the villagers (as stand-ins for the Palestinians) was not assured as the burning in the poem is expanding and all-consuming. The survival of the homeless in Albertha's poem was likewise very tenuous. These sentiments question ideals where survival and, especially, hope, lead to utopian liberation as the result of social struggle (Freire, 1971; Hall, 1999). At the same time, it was obvious that the less than certain portrayals of hope and survival in the poems did not lead to a sense of despair among the poets listening to the poems, who, rather, felt energized, and a sense of solidarity and collective spirit. Also, the feeling that there was a confusing expression of hope in the poems did not deter Saša from being inspired to reflect more critically on their responsibility to social justice issues and to want to dismantle barriers that exist between people. These considerations echo the notion expressed in in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011) that emotional experiences, even if less than empowering, can nevertheless allow people to connect with empowering feelings.

In light of this study's adherence to in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011), the very notion of specific emotions being essential in inspiring social change can also be called into question. In/capacity theory stipulates that emotions are context-specific as they are both idiosyncratic and culturally-influenced. In this sense, emotions that are effective in inspiring social change in one situation may not be in another. In this study, the example of the absence of explicit anger in my poem (see above) illustrated this point.

Varied and Combinatory Emotions as Inspiring Social Change. While some authors, as noted in the previous discussion, highlight specific emotions as essential to inspiring social change among groups living in marginal situations, others stress the variety and mixture of emotions experienced in this process. Gould (2009), for example, describes emotions experienced in social change as being complex, or in her words, "combinatory" or "bundled together" (p. 399). In the same regard, Goodwin and Jasper (2007) suggest that people engaged in social change can undergo a variety of emotions that render the emotional experience of it multi-faceted and, even, contradictory: For example, individuals can feel hope and disappointment at the same

time. When it comes to varied emotions, Gould also claims that almost any emotion or combination of emotions can be effective for social change, depending on the circumstances. De Courville Nicol (2011), through her in/capacity theory of emotions, emphasizes that any emotion, even the most seemingly disempowering, can allow people to tap into a corresponding empowering emotion, if they are able to use or devise satisfactory emotional concepts of their experiences and find a satisfactory course of action. In this sense, every emotional situation has the potential for hopefulness and change (Valérie de Courville Nicol, personal communication, August 18, 2018).

The results of this study suggested that many emotions, in community poetry, can be expressed and felt alongside others and can be inspiring for social change. For example, hope and survival were expressed alongside despair and the threat of death, most poignantly in Sana's poem, where these emotions were expressed in a juxtaposition through the descriptions of the tragic lives of women in rural Pakistan and those of future generations in the west. In another example, Avi noted that his poem, *Es Brent*, expressed mourning and anger or rage at the same time. Albertha, another poet, described her poem as expressing disgust along with despair, hope, and supplication. My poem also expressed combinatory emotions: For example, threat of death, perseverance, and forgiveness.

The emotional responses to these feelings also signaled that combinatory emotions are inspirational to social change. Avi's poem, for example, emitting both anger and mourning, evoked a feeling of solidarity with the Palestinian cause in Russ, one of the poets. Albertha's poem, as another example, expressing a combination of emotions (see above), evoked a feeling of anger in me. Moreover, Avi's reaction to *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*, my poem, included compassion and guilt. He stated that hearing the poem, including his emotional responses, motivated him to re-commit to social change causes. What these reactions suggest is that emotions that are expressed in combination with others can elicit solidarity, anger and feelings of inspiration, which can be considered useful emotions for social change (Summers-Effler, 2004). Overall, the poets felt energized by sharing their poetry and reacted with empathy and a sense of connection to each other and the work, which suggested that emotions, experienced in combination with each other, can be effective in community building. These results echoed the findings in the study where one of the poets stated that social change should include a variety of emotional expressions and experiences in order to be effective. The results also re-iterated Gould's (2009) comments

that a variety of emotions can be useful to social change and echoed de Courville Nicol's (2011) notion that people can employ a wide variety of emotional strategies to achieve social change.

New Considerations: Social Location and Combinatory Emotions as Inspirational.

Various writers (see Jasper, 2014; Stein, 2001; Vandreford, 1989) have commented on how social positions, such as being female or working class, affect how people engage emotionally in social change. This study illustrated that social location can also account for a combination of emotions being expressed and felt. In the case of Albertha's poem, for example, it expressed both disgust and supplication. As she mentioned about the feeling of disgust, this emotion was tied to her identification as one of the poor: "*We the poor citizens [are] feeling disgusted that nothing is happening.*" The supplication expressed through the title of the poem, *i.e.*, '*We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders,*' also expressed the collective voice of the poor. In my poem, I identified myself as living in Côte-des-Neiges and as a (former) alcoholic and addict. In this sense, I had commonalities with the perpetrator described in the poem. Yet, as the poem demonstrated, I was also subject to abuse by this individual. Therefore, the mixture of emotions expressed in the poem—for example, fear, oppression, and forgiveness—were potentially associated with these social locations. In terms of combinatory emotional reactions to the poems and social location, Gabriel, one of the organizers, felt both anger and compassion in response to *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo*, a poem about male violence. He stated that his social positions of former activist and Christian played a key role in these reactions.

Moving beyond individual social locations, this study revealed that in a group of people representing diverse social locations, varied and divergent emotions can be felt in the social change experience. For example, in response to my poem, Avi felt empathy for the abuser due to his former experiences as a Jewish male abuser, while Sana poet felt irritation because she regarded the women in the poem as putting themselves in unnecessary danger just to be able to drink. She explained this reaction as being due to her lack of exposure to issues of women and addiction which, according to her, do not exist in her country of origin. This study revealed that these divergent emotional responses to community poetry were a healthy sign of people's individuality and ability to express difference. In fact, the study highlighted this divergence in emotion as potentially being an important stepping stone to resisting injustice.

Uncertainty: Spontaneous, Constructed, and Deliberate Emotions. This section looks at the findings in light of the spontaneous, constructed and deliberate nature of emotions. It also

presents new considerations concerning the impact of the complexity of the emotional socialization experience as well as the impact of trust and vulnerability on the uncertainty and spontaneous expression of emotion.

According to authors in the field of the sociology of emotions and social movements, emotions are thought to be emergent and changing rather than fixed (see Burkitt, 1987; Gould, 2009). Another way of expressing this idea is to say that emotions in social change can be spontaneous (Robnett, 1998). Robnett speaks of the usefulness of emotional spontaneity, *i.e.* expressing emotions in a spontaneous manner, in inspiring social change by describing it as the “high energy of the spontaneous” (p. 78) that can be a very effective motivator for action.

In this study, as an example of spontaneity, one of the poets, Russ, highlighted that he wrote his poem, *Dreams*, in a spontaneous manner, which, as he stated, made the emotions expressed through it raw. More specifically, he pointed out that writing the poem in a one-shot fashion resulted in a rhythm that conveyed an unsettling and angry tone. Spontaneity was also expressed as discovery in this study. For example, Patrizia, one of the organizers, underlined how the community poetry experience can be surprising: “*People can feel things without knowing why and this can help them open themselves to new aspects of themselves that they hadn’t thought about.*” In addition, Russ described group performance as one where the exchanges were energizing, spontaneous and lacked pretension, which he felt contributed to the community building process of collective empowerment and solidarity. This discussion re-iterates the ideas of a number of authors (see de Courville Nicol, 2011; Wetherell, 2012) who regard emotions as being context-specific and idiosyncratic, and therefore as being highly dependent on the specific situation and people involved. In this sense, emotions can be very spontaneous (Wetherell, 2012).

To add to the notion of spontaneity of emotions in inspiring social change, using language as vehicles for emotion can also be an emergent experience because emotions and language are in constant reciprocal interaction (*i.e.*, while emotion can be expressed through language, language can form and restructure emotion) (Burkitt, 1987). Reddy (1999) refers to these written or verbal utterances of emotions as *emotives*. In this study, the written utterances were contained in the poems. For example, in one poem the poet employed the words ‘despair’ and ‘disdain’, which are feeling states, while another poem contained the words ‘anger’ and ‘rage’³². The reading out loud

³² I did not ask questions about emotional reactions to the written utterances contained in the poems (e.g., despair, anger, rage), but only to each poem in its entirety, which contained these utterances.

of the poetry, and the verbal accounting of the emotional responses by the poets, illustrated the phenomenon of verbal utterances. In the group performance, these emotives were expressed in a spontaneous manner by the reading out and then reacting to the poems. For example, immediately following Albertha's performance of her poem, Sana stated that she felt sad because she felt the homeless should do more to help themselves and I reported feeling angry that the poor were being neglected. The various levels of interaction between language and emotion in this study were part of the community building process that occurred through the sharing of poetry. While questions were not asked about how the uttering of emotions impacted how the poets felt, it was clear that, as one of the poets pointed out, the spontaneous nature of these exchanges made the group experience less artificial and more energizing.

De Courville Nicol (personal communication, August 18, 2018), for her part, speaks of "unexpected" emotions potentially occurring when people are compelled to adopt new emotional concepts of their basic affective states because their usual emotional strategies are no longer working. These new concepts, in turn, through a hope response, can lead to new ways of acting. While this process may not be considered spontaneous because finding new emotional concepts does take effort and agency, the combination of emotional concepts, and hence, action, are potentially limitless and potentially, disruptive (Wetherall, 2012).

The results of this study also suggested the presence and importance of unexpected emotion (and action) in inspiring social change. For example, in one of the poems, *Es Brent*, the use of repetition in the refrain *You stand there looking on, with futile folded arms* can be interpreted as expressing a seemingly never-ending despair (as expressed through the complicity/shaming norm pair) where the poet is seemingly stuck in finding a means to solve the problem of oppression (and the ineffective norm pair response). A hope response, through the norm pair of besiegement/saving, leads to a proposed course of action, unexpectedly introduced in the second-to-last stanza: *Grab the buckets, douse the fire! Show that you know how!*³³

While emotional spontaneity may be important in inspiring social change, the notion of emotional spontaneity can be deconstructed. Firstly, as indicated in in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011), people tend to employ known emotional tropes in life situations. These emotional reactions can be determined, to one degree or another, by what they have been taught

³³ In this instance, the despairing feeling can be thought of as "feeling a lack of resourcefulness" and the accompanying hopeful feeling can be thought of as "feeling the presence of resourcefulness."

to feel by cultural and social norms, or the emotional socialization process (Reddy, 1999). The influence of the participants' social locations in terms of their emotional responses to the poetry was elaborated on at several junctures in this dissertation and was determined to be an important factor in their reactions. For example, Sana and I, although both women, had very different emotional reactions and approaches to women and addiction, largely because we grew up in different countries where the social and cultural norms around this issue are undoubtedly quite different. Therefore, the emotional reactions experienced in this study, while often spontaneously felt or expressed, can also be regarded as exemplifying the notion of socially constructed or patterned feelings to some degree (Armon-Jones 1988; Wetherell, 2012). Also, the fact that the poems express some similar emotions (*e.g.*, hope and despair) and that the poets and organizers experienced some similar emotional reactions to the poems (*e.g.*, empathy for the victims) may be explained by the fact that they participated in a shared culture. Indeed, as the poets and organizers identified as activists or community organizers³⁴, they may have shared, to some extent, a culture that is highly aware of the difficulties experienced by those living in marginal situations and who are empathetic to their cause.

In addition to being culturally-influenced, emotional reactions can be highly personal (Wetherell, 2012). In this sense, an individual, due to their distinct personality, may also use certain emotional strategies in a given situation, and, unless challenged in some way, will continue to do so (de Courville Nicol, 2011). Overall, therefore, in this study, it is conceivable that the emotional expressions and reactions of the organizers and poets in question represented this employment of known emotional strategies, due to a combination of both cultural and personal influences.

Secondly, another element that may account for a lack of spontaneity in emotions, is what de Courville Nicol (2011) describes as “emotion management” (p. 7). Here, people can use language and discourse to express certain emotions and ideas in order to elicit specific emotions and actions in others. Therefore, emotional expressions in this case are at least somewhat deliberate. In this sense, while an audience member or party on the receiving end of emotional management may experience the expressed emotion as spontaneous, there is a certain element of control and design in this process. As de Courville Nicol states, social change is, at least in part,

³⁴ See portraits of poets and community organizers in chapter 3.

“propelled by... intention-driven actions” (p. 228). However, attempts at emotional management may fail and efforts to elicit certain feelings and actions may yield uncertain results (Gould, 2009).

In this study, many of the poets stated that they wanted to express certain emotions in their poems in order to elicit specific actions in audiences listening to them. For example, Avi wanted to express shaming in his poem so that people would feel shame, and as a result, would take action to support the Palestinians, while Albertha wanted elected officials to hear her poem, feel empathy, and take responsibility for the condition of the poor. At the same time, this study suggested that emotional management efforts are not always successful and that results can be uncertain. For example, Sana stated that she wanted audiences listening to her poem to feel inspired to do something to help the women in rural Pakistan escape their deplorable fate. When describing his reaction to this poem, Avi said that he was concerned that the portrayal of the women in the poem would reinforce western audiences’ stereotypes of life in Pakistan. This was hardly the response hoped for.

New Considerations: The Complexity of the Emotional Socialization Experience and Emotional Uncertainty. This study also added new elements to the discussions about emotional spontaneity, emotional socialization and deliberate emotion. For example, it revealed that rather than one set of emotional socialization experiences playing a role in emotional response, people often have several socialization experiences at work in their emotional reactions. For example, in accounting for my reactions to the poetry in this study I stated: “*I related to the poems as a woman, a born Canadian, a Jew, and a poor person, and someone who has close associations with very poor people.*” In the poetry performance, specifically, the poets reacted to the performances from a variety of social positions and emotional socialization experiences. Specifically, to what extent any one or more emotional socialization experience(s) will predominate at any given point in time, may also add to the uncertainty of emotions in social change. It is conceivable that the same group of people, assembled together at another time, may have reacted differently because another aspect of their emotional socialization experience may have predominated. This discussion re-iterates Wetherell (2012) and de Courville Nicol (2011), who view emotional experience as context-specific.

New Considerations: Spontaneity, Group Trust and Vulnerability. This study also added to the discussion of emotional spontaneity by connecting it to issues of trust and vulnerability.

As previously noted in my reflexive journal (see page 79), trust was an essential characteristic of the group performance where poetry and emotions were shared. Russ described this experience of trust as people making themselves vulnerable. Trust and vulnerability were instrumental in the expression of emotions in an honest and spontaneous manner. Indeed, by the time the community poets shared in the group performance, they knew each other well: We had, by this time, met in many group meetings, both in the pre-research and research phases of the project. Therefore, trust had been established between us and a certain level of comfort had been achieved (reflexive journal, April 2, 2018). Specifically, trust and vulnerability were demonstrated when I expressed shame as a Jew reacting to Avi's poem about Israel's abuses, when Avi expressed compassion for an abuser, and when Sana revealed her discomfort with Albertha's poem and my poem. In addition, these emotional reactions were expressed in the context of the poets discussing their social locations. In revealing these social locations, the poets also demonstrated trust and vulnerability as these locations included having mental health or addiction issues and being a survivor or (former) perpetrator of abuse. I believe that the poets may have been more reserved in expressing emotions in such a deep and spontaneous way with people they did not know as well and with whom trust had not been established (reflexive journal, April 2, 2018).

I felt very pleased with the discussions outlined in this section about the subtle, combined, spontaneous and uncertain nature of emotions (reflexive journal, July 2, 2018) as they highlight a perspective of the world that counters a "disembodied rationalist vision" (Williams, 2001, p. 8), where the world is viewed as a rationally controllable place (Ellsworth, 1998; Narayan, 1998). Instead, these discussions highlight the fact that social life and change, to some extent, are spontaneous and uncertain, which I believe corresponds more closely to reality and which I find highly enlivening (reflexive journal, July 2, 2018).

Implications for Social Change. The results of this study highlighted the necessity, variety, and uncertainty of emotions in social change expressed in the field of sociology of emotions and social movements as well as other areas of study. The necessity of emotion in social change and its integration into other aspects of life re-iterated the need to look at social change not strictly from rational perspectives, as was once tendency of sociologists³⁵, but in

³⁵ See literature review.

conjunction with the perspective of emotion or “what it feels like to be treated unjustly” (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 209). In addition, the inclusion of ethical or moral questions involved in emotional response was highlighted in this study. The focus on specific emotions in social change illustrated the possibility that emotions often considered essential to social change, such as anger, may not be present in the discourse, but that this discourse may still be effective in inspiring others to feel certain emotions and to commit to social change. The study also suggested that other emotions considered as key to social change, such as hope and survival, do not need to be expressed in clear-cut and straightforward ways to be effective. The necessity to speak of specific emotions as being essential in inspiring social change was also called into question in that this study, adhering to in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011), situates emotional experience in context-specific social change situations that may not be replicated elsewhere.

As previously discussed, many authors in the sociology of emotions and social movements describe emotions in social change as varied or as occurring in combination. This study reiterated and illuminated the diverse and combinatory nature of emotions and their effectiveness in social change. For example, emotions, such as anger and disgust, were expressed and felt in combination with supplication, mourning, and compassion. Together, these emotions played a role in inspiring social change and in building community, where sentiments of oneness and solidarity were experienced. The results of this study also suggested that people’s social locations can contribute to emotions being varied and combinatory and that involving people from diverse backgrounds in social change can increase the variety of emotions experienced. At the same time, this study highlighted the overall spontaneity and uncertainty of emotions and emotional effects—and their interplay with language and discourse. The findings in this study also indicated that emotional uncertainties are great in a diverse group of people because these individuals have differing and sometimes multiple experiences of emotional perception and socialization that can render their emotional responses diverse, complex and therefore, uncertain. At the same time, this study, adhering to in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011), took into consideration that the possibility for people to make efforts and employ agency in their emotional lives (by conceiving of new emotional strategies) is always present. In that sense, an endless combination of emotional strategies is possible. This possibility also adds to the unexpected and uncertain nature of emotional response.

According to de Courville Nicol (2011), emotions, as they constitute knowledge, are also a form of power. In this study, the individual empowerment experienced by the poets of coming to voice and of asserting difference, through expressing emotion, may have represented *ambivalent power* (McLaren, 2002), which represents a struggle, where people resist power and exercise power at the same time. According to de Courville Nicol, how a person emotionally experiences a situation (which represents power) will determine how they emotionally respond to it (in turn, an act of power). These exchanges were witnessed in the study through the emotions expressed in the poems, the reactions to the poems, and, in a few cases, the emotional responses to these reactions. This ambivalent interplay of power could have the effect of making social change, in this case, the community building process, more complex.

At the same time, the findings of the study indicated that there were emotions that were common to all the poems under investigation, including despair, hope, the threat of death, and survival. Additionally, two emotional responses, anger and empathy, were shared responses to the poems by the poets, and some of the community organizers. Also, the poets felt connected to each other through feelings of mutual respect and trust. These findings suggested that the emotional experience in community poetry is not strictly about variety and difference. According to Jasper (2014), reciprocal emotions, such as empathy, trust and respect, as well as common emotions towards objects outside the group—in this study, anger towards the perpetrators described in the poems and empathy to the victims—account for the feelings of solidarity in the community building experience. In such collective situations, power through emotional commonality can be described as “binding power” (p. 209). Indeed, this feeling of emotional connection and commonality can be very powerful (Summers-Effler, 2004). In this sense, the binding power of solidarity witnessed in this study may have been an important anchor to allow for individual differences, and power, to be expressed.

In this study, the variety and combination of emotions, as well as their spontaneity and uncertainty, energized the poets and contributed to the community building process. This type of emotional complexity also acted as a motivational force to many of the poets and organizers to envision, reflect on or recommit to larger social change. Overall, the interplay between emotional divergence, commonality and complexity (varied, spontaneous, managed, etc.) may render power diffuse, multi-dimensional (Bălan, 2015), and uncertain. As seen in the study, this type of power can be effective in inspiring social change in the community building process.

The results of this study represented what Horsfall (2008) refers to as post-modern social change carried out at the “microsocial level” (p. 13), that is, at the individual, group, and community level. The question that arises, therefore, is: To what extent are these results relevant to resistance to structural power? Many academic fields, for example, the sociology of emotions and social movements, discuss large-scale and structural social change. With the growing diversity of people living in North American cities (Schmid, 2000), social movements increasingly are consisting of the interaction between diverse people, identifying with a variety of social locations (Mair, 2002). As such, the findings of this study are relevant here. Specifically, the diversity, variety and uncertainty of emotional expressions and effect, due to differences between and even, within, people, certainly need to be addressed in social movements, as well as the negotiation between individual voice and collective power. Finding the commonality of emotion between diverse people to create a “binding power” (Jasper, 2014, p. 209) that can contain difference is and will continue to be a challenge (see Ledwith, 2005b). The example of trust building and vulnerability between diverse people, as highlighted in this study, brought to light the need for organizers and activists to pay attention to these issues in social change.

What Makes Community Poetry ‘Good’? Emotions, Aesthetics, and Social Change

In the previous section, emotions were seen as playing a key role in social life and change. Emotions and social change are discussed again in this section, but from the perspective of how they, along with aesthetic features³⁶ of poetry, are considered important aspects in the quality of poetry, or of what makes it “good.” In this sense, this section elaborates on the notion that emotions, aesthetic features, and inspiring social change can all contribute to the quality of poetry (Faulkner, 2007). This section also considers the notion that quality poetry consists of emotions interacting and being intertwined with aesthetic features and social change. New considerations garnered from the findings in this study are also delineated: For example, the idea that emotional complexity and context can also be considered attributes of good poetry or as contributing to what makes poetry good.

This section also analyzes discussions about the role and necessity of aesthetic standards in community and activist art. Specifically, two perspectives are enumerated on this theme: One

³⁶ In the study, the aesthetic features of poetry were limited to the study of its literary devices, and to the role of grammar, clarity and revision in poetry. In this section, aesthetic features of poetry incorporate these elements, but also include other traits, such as voice, ambiguity, and associative logic.

which sees the relationship between aesthetic features and social change as strained because community and activist art is not considered as meeting aesthetic standards, and another that considers mainstream aesthetic standards as a reflection of a Eurocentric approach to art that needs to be discarded (Denzin, 2000). Finally, implications to social change of the above-mentioned discussions are presented. The discussions in this section reflect knowledge found in arts-based inquiry and in community development and the arts.

Emotions, Aesthetic Features and Social Change as Quality in Poetry. Emotions are considered an essential element in good poetry (Faulkner, 2007), in terms of both emotional expression and evocation. Faulkner, in a review about the quality of poetry, describes several studies and articles where emotions are considered a criteria of good poetry. Specifically, she notes that having a strong emotional impact or eliciting emotional responses are found by many academics and authors to be necessary for poetry to be considered good. Other authors (see Leggo, 2008b) consider that being emotionally vulnerable while writing poetry makes for good art. Faulkner (2007) also states that attention to emotion is the equivalent to attention to craft or aesthetic quality in poetry.

According to Faulkner (2007), many authors and academics also regard the mastery of aesthetic features as important criteria in creating “good” poetry. In some cases, aesthetic features are regarded as being important to and intertwined with the emotional effect of poetry. For example, the effective use of voice, ambiguity, and associative logic (Sullivan, 2009), as well as the effectual use of imagery, metaphor, concreteness, and detail (Sherry & Shouten, 2002), are cited as being helpful in making poetry emotionally potent. More specifically, Addonizio and Laux (1997), see the effective use of imagery and detail as making audiences feel “with” the poem and not simply “about” it. At the same time, as Finley (2003) states, some believe that emotions in art are less potent when there is great attention paid to aesthetics factors, such as literary devices, and that only literature or art that is lacking in attention to aesthetic features can be emotionally raw and potent.

This study reiterated the importance of emotion in poetry and signaled it as making people care about what was being expressed. This study also echoed the notion that emotions and aesthetic features are intimately connected. Firstly, the potent expression of emotions in the poems was facilitated through the use of literary devices. For example, the repetition of the lines ‘*not according to Islam*’ in Sana’s poem exemplified the feeling of defending the religion against

prejudice. Moreover, the asking of questions in Russ' poem heightened its angry tone. Secondly, in the emotional reactions to the poems, the literary devices again played an important role. For example, the combination of rhythm and repetition in Avi's poem left Russ with the feeling of bombardment. While this study did not define such interactions between emotion and aesthetic features as producing "good" poetry, it did reveal that this intertwining is important for poetry to be effective in emotional expression and evocation. This study also discussed the need to acquire a certain level of mastery over aesthetic or literary devices, for example, by performing revision. This point of view was expressed by one of the organizers who stated that ideally, poets should pay attention to literary devices and revise poetry. According to her, paying attention to the poetic form results in poems that convey a sense of emotional detachment. This individual believed that this type of attention to aesthetic features and the resulting emotional detachment produced the best quality poetry. This perspective could be understood as being in sync with the idea that raw and unfettered poetry is more emotionally potent, while paying attention to aesthetic factors and quality renders writing or art more emotionally detached.

The first sections of this chapter considered the effectiveness of certain emotions or combinations of emotions in inspiring social change. The present discussion looks at this relationship from another angle: Specifically, it examines the notion that good quality poetry consists of its ability to be effective in inspiring social change through emotional expression and evocation (Faulkner, 2007). Good quality poetry, therefore, does not only inspire or move people on a personal level, it must inspire social change (Denzin, 1997). In the review of several articles in the poetic inquiry field, Faulkner reveals that inspiring social change, through emotion, is often considered a criteria of good poetry. This study highlighted the importance of emotion in community poetry in social change. The emotions expressed through the poems reinforced their potency as counter-narrative resistance and as an inspirational to further social change. Also, the emotional component of the poetry contributed to the community building process in this study in a significant way, as experienced, for example, through shared feelings of anger, empathy, respect and trust that led to a sense of oneness and solidarity. In this sense, the poems in this study could be considered good quality poetry as their emotional expression and effect played an important role in social change.

New Considerations: Emotional Complexity and Context as Quality in Community Poetry. Many authors, as witnessed in Faulkner's article (2007), consider emotions in poetry as

an essential factor in making poetry “good,” especially in their effectiveness to inspire social change. This study added to this discussion in its revelation that (community) poetry can express and evoke emotional complexity. Indeed, the emotional expression and effect of poetry in this study was determined to be straightforward and unified, as well as complex and divergent. Earlier in this chapter, the emotions as expressed and evoked through community poetry were also observed as working in combination with each other, and as being spontaneous and uncertain. The overall emotional complexity of community poetry in this study did not deter from social change, but rather enhanced it, by allowing for individual differences in emotion to be included in a group process and for energizing and spontaneous exchanges to take place. Therefore, the results of this study expanded the notion of what makes poetry “good”: *i.e.*, Complexity of emotion in inspiring social change can be included in the definition of quality poetry.

The results of this study also brought to light the importance of context in determining how emotion can be effective in inspiring social change, and, therefore, in determining the quality of poetry. For example, this study revealed that straightforward and unified emotional expression and evocation may be effective in some situations, for example at a demonstration, while expressing and evoking divergent and complex (*e.g.*, ambivalent or ambiguous) emotions may be more appropriate to others, such as a popular education workshop. Therefore, this study revealed that specific settings and activities can play a role in determining whether a poem is “good”.

New Considerations: Linking Emotions, Aesthetic Features and Social Change in Community Art. This study exemplified the importance of the relationship between emotion, aesthetic features (*i.e.*, literary devices) and social change in community poetry and art (although, once again, it did not define these connections as making “good” poetry). In the qualifications of what makes poetry “good”, emotions have been associated with aesthetic features and social change. However, many in the poetic inquiry field have separated social change criteria from criteria related to aesthetic features (Faulkner, 2007), so that a poem or other forms of writing are seen as being primarily “good” in terms of inspiring social change or in terms of the mastery and effectiveness of their aesthetic elements (*e.g.*, voice, imagery, associative logic). In other fields of study, however, social change and aesthetic features are linked. For example, in the education and community arts literature, authors (see Bell & Desai, 2011; Stevens, 2011) state that aesthetic features can evoke the imagination and help people conceive of different possibilities and are

thus very important to social change. At the same time, these authors do not include emotions as a key component in the relationship between aesthetic features and social change. In all cases, the relationship between the three elements—emotions, social change and aesthetic features—is not addressed.

Hamill (2003) is one author who does connect these three elements directly together when he speaks of combining “musical and imagistic expression” with the “transparency of emotion” (p. xviii) in social change-oriented poetry. Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on these connections. This study, in contrast, described these relationships in a detailed way: The very fact of expressing emotion, often highlighted through literary devices, was regarded in this study as one way in which community poetry acts as counter-narrative to dominant discourse. Also, the poets and community organizers reported feeling various emotional reactions to the poems, in many cases specifically responding to their aesthetic traits. These emotions led them to feelings of collective empowerment and inspired them to imagine, reflect on, or recommit to larger social change. In a different way, this study suggested the connection between these three elements through the idea of emotional detachment, a notion proposed by one of the organizers. This organizer believed that emotional detachment can be achieved through detailed attention to aesthetic features. At the same time, this individual believed that the act of revising poetry, specifically, could assure that poetry would be clear and as such, accessible to the greatest number of people, hence being effective as social change.

An important reflection resulting from the study is that emotions, aesthetic features and (inspiring) social change need to be viewed and analyzed as interactive and intertwined, in addition to being examined separately, in order to resist “fragmented ways of knowing” (Barndt, 2008, p. 352). Examining the connection between these three elements may also be useful in determining the quality of poetry and art.

The Need for Aesthetic Standards in Community and Activist Art. Another issue raised in analyzing the relationship between emotions, aesthetic features and social change concerns the necessity for aesthetic standards in community and activist art, especially among people who represent marginal social positions (Barndt, 2008). Debates on this theme are articulated in arts-based inquiry and community arts literature. For example, in the community arts, a perspective that sees community art as being of lesser quality (Barndt, 2008) is enumerated. Here, the aesthetic quality of community art is contrasted to individual works of great talent or even,

mainstream or academic art. Issues of clarity or coherence in community art have also been brought up. For example, Sjollega and Bilotta (2016) discuss a pilot study where the researcher had difficulty understanding and analyzing community poetry. A few problem areas highlighted by the researcher included the poems switching between first and third person in an unclear manner, changing abruptly between past and present tense, and being unclear as to where the action in the poems was taking place. Providing writing workshops for community members has also been described in some studies (see Foster, 2012) to help community poets write better. Bell and Desai (2011), for their part, describe the interaction between social change and aesthetics, specifically in activist art, as being one where aesthetic quality is potentially compromised. Due to this view, these authors see the relationship between aesthetic features and social change in art as tension-filled or strained.

In this study, the quality of community poetry was contested by one of the organizers. Although this organizer believed the poems could be effective as social change, she criticized them, for example, for their lack of fine tuning, ineffective prepositional use, ineffectual line breaks, and forced rhyme schemes. By expressing such ideas, she was applying aesthetic standards to the poems. Indeed, although direct comparisons of the poems in this study were not made to poetry produced in institutional or academic milieus, this organizer had a university degree in creative writing and was a poetry editor. As such, her actions appeared to coincide with the ideas presented by Barndt (2008) who believes that community art is often evaluated according to mainstream standards of aesthetic quality. At the same time, this study rejected the notion that community art should aspire to academic or other institutional measures of aesthetic quality. For example, Russ, one of the study's poets, stated that academic poetry often puts a lot of emphasis on form, and that community poetry should not be about that or compared to the ideal poem. The results of this study also contested the idea that the relationship between aesthetic features and social change is necessarily strained. For example, by revealing how effectively aesthetic features (*i.e.*, literary devices) can contribute to social change, this study illustrated that the intertwined relationship between social change and aesthetics can be experienced as harmonious.

According to Barndt (2008), ideas that community art does not but should meet aesthetic institutional standards leave many community artists feeling that they are not artists or that their art is not art. In this study, Russ reiterated some of these ideas by stating that many poets who

live in marginal situations do not have a forum for their work because their poetry is not considered to be marketable or a good commodity. Although he did not elaborate on what ‘marketable’ or ‘commodity’ meant to him, it is imaginable that the aesthetic aspect of these poems is what he was, at least in part, referring to, especially given his comments about the differences between academic and community poetry.

Certain arts-based researchers refuse the idea that activist and community art lacks in aesthetic quality and reject institutionalized or mainstream standards. For example, Neal (1988) states that in the art of many groups living in marginal situations “ethics, aesthetics, political praxis...are joined...there is not a separate aesthetic...realm regulated by transcendent ideals” (p. 1451). According to Denzin (2000), in the art of community members there should be “no preferred aesthetic” (p. 259) and he encourages art that is “grounded in the distinctive styles, rhythms, idioms, and personal identities of local folk and vernacular culture” (p. 258). In the *testimonio* movement in Latin America in the 1980’s, although the personal experiences of oppressed populations were rejected as literary works by the literary establishment, many alternative publishers did not judge the aesthetics of these works according to these standards (Yúdice, 1991). In a similar regard, Richardson and Lockridge (1998) state that there are “umpteenth problems here with hegemonic control over what constitutes the beautiful” (p. 330). Barndt (2008), for her part, dispels the myth of art only occurring at the professional or institutional level. For her, community art must inspire and nurture the creativity that is present in every person in a democratizing spirit that says that everyone can be an artist.

To a certain extent, this study illustrated the notion that “no preferred aesthetic” (Denzin, 2000, p. 259) prevails in community art and poetry. In terms of her aesthetic criticisms of the poems, the organizer who evaluated the poems in this manner was considered to be an outlier (Gladwell, 2008) in this study. Some of the other organizers, as well as some of the poets, also had significant experience in poetry, yet did not comment on or critique the aesthetic quality of the poems (reflexive journal, April 3, 2018). Newcomers to poetry and experienced poets, alike, were welcomed to participate in this study. As such, different levels of experience and perhaps, talent, existed between the poets. There was also no requirement that the poems undergo revision before being presented in this study. Other than Russ, who described his poem as being written in a spontaneous, one-shot fashion, the poets did not reveal how they wrote their poems or if they had revised them.

Notably, the literary devices in the poems were used differently by each poet which resulted in each poem having its own aesthetic style. My poem, for example, largely used imagery to impart its message, while in Albertha's poem rhyming was a key device. In Avi's poem and Sana's, repetition of words or refrains were important. Finally, in Russ' poem, the use of penetrating questions, forming a unique rhythm, was a central aspect of the aesthetics of this poem. In addition, Sana's poem was an English translation of a poem originally written in Urdu, while Avi's poem was presented in a back-and-forth manner between English and Yiddish. These factors also constituted the aesthetic aspect of these poems. The use of the literary devices was effective in being able to touch and reach audiences and to help them achieve a sense of renewed responsibility, collective empowerment and inspiration for further social change. Hence, this study reiterated the notion that "ethics, aesthetics, political praxis...are joined" and do not necessarily have to meet standards of an "aesthetic...realm regulated by transcendent ideals" (Denzin, 2000, p. 258) in order to be effective in evoking emotion and inspiring change.

These discussions continue to raise questions about the role of aesthetic standards in community art. This study confirmed the importance of aesthetics in the social change efforts of community poetry and endorsed the perspective that the two elements are intractably linked, along with emotional effect. However, whether community organizations and artists should do away altogether with standards of art found in the mainstream is uncertain. Should these ideals be the concern of arts-based researchers working in academic institutions and not community members and organizers? Could embracing such ideals help community art as a tool for social change, as one of the organizers suggested, by being more universally understood? Or is an aspect of true liberation in community art to be free of such ideals?

The discussions here bring up other questions about emotions, aesthetics and social change. Especially relevant are the comments made by certain academics (see Finley, 2003), who believe that emotionally potent writing potentially represents a lesser quality of aesthetics. Does spontaneously-written community poetry, potentially with less attention paid to aesthetic quality, move people more because the emotions are direct and immediate? In my experiences as a poet, I have sometimes been told that my earlier poetry, which was spontaneously written and less subject to revision than my later work, moved people more because it was emotionally raw (reflexive journal, April 4, 2018). If emotions in poetry are often varied, spontaneous, and uncertain, as the last section of this chapter discussed, does emphasizing revision and form, a

rational activity, take away from emotional potency, which is perhaps a result of the spontaneity and uncertainty of community poetry? These discussions will continue in the following section concerning implications for social change.

Implications for Social Change. The question of the role of aesthetic features and aesthetic standards in community art seen in the arts-based and community arts literature can be examined through the lens of resistance, power, and social change. This study suggested that aesthetic features and emotional effect are intimately intertwined with social change, both in poetry as individual acts of resistance, and in community building and collective empowerment.

Looking at poetry as individual acts of resistance, it was determined that the literary devices in the poems played a key role in the poems' attributes as alternative discourse, specifically in allowing the reality and life experiences of those either silenced or presented in superficial or stereotypical manners to be seen in detail. Written poems can be widely used in community settings. For example, they can be employed in performance, such as in public readings or demonstrations (Sjollema, 2012). They can also be published in anthologies, newsletters and other sources of publication and read by individual people (Abdelhak, 2013; Sjollema, 2017). Besides the poet, others involved in these processes can include other community poets and members, community organizers, and the public at large. Individual poems as resistance therefore can be disseminated to a wide variety of people whose backgrounds might be considerably different from the poet's. In these instances, aesthetic quality and standards may be important. For example, clarity would be important so that people could understand what was being said. Clarity may be particularly important in circumstances where the poem is only being read once, as in a demonstration, or in situations where it would be read by someone who has no access to the poet, as was the case with the organizers in this study. Just as an emotionally straightforward poem that unifies people may be appropriate for a demonstration, adhering to aesthetic standards, especially clarity, may be important and appropriate when a larger number of people have access to the poem and when a direct exchange with the poet is not possible or unlikely. In these instances of wide dissemination of community poetry, consciousness raising can occur that allows those listening to or reading the poem to better understand the details of the lives of people whose realities may not usually be heard from.

In this study, social change was also defined as community building. In addition, accessibility and coming to voice were regarded as the two crucial aspects of the community

building process. In community poetry settings, coming to voice often occurs in small groups (Sjollem & Hanley, 2013), such as the one assembled for this study. It is in these groups that individual and collective empowerment can occur. Accessibility in community poetry, as well as coming to voice, means that people of all levels of talents and abilities are welcome to participate. The following is a reflective poem I wrote about coming to voice and how rawness and spontaneity, rather than aesthetic standards, can be prioritized.

Coming to Voice

*Here, the simple fact
of having a forum to express oneself,
to be able to speak for oneself,
is primordial.
Here rawness, spontaneity
may be more acceptable.
Here, the one-shot style of writing may be a necessary
act of survival.
Here, people have the time
to give details,
can ask and answer questions
if something is unclear.*

Coming to voice can also occur in popular education workshops where the emphasis is often on social justice issues. Once again, in this type of environment, emphasis on aesthetic standards may not be needed as the focus is on engaging in exchange about the content—and potentially the emotional effect—of the poems. Of course, a certain level of clarity in community poetry may still be needed in a popular education workshop. In both small groups and popular education workshops, the exchange of ideas and feelings allows for time to clarify and ask questions.

At the same time, the results of this study suggested that the aesthetic element of performed poetry in a group can contribute to the emotional connection the poets feel to themselves and their own reality, to the work, as well as to the other poets. The aesthetic elements in the poems therefore contribute to a sense of collective empowerment even if, as seen in this study, the aesthetic style varied greatly. In this sense, aesthetics has an important role in community building but aesthetic standards may be less important because the emphasis is on other matters,

primarily accessibility, having a forum to express oneself, and to engage in exchange. The downplaying of aesthetic standards in community building can therefore be understood as resisting a “preferred aesthetics” (Denzin, 2000, p. 259) and emphasizing the energizing factor of community poetry, such as its emotional impact. As people coming to community poetry may also represent very diverse backgrounds and not have a shared common first language or express themselves in different languages, as was witnessed in this study, the promoting of one aesthetic style or standard may be inappropriate.

Participatory Democracy in Community Development and the Arts

The third discussion in this chapter elaborates on the findings of this study in light of debates about *participatory democracy* (Hemingway, 1996). In this discussion, participatory democracy is firstly viewed as consisting of the ability of community members to actively participate in social life, specifically in terms of accessibility (Kay, 2000), and affordability (Sjollema & Hanley, 2012), as well as the level of engagement with which people participate (Kay, 2000). In these deliberations, participatory democracy is secondly seen through the lens of *discursive space* (Hemingway, 1996; Mair, 2002). Discursive space is defined as a public space where communicative processes about social life occur (Hemingway, 1996). In this third discussion, new considerations, based on the study’s findings, are presented. These include the notion that personal perspectives and emotional connection can be considered important elements in levels of engagement in participation. Other new considerations include the idea that poetry and emotions can be considered as alternative practices in discursive space. Finally, implications for social change of these discussions concerning participatory democracy are also presented. These discussions about participatory democracy occur in the context of what is known about these subjects, primarily in the fields of leisure and community development and the arts.

Questions of Participation and Accessibility. Notions of accessibility are key to community members’ ability and motivation to be involved in social life, for example, in arts-based community and leisure activities that often take place in local neighbourhoods (Kay, 2000). These community members can sometimes suffer from a lack of self-confidence in general or regarding their artistic skills (Sjollema, 2012) or have history of exclusion, which renders their participation difficult (Brown, 2009; Carey & Sutton, 2004). In addition, neo-liberal politics have further limited the ability of low-income and other people in marginal situations to enjoy what Fraser (1999) calls “participatory parity” (p. 3), which means that these community members

cannot and do not participate in social life to the extent that other people can. The policies enacted in the neo-liberal era have made accessibility harder by making people poorer (Project Genesis, 2012). In addition, art has been increasingly promoted as the privy of professionally trained people (Barndt, 2008) that excludes those who may not have the money or resources to join this elite group of people.

At the same time, as noted in the community development and the arts literature (see Mathieu et al., 2004), many community organizations do offer arts activities that accommodate the needs of community members, by, for example, providing drop-in style programming. Similarly, in the leisure field (see Yuen et al., 2012), community practitioners call for accessibility-based measures to be implemented—for example, by not making those with criminal records disclose their offender status in registration or other forms. Specifically, the low cost of practicing poetry has been emphasized in the community development and the arts field (see Abdelhak, 2013; Sjollema & Hanley, 2013) as well as in other sources (see Lorde, 1990). As Lorde states: “Of all the art forms, poetry is the most economical ...requires the least material” (p. 282). These ideas about affordability were echoed in this study, specifically by me when I mentioned that poetry is cheap to practice, requires few materials, and that it is easy to move a poetry group around. This last sentiment is echoed by Sjollema and Hanley (2013) who describe poetry as “a portable form of art” (p. 9).

Burnell (2013) and Kay (2000) also discuss accessibility by emphasizing the importance of making art accessible to all levels of artistic ability, and by making it engaging to practice. In this study, participation did not require the poets to adhere to any aesthetic standard, revise the poems, or that they possess any level of talent and experience. As such, such requirements did not create barriers to their participation, and did not take away from the profound and genuine experiences they engaged in. These discussions connect back to the debates about the role of aesthetic standards in community art and social change where the emphasis on standards was deemed to be inappropriate, or of lesser importance, in people coming to voice through art. Indeed, the most compelling and engaging aspect of this poetry experience was the emotional connection and solidarity experienced by the poets through the group process. This sense of solidarity was achieved through a process of group building and poetic performance that did not stress artistic ability or talent.

New Considerations: Accessibility through Personal Perspectives and Emotional Connection. This study also introduced new notions of what accessibility can mean in community poetry or the community arts in general. One idea focuses on the fact that community poets often write about social or political issues from a personal perspective, as was illustrated in this study. Indeed, the topics that were featured in the poems in this study either recounted the poets' personal experiences or represented issues that were very close to their personal concerns. A few authors (see Foster, 2012; Parry & Johnston, 2007) have discussed the notion of personal and social understandings coming together in community and leisure settings in the artistic process. The findings of this study suggested that writing poetry on social issues that include one's personal experiences allows people to have a profound and heartfelt connection to their work. Such heartfelt and emotional connections to one's work may be conceived of as an element of accessibility in art. Simply put, it may be more motivating and engaging for community members to create art that connects to personal experiences or that is of a personal concern.

This type of personal and emotional engagement may also make community poetry more accessible to audiences. This short reflective poem addresses this issue.

Audiences of Empathy

*Creating through a personal lens
lends itself to accessibility
through emotional connection
felt by others, the audience,
listening to, with empathy,
reading the work.*

*Community poetry
is personal and humane.
As the organizer stated:*

'You can access the core of someone through a poem'

*The poets had it:
It was a personal, emotional
connection to their material,
allowed others to experience a bond
to themselves, to the poems,
to the poets and the world.*

In addition, as Russ, one of the poets in the study, explained, the personal experience described in his poem allowed it to be something that others could potentially understand, and could help them feel less isolated in their difficulties.

These notions of accessibility through writing from a personal perspective were, however, contested to some extent by one of the organizers in the study, who believed that poetry that is too personal is in fact not always accessible to others. Indeed, as she mentioned, these others might feel excluded. At the same time, she did not specify that she thought the poems in the study were too personal or excluded people. The results of the study, overall, suggested that personal perspectives, and the resulting emotional connection the poets feel to their material, renders community poetry accessible to others, not only to fellow community poets, but to those who engage with the poems with no prior or current connection to the poets. In this study, for example, two of the organizers, who had never met any of the poets whose work they commented on, reported feeling a strong emotional connection to these poems. These community organizers attributed this connection to the personal experiences recounted. At the same time, it is possible that those working in community environments, who are sensitive to and aware of issues of marginalization and oppression, may not represent the public at large in terms of these types of reactions to community poetry. Others outside community environments may not feel a strong connection to such personal experiences and may not be able to identify with them. Community poets may also be more likely to feel that the content of poems, including personal experiences, are more accessible to them if performed by people with whom they have developed some sense of community. In addition, explanations as to how and why the poet wrote or adapted the poem, which occurred in this study, may render the personal experiences or concerns in the poems more accessible to others in the group.

New Considerations: Sharing Emotional Reactions as Accessibility. Another new concept that this study introduces regarding accessibility is that the sharing of emotional reactions in response to community art may be an accessible means of communication. In the community development and the arts field (see Mathieu et al., 2004; Westbrook, 2004), poetry group sessions are reported as people sharing, performing, and discussing their work. These interactions tend to focus on the rational discussions where people share what they think of the poems. For example, the process can include evaluating the work in terms of aesthetic effectiveness or commenting on issues of a political nature (*e.g.*, critiquing the poem for being sexist) (Westbrook, 2004). In this

study, conversations focused on the sharing of emotional reactions to poetry. Indeed, in many instances, the poets and organizers articulated complex and multi-faceted emotional reactions to the poetry. As one of the organizers commented, this type of sharing can be more accessible for community members because these individuals might feel more comfortable sharing emotional reactions rather than engaging in a rational debate. Specifically, in a rational debate, community members might feel that they need to possess and provide factual information, which they may be unable to do. Notably, in this study, I observed that while the community poets expressed their thoughts with varying degrees of articulation and knowledge of social issues, they expressed their emotions with similar levels of ease and articulation (reflexive journal, June 24, 2018). Therefore, focusing on or including emotional reactions as part of the discussion about community art may be a means of rendering these discussions accessible to more people. Yet, it must be noted that people's emotional reactions are often intertwined with the facts they possess, or lack thereof. Also, in the first interview with the poets and in the group performance, I had to remind the poets to focus on the emotions emitted by the poems or felt in reaction to the performed poems on more than one occasion (reflexive journal, August 31, 2016). What these reminders suggested was that to respond to social life and change from an emotional perspective may be a way of communicating that many are, initially, unfamiliar with.

Discursive Space in the Public Sphere. Issues of participation and accessibility are an essential aspect of participatory democracy and are key for social change to take place in arts-based community settings so that the greatest number of people, regardless of ability, income, or background, can partake in the activities. In this section, the concept of *discursive space* (Hemingway, 1996; Meir, 2002), also a key concept in participatory democracy, will be explored. Discursive space is an environment where communicative processes happen between people that involve critical debates about social life and where people define their “inter subjective situation” (Hemingway, 1996; p. 36). This communication takes place in the public sphere, which is defined as being situated between the private realm and economic or political systems (Hemmingway, 1996). Hemmingway contrasts this type of space to those of the market economy, which prioritizes individual gain and “temporary exchange relations” (p. 35).

This study highlighted the possibility of creating discursive space. Firstly, the community poets in this study engaged in a process where critical debates and interpersonal discussions took place about social life. At the heart of the critical debates in this study was the content of the

poems, which challenged dominant ideas by expressing personal and collective experiences of social injustice and change. This content was shared and debated in the primary discursive space in this study, the poetry performance, which, taking place in a community centre, was in the public sphere. The community-based organizational settings described in the study, for example, popular education workshops, could also be comparable to Hemmingway's (1996) discursive space where communicative processes occur. Community organizations are spaces in the public sphere that go beyond the private realm and still maintain an autonomy from the larger political system or even larger social change movements (Kruzynski, 2004). This study, overall, could also be considered a discursive space, as the interviews and group meetings, which all took place in community settings, included communication and debates about social life.

Secondly, the poetry performance could be considered a discursive space in that it allowed for both individual and collective empowerment of those living in marginal situations to occur—hence going beyond individual gain. Finally, the exchange that occurred during the performance was not one of a “temporary exchange” in terms of market value (*e.g.*, making money). Rather, other values were highlighted, such as coming to voice, emotional expression, sharing, creativity, and solidarity. According to Barndt (2008), community art practices, which focus on collective knowledge and collaboration, are an act of resistance to the individualist values of the market economy.

When discussing people who engage in or with discursive space, Hemmingway (1996) sees them as moving beyond the objectified “social role of the client” (p. 37) where they are expected to be compliant to the expectations of service providers or administrators. The participation of people from different backgrounds is also encouraged in such space (Hemmingway, 1996). The poets in this study were not reduced to the role of clients—or even research participants—but were active citizens, through their feedback and participation in this study (as part of the participatory research process), as well as through the performance of their poetry and their feedback about their emotional reactions. Obviously, they also represented diversity in terms of age, race, religion, country of origin, sexual orientation, and many other factors.

Hemmingway (1996) and Mair (2002) see discursive space as a stepping stone, either to further commitment to democracy and “the just life” (Hemmingway, 1996, p. 35) or to recounting to others what occurred in this space (Mair, 2002). Mair describes discursive space as fleeting and therefore, the detailing to others what took place is a result of a need to extend this

space. In this study, the primary discursive space, the poetry performance, acted as a stepping stone to further inspiration or commitment to democracy. For example, Avi, one of the poets, stated that he felt inspired to recommit to certain social justice practices due to his listening to *Kaddish for Mr. Ringo* while another poet, Albertha, commented that she could envision community poetry growing in importance in social change thanks to her participation in the performance. Through the interview process, the poets also formally recounted what had occurred in that space, hence extending it. Although the interview was part of the protocol of the research process and did not result from the poets' desire to see the discursive space extended, I believe that the informal discussions about the poetry performance that took place directly afterwards, and before and after the interviews, were due to a need to extend this space (reflexive journal, April 2, 2018).

New Considerations: Art and Emotions as Alternative Practice in Discursive Space. The notion of discursive space, as seen above, focuses on communication between people which highlights the content of the discussion, the types of people who participate (e.g., diverse people), the roles people assume in this space (e.g., active citizens), and the value system that underlies the communication (e.g., values of sharing and solidarity). Discursive space is also defined as spaces in the public sphere, found between private and political realms. A need for people to extend discursive space is also part of the discussion. In this discussion, I use the term *alternative practice*³⁷ to describe the tools or means used to communicate within discursive space. This section explores art (poetry) and emotions as alternative means of communication in discursive space.

Art can be considered as an alternative practice, especially in community settings. Firstly, art is a creative and often spontaneous means of communication that can confront the pragmatism and planning of community organizing (Sjollem, 2012). Secondly, community art is a form of communication that challenges the passivity of consumption, commodification of culture, and the championing of professional art (Barndt, 2008). Art can confront the tendency of various leisure spaces to become what Hemmingway (1996) considers sites of "culture consuming" rather than "culture creating" (p. 36). According to Hemmingway, these sites are often negatively impacted

³⁷ This term is an amalgamation derived from two different sources: Foster's (2012) term *alternative text* (used to describe community poetry) and de Courville Nicol's (2011)'s description of emotions as a "a viable *alternative* to the dominant perspective that actions are...malformed by emotion (p. 3).

by market rationality that emphasizes superficial interactions and profit-making. Finally, community art, by the fact that it can cultivate the capacities of each person (Barndt, 2008), highlights active citizenship and emphasizes a diversity of (art) activities. Active citizenship also consists of critiquing or evaluating these activities (Barndt, 2008).

In many ways, this study echoed the notion that art is an alternative practice in discursive space. For instance, it revealed that writing poetry, certainly a creative act, can be spontaneous: This was witnessed through Russ' comments about writing *Dreams* in one sitting, without stopping. In addition, writing, sharing, performing, and reading poetry can be thought of as being engaged in active citizenship that challenges commodified and passive modes of relating to the world. This engagement in a creative process can allow poets and community members to develop, as Stevens (2011) suggests, a consciousness that questions the separation of production and consumption that is inherent to capitalism. In this study, the experience of coming to voice illustrated the idea that the capacities of everyone do have the possibility of being nurtured. The community experience in this study also echoed Barndt's (2008) notion of a diversity of activities: In this study, poetry was delineated in its written and shared modalities, and more specifically, described in its use in demonstrations, in a group process, and in popular education workshops. This study therefore illustrated the variety of activities possible in community art and the further potential for creative and innovative uses. In terms of critiquing or evaluating diverse art activities, the poets were asked to give an evaluation of the group performance as part of a later interview process. They also evaluated the study's overall process in the final debriefing.

This study also revealed that emotion can be an important form of alternative practice in discursive space. According to Russ and Albertha, two poets in the study, it is the emotional expressions and responses of the community poetry experience that encourage people to care about what is being shared, and that allows for a connection with other poets to be established. Moreover, this study illustrated that these emotional exchanges are often uncertain, divergent, and complex, largely due to the fact that people can often identify with and respond from more than one social location, and due to the diversity of the people involved. What this means for discursive space is that the "inter subjective situation" (Hemmingway, 1996, p. 36) and debates, when involving emotion, can be increasingly complex and represent increasingly diverse points of view or expressions. Sharing of emotions in a spontaneous manner also occurred in this study in the group performance. This action not only confronted the rationality and pragmatism that can

be part of community development (Sjollema, 2012), but allowed for community building to occur. For example, according to Russ, this spontaneity allowed the poets to drop their defences and engage in authentic dialogue, free of artifice. He believed that this authenticity energized the poets and the overall process.

New Considerations: Coming to and Maintaining Voice in Discursive Space. Other notions introduced in this study can be considered important elements in the creation and maintaining of discursive space, such as the experience of coming to voice through art and the maintaining of voice through specific actions or processes. In sharing art, community members come to voice and have that voice heard and validated. This coming to voice is especially meaningful because it is often experienced by community members who are living in marginal situations whose art is not, in mainstream culture, considered, as marketable or as a good commodity, as Russ noted. In other words, these populations have often been silenced. What this means is that discursive space is not just a space for critical debates about social life, but a space that can allow voices previously unheard to engage in these discussions, through art. While Mair (2002) mentions the use of art and music as a means of debate in discursive space, she does not explore the notion of coming to voice as a part of this process.

Kruzynski's (2004)³⁸ elaboration on alternative processes in the context of community development is also useful to this discussion. These processes are important in the context of voice in discursive space because they include specific measures that ensure that the voices of those participating can continue to be heard. They are also attempts to ensure that each voice is heard equally. Specifically, Kruzynski (2004) focuses on actions that need to be "consciously organized" (p. 98) to take place during group meetings. She believes that group meetings should consist of, for example, check-ins, allotment of equal time for those present to speak, and evaluation and follow-through after meetings take place. She also believes that people should name their emotions in relation to power dynamics that occur during meetings.

This study embodied many of the actions suggested by Kruzynski (2004). For example, through the group discussions that took place during the pre-research and research stage of this study, the poets checked-in, were allotted equal time to speak, and in some instances, gave

³⁸ For a more detailed description of these processes, see Kruzynski (2004). Many community groups have other suggestions as to how to make participation within community groups democratic or anti-oppressive. See, for example, <https://coco-net.org/un-guide-anti-oppression-pour-les-animateurs/?lang=fr>.

feedback and evaluations (*e.g.*, after the first interview, the poets gave feedback on the interview process). The poets offered feedback individually through the final debriefing. These actions were “consciously organized” (p. 98) aspects of the study.

The primary group meeting in this study was the poetry performance. The performance started with a check-in where each poet gave background information about him or herself and about the poem he or she was going to be presenting. Each was allotted equal time for the check-in, for the reading of the poem, and for giving feedback on the others’ poetry. In interviews conducted after the reading, each poet gave feedback and an evaluation of the group process, although the time allotted for this could have been longer and the feedback more in-depth. The identification of emotions that occurred in the performance did not concern power dynamics in the group, but rather about how the poets were reacting emotionally to the poetry. Nonetheless, the exercise of naming emotions seen in this study could be a model for naming emotions in other circumstances in community development, as seen in Kruzynski (2004).

Implications for Social Change. Notions of accessibility, participation, discursive spaces, and alternative practices in the realm of community development and the arts can be seen through the lens of resistance, power, and social change. Firstly, people must have access to discursive spaces to have a voice in these milieus. Accessibility is a social justice issue as many low-income or otherwise disadvantaged people do not have equal access to participation (Fraser, 1999). This study emphasized the affordability of practicing poetry, both individually and collectively. This affordability allows for greater access and participation for a greater number of people.

This study also introduced new considerations in terms of accessibility. Namely, that certain approaches to practicing community art can enhance accessibility: For example, encouraging people to write poetry to include personal experiences or concerns that are emotionally relevant to them can motivate people to write, and can incite a sense of emotional connection in others who are listening to or reading the work. These approaches link back to the notion of poetry as counter-narrative where personal experiences and concerns are expressed, and where the content of the poetry provides details about people whose lives are often ignored by the mainstream or stereotyped in dominant discourse. This type of poetry, therefore, acting as resistance to dominant discourse, can be encouraged in community settings.

In this study, accessibility was also associated with emotions. Specifically, encouraging people to express their emotional reactions was considered as a more accessible means of communication because people might not always know or remember factual information, often used in rational debate (in other words, if people do not possess factual information, they may be silenced or remain silent). This consideration connects to the idea of coming to voice and individual empowerment that was regarded in this study as one of the first steps in the community building process.

The discursive space of community art and poetry is a space of power and resistance. The active citizenship, creativity, and social debate—achievable through sharing art and emotions—are all conducive to sharing counter-narrative works of resistance and to raising consciousness about social justice. The specific processes outlined by Kruzynski (2004) work to empower people, especially people who have been silenced and are coming to voice, and to ensure equal participation in discursive spaces. The exchanges and practices occurring in discursive space not only enhance personal empowerment, but can encourage community building, that is, collective empowerment through feelings of solidarity, respect and empathy. Finally, participation in discursive space is also conducive to further commitment to social change, democracy and “the just life” (Hemmingway, 1996, p. 35). This phenomenon was witnessed in this study as some of the poets and organizers were inspired by their participation in this study to aspire to further reflections and actions regarding social change. As discursive space can enhance values such as sharing, creativity, and emotions, it is a space that resists the domination of the market mentality, *i.e.*, a mentality primarily interested in profit (Hemmingway, 1996).

Discussions in this chapter highlighted the role of emotions, aesthetics, and participatory democracy in social change. Emotions were regarded as inspiring people to care about social injustice and inciting in them a desire to fix the problems. In this sense, emotions were considered as lending a dynamism and meaning to social change endeavours. They touch the heart and open the soul, in part, because they are varied, uncertain, and spontaneous. Specific emotions, such as anger and hope, as well as emotions in combination with each other, were signaled as useful for counter-narrative poetry to transmit its message and in contributing to feelings of solidarity in community building. At the same time, these emotions were regarded as motivating inspiration to commit to social change beyond the group or community experience. Moreover, subtle or less-than-straightforward expressions of certain emotions were also regarded

as effective in community building. In some cases, emotions often considered central to social change were seen as not being necessary for social change to occur, and the notion of “central” or “key” emotions in inspiring social change, in light of in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011), was called into question.

Aesthetics were primarily discussed in terms of what makes for quality or “good” poetry. Aesthetic features were examined in interaction with emotions and social change in ways that confronted ways of knowing that are divided from each other (Barndt, 2008). Ultimately, good poetry needs to be considered in terms of the interaction between emotions, aesthetic features and social change. The importance or role of aesthetic standards in community poetry was debated. On the one hand, aesthetic standards were seen as inappropriate (or, at least, less important) in instances of ‘coming to voice’ where previously silenced people meet in small groups. Here, social change through individual empowerment through pure and raw expression needs to be prioritized. On the other hand, in instances where community poetry is disseminated to large groups of people, such as in demonstrations, certain aesthetic standards, such as clarity, were regarded as being potentially useful to impart the poems’ social justice message.

In this chapter, discussions on participatory democracy revealed that accessibility, participation and discursive space are key notions associated with this theme. To achieve social change at the community level, the participation of those on the margins was regarded as a key factor. Accessibility was examined through the lens of affordability, and poetry was deemed to be one of the most, if not the most, affordable forms of art. Accessibility was also seen through the perspective of creating from personal experiences and concerns, which can be highly motivating and emotionally-inspiring, to both poets and audience members. Responding to art through emotions rather than rational forms of debate was also considered as being important in accessibility as people can be silenced by not possessing factual information.

Discursive space was also enumerated as a relevant discussion in participatory democracy. This space was defined as one where people communicate about social life in the public sphere. In these spaces, people display active citizenship by espousing values and roles that go beyond those of passive consumer (where monetary concerns are emphasized) or service-provider client. New considerations included looking at poetry and emotions as alternative practices, *i.e.*, tools or means, in this communication process that can champion creativity, sharing, and complexity. Finally, coming to and maintaining voice were also determined to be a new consideration in the

discussion of discursive space. This perspective interpreted this space as being one where previously-silenced people can articulate their concerns and feelings, and where enacting certain processes or actions would ensure the continuation of all voices at equal levels of participation. Discursive space was regarded as being favourable to the expression of counter-narrative discourse (such as community poetry) through its emphasis on debate and communication, and to the individual and collective empowerment that can occur in community building, through its focus on active citizenship. Discursive space was also seen as being a launching pad to political or social implication at larger levels of social change.

The results and findings of this study, in this chapter, were interpreted through the lens of the role and importance of emotions in social life and change, the intertwining of aesthetic features of art, emotions and social change, and the concept of participatory democracy. In the next chapter, based on reflections on the study's findings and on the insights discussed in this chapter, I will make recommendations for research for future considerations. The next chapter will also feature specific recommendations for participatory action research, and activist and community development practice based on the poets' recommendations as well as my own reflections.

Chapter 7: Future Considerations and Recommendations

The final chapter of this dissertation highlights considerations and recommendations based on key learnings from this study. Thinking about the recommendations, I firstly reflected on the research process and design, and more specifically, on the selection of participants, data collection and interview process. Secondly, I deliberated on the findings as well as the discussions of the study's larger implications. Recommendations listed in this chapter consist of my recommendations for research, including process-oriented suggestions for academics using PAR approaches, and my recommendations for practice to community organizers, members and activists. Also featured are the comments of the community poets who were asked to offer recommendations to PAR researchers and to activist and community development practitioners based on their participation in this study.

Recommendations for Research

The recommendations to researchers are based on the learnings from this study and what they indicate in terms of directions for future research possibilities. These recommendations may have relevance to a variety of fields, including leisure, community development and the arts, poetic inquiry, and sociology of emotions and social movements. Rather than offer separate recommendations to each of these fields of study, I have, for the most part, amalgamated the recommendations and present them according to the various issues discussed in this dissertation: Emotions, divergence and diversity, aesthetics, personal perspectives/social location, and other considerations. Recommendations specifically destined to any one of these above-mentioned fields will be highlighted if relevant to the discussion. These recommendations are followed by future considerations for PAR-based research.

The Complexity of Emotions. This study revealed that emotional complexity is a salient feature of the community poetry experience, both through the variety of emotions expressed through poetry and through the complexity of the emotions experienced as a response to poetry. In these two instances, complexity consisted of emotions that were combinatory, straightforward, unified, divergent, ambivalent, and spontaneous, yet also deliberate and constructed to some extent. The emotional component emitted through written poetry was regarded as an important element in its role as counter-narrative and an act of resistance to rational ways of knowing and describing the world. The emotional aspect of shared poetry was considered as helping in the development of individual and collective power, as people expressed their individual emotional

differences and, at the same time, developed feelings of unity and solidarity. Specifically, the expression and sharing of emotions in a spontaneous fashion was regarded as being a potential means of survival for people living in marginal situations and rendered the collective dynamic energizing and without artifice. Others were inspired by the emotional aspect of the community poetry experience to envision, reflect on, and commit to further social change.

According to Eisner (2001), the life of feeling is best revealed through the arts, and this is their special task. As such, arts-based inquiry and the field of community development/leisure could investigate other (various) forms of art, such as dance or the visual arts, for their emotional complexity and impact as counter-narrative discourse and tool for community building, that is, for the development of feelings of solidarity and a sense of individual and collective power. As some of these other forms of art are not language-based, a detailed exploration of how they contribute, through their potential emotional complexity, to social change is recommended. For example, does art that does not use words and language result in more spontaneous emotions being expressed and felt? Does this potential increase of spontaneity lend itself to a more energized and powerful collective experience? The fields of the sociology and social movements may also benefit from such inquiries. What kind of art is (more) effective in motivating people to take part in large-scale social change, perhaps used at demonstrations? How does the emotional complexity as emitted and evoked by these art forms (*e.g.*, dance, visual arts) contribute to this motivation?

Emotional complexity and its contribution to individual and collective empowerment could also be examined in an in-depth manner in a wide range of activities in the community art and social movement experience, such as demonstrations, public performances, exhibitions, publications or other means of dissemination, as well as group exchanges and popular education workshops. Some of these activities were touched upon in this study and were revealed to be spaces in which social change, through poetry and emotions, occurred. A more in-depth look at how emotional complexity is expressed and evoked in these circumstances may contribute to a better understanding of how emotional complexity can contribute to collective empowerment, either at group and community level, or at the larger social change arena.

Specifically pertaining to the field of the sociology of emotions and social movements, emotional complexity could also be examined in a longitudinal study that looks at how people's emotions change over a period of time in the activist endeavour and how these changing

emotions are expressed through artistic means. Moreover, considering in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011) such studies could analyze how people change and adapt their concepts of their basic affective states over time and how the specificities of an art form (poetry or other) articulate these concepts.

Divergence and Diversity. Barndt (2008) claims that art is a useful means for differences to emerge in community settings. In this study, divergence among five community poets was revealed through their varying emotional reactions to performed poetry. Overall, the diverse responses were regarded as not having a detrimental effect on community building and collective empowerment, but as necessary and useful, especially for individual expression and empowerment to occur within the collective dynamic. At the same time, some of the differing reactions were met with counter-reactions that expressed discomfort or irritation. The differing reactions were discussed briefly among the poets during the performance and in-depth with me in a follow-up interview. This study ended before any tensions resulting from these differences could be discussed or navigated between the poets.

Barndt (2008) also contends that art is a good tool for addressing and negotiating differences in community settings. To examine how such differences could be navigated, the field of community development and the arts and leisure, as well as arts-based inquiry, could potentially benefit from a longitudinal study that examines how a group of diverse community artists negotiate difference, including dissimilarities in emotional responses, over a long period of time, and how this affects community building and individual and collective empowerment over the long-term. How art can be used to negotiate any tensions resulting from these differences could also be examined³⁹. These types of examinations could also be useful to the field of sociology, emotions, and social movements as these movements are also the arena of emotional difference and complexity (Gould, 2009). As such, a longitudinal study of a group of artist-activists could take place that addresses emotional difference (and resulting tensions) and its effects on motivating and taking part in social change.

At the same time, as this study indicated, similarities in emotional expression and responses can also occur in community building. In this sense, longitudinal studies could examine how the interplay of similarities and differences, including through emotion, is negotiated over a

³⁹ Many ways to approach conflict and difference have been suggested by community organizations. For example, the iceberg method. See <https://coco-net.org/conflict-about-the-iceberg/coco-conflictheberg-2/>.

long period of time. For example, how does the “binding power” (Jasper, 2014, p. 209) of respect, empathy, solidarity, and collective anger interact with the potential ambivalent power (McLaren, 2002) brought about by individual differences in emotion? How does the interplay of these different types of power affect community building over the long term? In the field of emotions and social movements, differences and similarities in emotional effect could also be part of longitudinal studies.

Further exploration of diversity could also be a part of future studies. As the inclusion of a wide range of people would be representative of the increasingly diverse populations living in North American cities (Schmid, 2000), or who participate in social change movements (Mair, 2002), this suggestion is especially significant. More specifically, focusing on diversity, these studies could illustrate how counter-narrative (including art), collective empowerment in community, and social change at the level of social movements is affected by diverse groups of people participating in their activities. While this study included people who represented a variety of social locations (*e.g.*, based on age, race, religion, ethnicity, country of origin, sexual orientation, disability and gender), the poets were quite similar in terms of mother tongue or language of choice, political views, and educational background. Future research could include other diversity factors: For example, people who speak a wide variety of languages or who represent a wide range of educational backgrounds. It would be interesting to examine if these factors of diversity, or others, would make the shared emotions demonstrated in this study, such as respect, trust, vulnerability, solidarity, more or less likely? These differences could be examined in the context of a group of people who are dedicated to social justice. In this way, researchers could examine if a commitment to social justice is enough to create a bond between people regardless of how diverse they are or what factors of diversity are at play.

Aesthetics, Emotions and Social Change. In social change efforts, there is now a consciousness that the mode of expression is as important as the message itself (Mair, 2002). What this statement means is that how the social change message is expressed is important. Specifically referring to the role of art in social change, the aesthetic features specific to the art form are a relevant aspect of the social change message. This study revealed that aesthetic elements are intractably intertwined with emotions and social change. Specifically, literary devices in community poetry (*e.g.*, imagery, rhythm, sound, repetition) played a key role in expressing and evoking emotions that accounted for poetry being an effective means of counter-

narrative and that contributed to community building and collective empowerment. Emotions and aesthetics also played a role in organizers and poets being able to envision, reflect and commit to further social change.

A closer look can be taken by researchers to explore the connection between aesthetic features, emotions, and social change, when investigating poetry or art at both the community level and the larger social movement arena. These three elements are often considered in isolation, notably in the poetic inquiry and other art-based research fields. Analyzing these elements together in other forms of art, for example, may help validate the importance of aesthetics in social change, and not regard the relationship between aesthetics and social change as strained (Bell & Desai, 2011), and may help validate the use of both aesthetics and emotion as important to social change, and not be dismissed as irrational or of secondary importance (Sjollema, 2012). In this study, questions were raised as to whether paying close attention to aesthetic features reduces emotional potency in poetry and art. Future studies could explore this idea further. For example, researchers could ask community artists if they believe that attention to aesthetic quality makes their art more or less emotionally potent. If so, do they believe that this increasing or lessening of emotional effect produces work that is less effective as social change? Either for collective empowerment in community or in a larger social movement arena?

Aesthetic standards that determine the quality of art may or may not have a place in community art, depending on the context. This study indicated that if the focus of the community activity is on providing community artists with a forum to express themselves (*i.e.*, ‘coming to voice’), the emphasis on aesthetic standards may not be appropriate. It also suggested that if the goal of the activity is on having a wide net of people understanding and being in solidarity with these populations, then some standards, such as clarity, may be needed. What these differences suggest to researchers working with community artists is that the researcher needs to be sensitive to the context and purpose of the research as well as to the community artists. For example, researchers can ask: Is the goal to have community artists produce art that will eventually be shared with a wider audience to promote a social change message (e.g., academic journals, conference presentations, art exhibits, public performances, anthologies)? Or, is the purpose of the art-making experience in the research to provide a forum for giving voice or sharing among other community artists for community building purposes? From the outset, the researcher may determine that aesthetic standards are not a factor in the research, such as occurred in this study.

However, if aesthetic quality or standards are a consideration, researchers working with community artists would need to specifically ask them how they feel about producing or sharing their work in relation to aesthetics standards. As community artists are the primary actors in this consideration, their opinions and feelings on this matter would be necessary, especially in the context of a participatory action research study. Together, the researcher and community artists may come up with their own definitions of what quality in art means, what is relevant, what skills are needed, how to develop these skills, and what message to highlight.

Certainly, more investigation into the role of aesthetic standards could occur in the leisure and community development and the arts fields, as well as arts-based inquiry. In this study, only one of the poets commented on the theme of aesthetic standards as this theme was not included in the interview questions. In future studies, researchers could ask questions to community artists regarding this subject. For example: Do aesthetic standards inhibit (or disempower) them by making them feel like they are not really artists, or are these standards regarded to encourage the development of their skills, which they may experience as empowering?

Personal Perspectives and Social Location. This study illustrated that personal perspectives and social location can be very important components of community art. Firstly, it revealed that personal perspectives and experiences expressed through community art can account for its strength as counter-narrative and for the emotional connection felt by audience members. Indeed, the personal perspectives expressed in the poems were key to the emotional connection audience members felt to themselves, to other artists, and to the material. Secondly, the social location of the audience member was also determined to be a significant factor in how the art was received at an emotional level. Personal perspectives and social location were therefore factors that intertwined with emotional effect and aesthetics (which heightened the emotional responses). Together, all these elements led to mutual feelings of solidarity and motivation to further social change. As such, researchers could investigate the role of social location and personal perspectives, concerns and experiences, as expressed through art (both community art and art used in social movements) to elucidate the findings of this study. Also, asking community and social movement artists how and why their works are created from personal perspectives may confirm the notion that it is more emotionally engaging and accessible for them to create from a personal point of view.

Other Considerations. As stated by Kruzynski (2004), many community members begin engagement with social movements through their implication in community organizations. It is here that their private concerns are linked to political issues. This study briefly examined how implication with community art, here by taking part in this study, inspired community members and organizers to envision, reflect on and re-commit to larger social change. Based on these learnings, an in-depth look at how participation in community art activities may lead to further social change implication is recommended. Why are people inspired to engage in social movements based on their experiences in community art? What types of people are likely to be motivated to do so? According to Maton (2008), it is in part due to feelings of solidarity experienced at the community level that people are inspired to act at the larger social change arena. If so, does community art, especially, allow for such feelings to emerge and to motivate people to take action?

PAR Research. The recommendations in the following paragraphs suggest specific practices to be undertaken by academics using participatory action research and community-based research paradigms. These suggestions are, in part, a reflection of the community poets' recommendations given in the final debriefing (see Appendix K) and are also a result of my own reflections. These suggestions can be broken down into the following categories: *Research Design; Trust, Familiarity and Community Building; Ownership of the Process; and Inclusivity and Responding to Specific Needs.*

Research Design. The research design of this study included collecting and analyzing poems that were produced by community poets independent of and prior to being part of a research study. These poets represented people occupying marginalized social positions. In this sense, the poems represented the unfettered, heartfelt expressions of people whose writing, and therefore, voice, are usually not heard in academic settings. PAR researchers could make efforts to investigate more thoroughly art that is created in community by community members not produced for research purposes. Specifically, arts-based and community development/leisure researchers could create PAR research designs that highlight this type of knowledge produced in community. As such, the direct voices and knowledge of community artists living in marginality would be heard. In these circumstances, these voices would be less filtered or controlled by academic requirements that may impose a certain subject, theme or process of creating (*e.g.*, having to create within a certain time frame). Community artists would also be freed of the

possible stress of having to produce poetry or other forms of art for an institution, academia, that may be foreign to them and that they may regard as very powerful and intimidating.

As seen in this study, including art produced in community would give community artists the power to choose the poem (or other art work) they think is best suited for the study's purposes and that they perhaps feel the most connection with. The heartfelt connection the poets in this study had to their work, in part, resulted from the fact that they chose the poem they wanted to present. Overall, then, including art produced in community takes away a certain degree of power from the researcher and academic institution and leaves it in the hands of community members. This suggestion could be an important aspect of participatory action research.

Trust, Familiarity and Community Building. During the pre-research and research phases of this study, the other community poets and I met as a group in various locations in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, including the local park, the local shopping mall and a few local coffee shops. A few of the poets stated that they liked the fact that we met in locations that they knew and could identify with and also liked the variety of locations. These meetings gave them a sense of familiarity with each other, and, as such, acted as a community building exercise.

The familiarity and trust built up over time helped the poets feel that they could give me honest feedback. For example, one of the poets mentioned that he felt that one of the interview questions was not clear and others stated that they felt uncomfortable with certain terms, *e.g.*, marginalization. Notably, this trust and familiarity allowed the poets to give each other honest feedback and to be vulnerable during the poetry performance. For example, sharing emotions, such as discord, discomfort, shame, and compassion (for an abuser) may not have been as readily discussed in a group that had not have developed trust. In addition, revealing one's social location (*e.g.*, a former abuser) also required trust as such disclosures can be very intimate and can leave one quite vulnerable. The community poets stated that they highly appreciated the group performance and thought it was a very special and memorable occasion, due to the sharing of poetry and the spontaneous disclosure of emotional reactions. They felt highly energized by the event. Overall, the development of trust and honest sharing of feelings allowed for individual and collective empowerment to occur in this study as well as feelings of mutual empathy and solidarity.

At the same time, one of the poets noted in the final debriefing that he felt that there was not enough time allotted during the group performance to process some of the uncomfortable or

conflictual feelings expressed. Indeed, the processing of these feelings primarily occurred with me in a follow-up interview.

Based on these reflections, the recommendation to researchers using PAR research designs would be to take the time to meet with participants as a group at various intervals to encourage community building through the development of trust and familiarity. These group meetings could be informal gatherings at a coffee shop or perhaps could include, as suggested by one of the poets, writing exercises (or practicing other forms of art). Notably, as suggested by one of the poets, PAR researchers should allow enough time for the processing of any uncomfortable or conflictual feelings expressed in a group dynamic, in (a) follow-up meeting(s), to ensure that community building and group trust, through honest sharing, continue until the end of the project.

Ownership of the Process. The community poets expressed appreciation for their implication in this study's process, an idea that is also referred to as 'ownership of the process' (Kruzynski, 2004). For example, one of the poets commented that she appreciated the translation of academic terms, such as *counter-discourse*, into laymen's terms so she could understand what was being discussed. Another commented that he appreciated the detailed explanations as to the what to expect (*i.e.*, what the next step(s) in the process were). He also expressed appreciation that these explanations were laid out well in advance by the researcher. In this way, he felt he knew what was going on, could follow everything, and had time to reflect and ask questions or give feedback if desired.

The poets also stated that they appreciated being provided with all relevant documents during the research process. Being provided with a copy of the transcripts was especially meaningful. Here, having ownership over one's words appeared to be very empowering to the poets. Another poet commented that he appreciated the carefulness of reviewing with the researcher all the quotes from his interviews that appeared in findings. In these reviews, the poets were able to revise their quotes if desired. In some instances, slight revisions occurred.

The ownership of the process also occurred in this study by the poets determining the content of their portraits (also reviewed with the researcher), by their participation in the preliminary emotional discourse analysis, by their review of the emotional discourse analysis on two occasions, by their review of the preliminary thematic analysis, and by their implication in the final debriefing. I was especially happy with their participation in the preliminary discourse

analysis as my analysis was strongly and largely inspired by what they had said (reflexive journal, July 3, 2018).

Certainly, I would recommend to PAR and community-based researchers to involve participants as much as possible in the research process, while respecting their availabilities, capacities, and interest in involvement. All the ways in which this study involved the participants (outlined above) appeared to be a very empowering experience for them.

One learning arising from my own reflection of the process is to emphasize, as much as possible, face-to-face individual or group meetings. In some instances in this study, information was passed along via e-mail and in other cases, matters were discussed face-to-face. In the face-to-face encounters, the poets were much more likely to be engaged, comment, give feedback, and ask questions than when communication happened via e-mail. Face-to-face encounters therefore seemed to encourage the empowerment of community members in the research process.

Inclusivity and Responding to Specific Needs. Researchers working with people who live in marginal situations need to be especially mindful of being inclusive so that all aspects of the study are equally accessible to all participants. This inclusivity is essential so that participants are empowered. In this study, for example, one of the community poets had neither voice nor e-mail and special efforts had to be made to communicate with her and provide her with all the study documents. To include her, therefore, took extra face-to-face individual meetings. In another case, one of the poets was especially nervous in front of the microphone, especially during the first interview, and had great difficulty articulating her thoughts. In this case, she supplemented some of her answers in writing.

The community poets, overall, did not comment on issues of inclusivity. One poet did say, though, that she did appreciate the balance between group meetings and one-on-one meetings with the researcher (me) that occurred in this study. According to her, the individual meetings were helpful because they gave her the space to express her specific needs and issues in the research, while the group meetings helped her learn from others. Indeed, it was primarily during individual meetings that specific needs were brought up.

Based on these learnings, I would suggest that PAR researchers be as sensitive and accommodating as possible to the specific needs and capacities of each of the research participants. Researchers must do what they can to include the voices of people living in marginal situations in research, precisely because they are often shut out of other forms of participation. As

suggested earlier in this dissertation, accessibility and participation are social justice issues. Also, I would recommend that PAR researchers take the time to meet with participants individually, as well as in group meetings, so that individual needs have a chance to come to the surface.

Recommendations for Practice

This section is based on the comments of the community poets in the final debriefing, where they were asked what recommendations they have to community members and organizers, as well as to social activists, based on their experiences in this study. The following suggestions also include my recommendations for practice to individuals who are active in the community sector and social movements.

Accentuate Art/Aesthetics and Emotions in Community and Activism. This study revealed the power of art and emotions as counter-narrative, as tools in community building and as inspiration for larger social change. It also revealed the important role of aesthetic features in poetry, for example literary devices such as rhythm, sound and repetition. At the same time, this study underlined the fact that art and emotions can be downplayed in community organizations where rational ways of knowing and planning can be prioritized. The poets in this study agreed that the combination in this study of art or poetry and emotion resulted in very meaningful and profound experiences, such as the trust, solidarity and oneness felt as a result of the community building process.

The poets recommended that community organizers, members, and activists do more to incorporate art and emotions into their activities. One poet saw this study as a blueprint for other community practices of community building where emotions could be expressed in a spontaneous manner. This spontaneity would reduce artifice or pretension and defences would be dropped. Another commented that the more urgent an issue is, the more community groups and activists should use emotions and art as a means of expression because only they can truly portray and articulate the urgency of a situation. This poet said that emotions and art should also particularly be used when addressing government officials, because the speeches and protest slogans, usually employed by activists and organizers, will only be ignored by government people. These officials need something more potent, like art, poetry, and emotions, to wake them up. I also recommended to community organizers to set up popular education workshops, group exchanges, and other community activities using art and emotions as a means of exchange and community building. Some of these activities might highlight the straightforwardness of

emotions in art, such as demonstrations, while others, such as group exchanges, might emphasize emotional complexity. Similarly, activists could organize events and activities that highlight art and emotion, both for group building exercises among them and for larger social change purposes, such as in demonstrations.

Encouraging Participatory Democracy. In this study, discursive space was regarded as a key component of participatory democracy, a democracy that encourages the participation of community members in social life. This space is one where inter-subjective conversations about social life between community members takes place in the public sphere. Discursive space also includes the re-telling of what occurred in the space. I would recommend extending discursive space in community settings by community members reflecting or writing about their experiences with community building or social action in in a community blog or other forums to share these experiences with others. In this way, not only would the discursive space be extended, but others may learn from the mistakes and experience of the community bloggers regarding social change. This action-reflection process was highlighted in this study as part of its participatory action research design (Kemmis et al., 2014), and in its role as discursive space. Action-reflection is often lacking in community organizations where time can be limited (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006).

Discursive space was also identified in this study as a space where community members could ‘come to voice’ and where this voice could be maintained. Maintaining this voice was seen as being achieved through alternative processes that consisted of, among other actions, people evaluating community activities. This study enacted this evaluation process by including comments and evaluations of the study’s processes by the community poets. More evaluation could occur in community settings and in social movements as a means of reflection of various activities, such as popular education workshops or demonstrations. In addition, these evaluations could include people’s emotional reactions to the events or activities. Once again, an emphasis on the action-reflection process (Kemmis et al., 2014) would be helpful to learn from mistakes and difficulties in community building and social action.

Debating Aesthetic Standards. Aesthetic standards, or standards that determine what good art consists of, was debated in this study. On the one hand, it was determined that in certain instances, having community poets express themselves in raw and spontaneous ways, without paying attention to matters like clarity or revision, perhaps should be emphasized, especially if participation, accessibility and ‘coming to voice’ were the priorities of the community endeavour.

On the other hand, revision and paying attention to clarity may be in order if the message of the community art is designed to reach a wide audience. Based on these learnings, I would advise community organizers and members/artists to discuss the matter of aesthetic standards and to come up with their own definitions of what quality in art means, what is important, what to prioritize, and what means to take to help community artists who want to improve their technique. For example, workshops in artistic technique could be suggested, as long as they are flexible enough to accommodate all levels of experience and talent, so that all are included and can participate. Of course, community organizers themselves may be unfamiliar with aesthetic standards in art and may want to educate themselves in this area. These types of debates would be empowering for community members to participate in as they are the primary actors involved.

The Personal Connection. One important finding of this study is that creating art from a personal perspective and sharing it with others allows for emotional connection to occur among community artists, which in turn strengthens community building and mutual feelings of respect and trust. In this study, even the community organizers who read the poems (and who had not met the poets) felt an emotional connection when reading the poems, due to the personal perspectives expressed. Also, interviews with the community poets revealed that their social locations played a significant role in how they reacted emotionally to the poetry.

Based on these learnings, I would recommend that community organizers include personal perspectives in writing exercises or other art-creating practices in workshops or other activities so that people can connect emotionally to the work. In addition, this approach may also be a more engaging and accessible way for community artists to approach their creativity. Specifically asking those in the audience, such as in the case of a popular education workshop, to discuss their emotional reactions (based on their social locations) to artistic performance would be a powerful element in community building, as the vulnerability that these kinds of disclosures display help build collective trust and solidarity.

According to activist and McGill University law professor Payam Akhavan (Bethune, 2017), the basis of any progress or social change is developing a felt sense or a “felt experience” (p. 22) of a social issue through the telling of individual stories. Akhavan believes that it is at the level of emotions and personal stories (or experiences and perspectives) where “empathy originates” and how “humans respond to one another” (p. 22). Ledwith (2005a) describes the telling and sharing of one’s story in community as leading to a sense of dignity, mutuality, and

reciprocity that allows people living in marginal situations to develop the confidence and critical autonomy necessary to engage in collective action. This sharing process also highlights emotions as a legitimate source of knowledge (Ledwith, 2005a). Certainly, in this study, poetry was used to achieve this felt experience through the telling of social issues through personal experiences—or issues that affected the poet personally—that generated empathy, as well as a host of other emotions, among community organizers and the poets themselves. For larger social change to occur, relationships between people need to be rooted in these types of exchange, that at the same time point to possibilities for larger changes to occur. I end this dissertation, befittingly, with a poem that talks about possibility.

*The felt sense, the embodiment,
of social issues is possible
achieved through poetry
an inexpensive form of art.
Through images,
poetry intensifies the struggle:
Hard sounds thumping of freedom
and responsibility.
Poets who are low-income
can afford paper and pen
choosing poems that are meaningful to them.*

*The roots of social change
start with individual acts of creativity
and then, shared emotion.
The messiness of emotion,
some research sense of order
somehow play together.
The poets feel the power
of vulnerability,
tap into an “unbounded...force.”*

*They bring these knowledges forward now
to other spheres of life.*

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APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE - POETS

Hello,

My name is Sandra Sjollem and I am a Ph.D. student in the Individualized Ph.D. program at Concordia University, Montréal. I am currently undertaking a study that looks at the role of poetry and emotions in community-based efforts for social change among marginalized populations. Your involvement in this research would be a valuable contribution in that it may help local Côte des Neiges and other Montréal-based community organizing efforts in the fight for social change for marginalized people.

Participation in this study would involve a variety of aspects: 1) Selecting a poem about social change you have written or adapted from another source⁴⁰ to share with me and the other research participants. 2) Taking part in two interviews with me lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes each, before and after a poetry performance 3) Participating in a poetry performance with me and four other research participants/poets in attendance, lasting from 1 to 1 ½ hours; 4) Participating in a final group discussion to talk about your participation in the research project and the overall research process. All activities will take place at the Côte des Neiges community centre.

In order to participate, you must 1) be at least 18 years of age; 2) speak and understand English well enough to perform your poem in English and to answer interview questions in English; 3) participate in community activities in the Côte des Neiges neighbourhood; and 4) consider yourself to have marginalized status due to age, race, social economic status, religion, ethnicity, or health status (or other factors).

You do not need to have previous experience performing poetry or to have studied poetry writing. Any style of poetry will be accepted.

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any point in the project without question and without negative consequence. You may choose not to answer any of the interview questions. Your decision to participate, not participate, or withdraw will have no negative impact on you. You can also ask that your data be withdrawn from the study.

If you decide to not participate or to withdraw data from the study, this decision will have no negative consequences on current or future collaborations between us.

For the purposes of dissemination, you may choose to reveal your true identity, or to use a pseudonym (a fake name). This name will be applied to my Ph.D. thesis paper and other documents that may result from the project (*e.g.*, academic journals, community reports).

⁴⁰ Adapted from another source: This means that you have taken someone else's original poem and re-written parts of it. If the poem you are presenting is adapted from another source, the original poem must be in the public domain (*i.e.*, no longer requiring the original author's permission to reproduce or change). I am available to research the poem and confirm if it falls into the public domain and therefore whether it is eligible for this study.

Your name/pseudonym will also be used when identifying your written poems as this corresponds to Canadian copyright law.

With your permission, I would like to video tape the poetry performance and audio record the interviews to be sure not to miss important information. All recordings will be deleted once the project is finished (April 2019). The audio recordings will be transcribed for data analysis. Electronic copies of the transcriptions will be held in my files in the hard drive of my computer under a locked password for five years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please do not hesitate to contact me. To participate in the project, please reach me at scdsconcordia@gmail.com or at 514-344-3903. For any questions or concerns, you may also contact my faculty supervisor: Felice Yuen, felice.yuen@concordia.ca, (514) 848-2424 ext. 2267.

This project has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research at Concordia University. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Manager at the Research Ethics and Compliance Office (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at oor.ethics@concordia.ca. I thank you in advance for your help in this project.

Sincerely Yours,

Sandra Sjollema

APPENDIX B: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE - COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

Hello,

My name is Sandra Sjollem and I am a Ph.D. student in the Individualized Ph.D. program at Concordia University, Montréal. I am currently undertaking a study that looks at the role of poetry and emotions in community-based efforts for social change among marginalized populations. Your involvement in this research would be a valuable contribution. Your insight may help local community organizing efforts as they fight for social change for marginalized people. Your participation may also help Côte des Neiges and other Montréal-based organizations who are interested in developing poetry and other arts-based interventions as a means of fighting injustice.

Participation in this study involves two aspects. Firstly, I will ask you to read five poems written by local poets who self-identify as marginalized community members. Immediately following this reading, you will be invited to an interview with me. Questions will focus on the emotions evoked by reading the poetry and the significance of these emotions to local organizing efforts for social change. The reading and interview will take approximately 1 ½ hours. This session can take place at your community organization or at the Côte des Neiges community centre.

In order to participate, you must 1) be at least 18 years of age 2) speak and understand English well enough to read English and to answer interview questions in English 3) have at least one previous experience organizing a poetry activity that aimed at social change in a community-based setting.

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any point in the project without question and without negative consequence. You may choose not to answer any of the interview questions. Your decision to participate, not participate, or withdraw will have no negative impact on you. You can also ask that your data be withdrawn from the study.

If you decide to not participate or to withdraw data from the study, this decision will have no negative consequences on current or future collaborations between us.

For the purposes of dissemination, you may choose to reveal your true identity, or to use a pseudonym (a fake name). This name will be applied to my Ph.D. thesis paper and other documents that may result from the project (*e.g.*, academic journals, community reports).

With your permission, I would like to audio-tape record the interviews in order to be sure not to miss important information you provide. All recordings will be deleted when the project is finished (April 2019). The audio recordings will be transcribed for data analysis. Electronic copies of the transcriptions will be held in the hard drive of my computer under a locked password for five years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please do not hesitate to contact me. To participate in the interviews, please reach me at scdsconcordia@gmail.com or at 514-344-

3903. For any questions or concerns, you may also contact my faculty supervisor: Felice Yuen, felice.yuen@concordia.ca, (514) 848-2424 ext. 2267.

This project has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research at Concordia University. If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Manager at the Research Ethics and Compliance Office (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

I thank you in advance for your help in this project.

Sincerely Yours, Sandra Sjollem

APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE - POETS



INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Study Title: *“What is found there? Poetry and emotions in resistance and power for social change among diverse community poets”*

Researcher: Sandra Sjollema

Researcher’s Contact Information: scdsconcordia@gmail.com, (514)-344-3903

Faculty Supervisor: Felice Yuen

Faculty Supervisor’s Contact Information: felice.yuen@concordia.ca, (514) 848-2424 ext. 2267

Source of funding for the study: N/A

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to look at the role of poetry and emotions in collective and community-based efforts for social change among marginalized populations. This study reflects community-based poetry practices that marginalized populations participate in as community members and activists. One of the goals of this research is to better understand, through both written and performed poetry, the dynamics of emotional resistance to social injustice and how emotions work to act for social change. This research project is a part of Sandra Sjollema’s Concordia University’s Ph.D. thesis.

B. PROCEDURES

To take part in this study, you will be asked to present a poem that you have written or that you have adapted from another source (*i.e.*, someone else’s poem that you have re-written or changed in some way). You will select this poem for this research project, and it will be shared both in its written form and orally with other participants (and the researcher) during interviews and a poetry performance (the written poems will be identified by a pseudonym or by your real name). At the end of the session, the researcher will collect these copies and destroy them.

Your written poem will also be shared with community organizers who will be asked to read it (your poems will be identified with your real name or a pseudonym). A hard copy of your written poem will be given to the community organizers immediately prior to the interview with them, will be read in the researcher’s presence and will be collected by the researcher at the end of the interview. The researcher will then destroy these hard copies.

More specifically, if you participate, you will be asked to:

- Send a copy of your written poem to the researcher through an e-mail attachment or give the researcher a hard copy of the written poem prior to an interview with her. This will take a few minutes via e-mail. If in person, the researcher can come to meet you in person in a public place close to your home, therefore taking 10 to 15 minutes travelling time.
- Based on the principles of participatory action research, take part in a preliminary poetic analysis of your poem that will consist of a semi-structured interview with the researcher that will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The purpose of this analysis will be to identify the poem's key emotional themes. This interview will be audio recorded in order for the researcher to verify what was said for the purpose of analysis. The researcher will use this preliminary analysis to conduct a more in-depth emotional analysis of your written poem. This interview will be transcribed by the researcher into written notes.
- Participate in a poetry performance that will last approximately 1-1 ½ hours where you will be asked to perform your poem to four other people, including three other participants, and the researcher. You will also be asked to act as an audience member to the other participants' performances. The purpose of this performance is to examine the emotional responses to the poetry and what implications these reactions may have for resistance to injustice and efforts towards social change. The purpose of this performance is also to investigate both the effectiveness of emotion as a means of resistance and the efficacy of poetry as an alternative discourse in the fight for social change.

This performance will be videotaped (the video recording will not be used for data collection, analysis or dissemination). You will also be given a brief reflective guide to bring home that will help you reflect on the performance (the reflective guide will not be used for data collection, analysis or dissemination). The purpose of both the video tape and reflective guide is to facilitate answering questions about the performance during a later interview.

- Take part in a semi-structured interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes, following the poetic performance. The purpose of this interview is to reflect on the poetic performance and to answer questions relating to the purpose of the performance as stated in point 2 above. You will have access to the video tape (and can view it in the presence of the researcher) and to the reflective notes in order to answer these questions. This interview will be audio recorded in order for the researcher to verify what was said for the purpose of analysis. This interview will be transcribed by the researcher into written notes.
- Review the data analysis of the second semi-structured interviews (the interviews held after the poetic performance) and, based on the principles of participatory research, offer feedback to the researcher. This can take from 1-2 hours.
- Take part in a final meeting, lasting approximately 1½ hours where you will take part in a group discussion about your participation in this research and, based on the principles of participatory research, give feedback on the overall research process. The researcher will take notes during this meeting that may be disseminated in her Ph.D. thesis and other written forms of dissemination (*i.e.*, publications).

In total, participating in this study will take 6-7 hours.

The interviews and performance will take place at the Côte des Neiges community centre in a private room reserved for these purposes.

As a research participant, your responsibilities would be:

- 1) To minimize risk of exposure, to acknowledge that by agreeing to participate in the poetry performance in signing this Consent Form, you are bound to a confidentiality agreement in that the identity of other participants, the content of the poems and anything discussed during the poetry performance will remain confidential.
- 2) To bring to the researcher's attention any difficulties, tensions or conflicts that you may be experiencing during the course of the project. As such, you can request a private meeting with the researcher to discuss these difficulties. More specifically, you can request a meeting with the researcher and another (other) participant(s) if a conflict has occurred between you and another (other) party (ies). You can also request to take a break at any time and refuse to answer any interview questions. The researcher can also refer you to appropriate resources in the Côte des Neiges area if follow-up support is needed.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks include: (1) sharing personal stories or information with the other participants and researcher during the discussion, interview and poetry performance (2) feeling and sharing strong emotional reactions with the other participants and researcher during the discussion, interview and poetry performance (3) potentially disagreeing with the other participants in terms of your emotional reactions to the poems during the poetry performance or having issues with the way others are behaving during the performance.

You might or might not personally benefit from participating in this research. Potential benefits include: developing a deeper understanding of the use of poetry and emotions in community-based social activism, developing feelings of solidarity with other participants from different backgrounds, and helping to further the importance of community poetry in the struggles of marginalized people.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: the written poem you present for the project and your analysis and feedback as to the emotional themes present in this poem (through an interview with you); your review of the poetry performance as to how poetry, as a vehicle of emotion, can contribute to collective emotional resistance among marginalized people in the face of social injustice (through an interview with you); and your review of your participation in this research project and the overall research process through a group discussion (to be represented through the researcher's notes).

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research, and except as described in this form. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be identifiable. That means it will have your name directly on it, and you understand that your identity will be known by both the research team and your participant group during your poetry performance.

The information shared with community organizations may be 1) identifiable or 2) anonymous (*i.e.*, using a pseudonym). Please indicate below whether you accept to have your information attributed to you or not:

The information gathered will be anonymous. That means it will not be possible to make a link between you and the information you provide.

The information gathered will be identifiable.

That means it will have your name directly on it.

We will protect the information by:

1. Keeping information stored on paper in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office
2. Storing and protecting electronic information in a password-protected file on the researcher's hard drive

We intend to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below whether you accept to be identified in the publications:

I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research.

Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research (a pseudonym will be used in this case).

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You are free to not answer any questions during the interviews. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before May 1st, 2017.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

F. PARTICIPANT’S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE - COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS



INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Study Title: *“What is found there? Poetry and emotions in resistance and power for social change among diverse community poets”*

Researcher: Sandra Sjollem

Researcher’s Contact Information: scdsconcordia@gmail.com, (514)-344-3903

Faculty Supervisor: Felice Yuen

Faculty Supervisor’s Contact Information: felice.yuen@concordia.ca, (514) 848-2424 ext. 2267

Source of funding for the study: N/A

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to look at the role of poetry and emotions in collective and community-based efforts for social change among marginalized populations. This study reflects community-based poetry practices that you as community organizers participate in as organizers and coordinators. One of the goals of this research is to better understand, through both written and performed poetry, the dynamics of emotional resistance to social injustice and how emotions work to act for social change. This research project is a part of Sandra Sjollem’s Concordia University’s Ph.D. thesis.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to read five poems written by the participants (and the researcher) in order to understand the emotional impact of poetry in the struggles for social change of marginalized community members and to answer interview questions based on these readings. The participants have given their consent for you to read their poetry and the poems will be identified with either a pseudonym or the author’s real name.

More specifically, if you participate, you will be asked to:

- Read over the five poems. These written poems will be given to you by the researcher immediately prior to an interview with you and you will be asked to read them in the researcher’s presence. You will be asked to read these poems out loud to experience their full effect, sound, voice.

- Take part in one semi-structured interview lasting approximately 1-1 ½ hours (including time to read the poems). The purpose of this interview is to discuss the emotions evoked by the poetry and their significance to local organizing efforts for social change. This interview will be audio recorded in order for the researcher to verify what was said for the purpose of analysis. After the interview, you will return the poems to the researcher. This interview will be transcribed by the researcher into written notes.

As a key informant in this research, your responsibilities would be:

- (1) To not disclose the identity of the participants who have written the poems.
- (2) To bring to the researcher's attention any difficulties, tensions or conflicts that you may be experiencing during the course of the project. As such, you can request a meeting with the researcher to discuss these difficulties. You can also take a break at any time and refuse to answer any interview questions.

The interview will take place at the Côte des Neiges community centre in a room reserved for these purposes or at the location of your community organization.

In total, participating in this study will take 1½ hours.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks include: (1) sharing personal stories or information with the researcher during the interview (2) experiencing strong emotional reactions (to the poems) shared with the researcher during the interview.

You might or might not personally benefit from participating in this research. Potential benefits include: developing a deeper understanding of the use of poetry and emotions in community-based social activism, which may help you in your work organizing such activities and helping to further the importance of community poetry in the struggles of marginalized people.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: feedback from you and four other community organizers as to the role community poetry can play in local efforts towards social justice based on the reading of five poems presented by the study's participants (4 people) and the researcher. This information will be audio recorded and transcribed for purposes of analysis.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research, and except as described in this form. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be identifiable by either your real name or a pseudonym (a fake name), depending on your choice. This applies to information gathered through the semi-structured interview.

We will protect the information by:

1. Keeping information stored on paper in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office
2. Storing and protecting electronic information in a password-protected file on the researcher's hard drive

We intend to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below whether you accept to be identified in the publications:

I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research.

Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research (a pseudonym will be used in this case).

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You are free to not answer any questions during the interview. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before May 1st, 2017.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

F. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

APPENDIX E : INTERVIEW GUIDE (1) – POETS

1. Are there any specific features of your written poem (rhyming, metaphor, imagery) that you feel are emotionally evocative?
2. How effective do you find written poetry as a means of challenging dominant discourse about social justice issues and asserting an alternative point of view?
3. How does your poem act as a means of challenging dominant discourse about social justice issues and asserting an alternative point of view? How effectively do you think it does that?

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EMOTIONAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
– POETS

1. What do you see as being the social injustice presented in this poem?
2. What is the emotional tone of this injustice? (*E.g.*, humiliation, neglect, aggression)
3. Do the emotions present in the poem suggest that the injustice has become intolerable and must stop or/and that the current situation is not good enough and must be improved? Or both?
4. What do you feel are the key emotions evoked in this poem? (*e.g.*, victimization, pride, shame, outrage)?
5. Does the poem rely on a rhetoric of fear (*i.e.*, we better do/not do this or else something bad will happen') or desire (*i.e.*, if we pursue this course of action, good things will result)? Or is the rhetoric more ambivalent? How are these emotions presented in the poem?
6. (How) does the poem suggest that the injustice can be solved? Is a state of well-being or justice as a result of some kind of action evoked?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE (2) - POETS

1. Did anything stand out for you in terms of the other participants' emotional responses to your poetic performance/poem? (Were you surprised in any way?)
2. Did anything stand out for you in terms of your emotional reactions to other the participants' poetry?
3. To what extent/how do you believe your social locations contributed to your emotional reactions to the other members' poetry? (For example: Did you feel strongly about the content of any of the poems because you could relate it to your own experiences? Did the content of any of the poems provoke you in any way because it confronted your own sense of identity?)
4. To what extent did you find the participants' emotional responses to each other's poetry to be similar or divergent? How do you see this similarity or divergence as affecting collective resistance to injustice and efforts towards for social change?
5. Based on the poetry performance you participated in, how effective do you think emotions and emotional expression are as forms of knowledge that (potentially) can resist injustice and that can act towards social change?
6. How effective do you feel performed poetry is as a vehicle for emotion that (potentially) can resist injustice and work for social change? Did anything stand out for you in the performed poetry (*e.g.*, rhyming scheme, rhythm, metaphors) that was emotionally evocative?
7. Overall, how did you find the group process during the performance? Was there anything that you noted in terms of the group dynamic?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW GUIDE - COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

1. Overall, what is the emotional impact of the poems you have read?
2. What do you think about the use of poetry as a means to evoke and express emotion about social justice issues? Did any aspects of the poem (rhyming, imagery, word choice) stand out for you in the poems you read?
3. Given the diverse and multi ethnic character of Côte-des-Neiges and of the group of poets who shared these poems, how likely do you think it is that the emotions expressed and evoked will be similar enough to form a unified collective resistance and to work for social change? Or is it possible for divergent emotional responses to poetry to still work for social change, if so, how?
4. Do you think evoking emotion through poetry can contribute to community efforts to fight social injustice and to work for justice in Côte-des-Neiges? If yes, how so? If no, why not?

APPENDIX I: DEFINITIONS OF SHARED, NEW AND MODIFIED NORM PAIRS

NORM PAIRS FOUND IN THE FIVE POEMS⁴¹

Threat of death/Survival: MODIFIED NORM PAIR. Is the felt in/capacity to prevent or avoid the threat of death by someone else's or one's own actions. De Courville Nicol's original pairing is Victimization/Survival (p. 38)

⁴²**Despair/Hope:** NEW NORM PAIR. Is the felt in/capacity to confront the lack of confidence that hope can be found in new or unexpected ways.

Oppression/Emancipation: According to de Courville Nicol (2011), is the felt in/capacity to confront forces that illegitimately constrain one's freedom (p. 33).

⁴³**Danger/Safety:** NEW NORM PAIR. Is the felt in/capacity to confront harm or threat that may put one in physical or emotional jeopardy.

Fear/Courage: MODIFIED NORM PAIR

The felt inability to confront forces that are anticipated to produce pain. The felt ability to do so. This is not listed as a norm pair in de Courville Nicol's book, but is used to explain a basic orientation, (*i.e.*, *fear*) in response to a perceived inability to overcome a danger or a painful situation.

NEW OR MODIFIED NORM PAIRS

New Norm Pairs

Complicity/Shaming (Albertha, Russ, Avi).

Felt inability to confront a lack of solidarity-producing feelings of guilt, regret, or sadness in another or oneself; felt ability to do so. In these poems, the use of shaming seems to be a desire for a situation (*e.g.*, apathy or indifference or benefitting from one's privilege) to be overturned.

Disunion/Solidarity (Russ, Avi)

Felt inability to confront/prevent the absence of mutual responsibility or agreement of feeling and action/felt ability to pursue mutual responsibility or agreement of feeling and action.

⁴¹ In some cases, the powerful feelings (*e.g.*, emancipation) are illustrated in the poems as possibilities rather than something that has happened or is happening. Not all the poems express both sides of the norm pairs.

⁴² Although hope is, in de Courville Nicol's book (2011) is described in terms of hopelessness/hopefulness, I have reinterpreted it as despair/hope because this is how the poets' themselves understood and articulated these feelings.

⁴³ Although danger and safety are core principles in in/capacity theory (de Courville Nicol, 2011), de Courville Nicol does not describe them as norm pairs. I did this, once again, because this is how the poets expressed these feelings.

Inhumanity/Humanity (Russ, Avi)

Felt inability to confront or prevent one's inhumane treatment of oneself or others, felt ability to do so.

Giving up/Perseverance (Russ, Sandy)

Felt inability to confront the feeling of the lack of perseverance in oneself due to adverse circumstances, felt ability to do so.

Forsakenness/Protectiveness (Sana)

Felt inability to prevent harm or injury from occurring to oneself or others/Felt ability to do so. Sana describes the means that the parents of the young woman in the poem use as a means of preventing her abuse by potential suitors for marriage (*i.e.*, screening the suitors carefully).

Exploitation/Affirmation (Sana)

The felt inability to confront having one or another's resources or labour being taken advantage of; the felt ability to do so. Concerning the treatment of the women in rural Pakistan.

Condemnation/Forgiveness (Sandy)

Felt inability to avoid feeling condemnation at being hurt, abused or taken advantage of; felt ability to do so. Concerning the feelings towards the perpetrator.

Explosiveness/Calm (Sandy)

Felt inability to confront major strain or pain in a self-controlled manner. Felt ability to do so. Concerning the perpetrator in the poem, alive and then deceased.

Indifference/Concern (Avi)

Felt inability to confront one's lack of concern about the well-being of oneself or others; felt ability to do so. The lack of concern of the outside world towards the Palestinians' fate.

⁴⁴**Besieged/Saved** (Avi)

Felt inability to prevent beleaguerment in the face of overwhelming oppressive forces; felt ability to do so.

Attack/Defend (Sana)

Felt inability to prevent one's lack of defence in the face of harmful forces; felt ability to do so. Concerning the defence of the Muslim religion.

Settledness/Unsettledness (Russ)

⁴⁴ Avi also expressed the feeling of besiegement as being consumed

Felt inability to confront/avoid the complacency of the unjust status quo; felt ability to do so.

Orderliness/Spontaneity (Russ)

Felt inability to confront/avoid the regimented orderliness of the status quo. Felt ability to do so.

Deprivation/Plenty (Russ)

Felt inability to prevent a lack in terms of material goods and emotional states (*e.g.*, hope). Felt ability to do so.

Diffidence/Assertion: (Sana, Albertha)

The felt inability to confront one's inability to state one's claim in the face of more powerful forces. Felt ability to do so.

Desperation/Supplication (Albertha)

The felt inability to confront the lack of attention being paid by more powerful forces to one's own or another's suffering. The felt ability to do so.

Modified norm pairs

Appeasement/Anger (Outrage) (Avi, Russ, Albertha)

The felt inability to confront another's (illegitimate) hurting of oneself or others. The felt ability to do so. The norm pair in de Courville Nicol's book is anger/assertiveness (p. 33). Through harsh and repeated details of the life of Pakistani women, Sana's poem may also indirectly express anger.

Denial/Alarm (Avi)

Denial is the felt incapacity to confront or avoid the non-recognition of the severity and urgency of a situation; **Alarm** is the felt capacity to do so. This norm pair, in de Courville Nicol's book is alarm/reassurance (p. 38).

Dependence/Support (Albertha, Avi, Sana)

The dependence/independence norm pair (de Courville Nicol, 2011, p. 36) which I felt was not appropriate in the context of the some of the poems. For example, in Avi's and Albertha's poem, the goal is not to have the Palestinians or poor Montrealer's become independent but rather that others reach out to support them.

Dependence is the fear triggered by the perception that one lacks the capacity to confront one's healthy reliance on another force to be free; **Support** is its pair.

Difference/Affinity (Sandy)

Another norm pair: difference/integration had to be adapted. Although I kept the incapacity form of the norm pair (p. 39), I changed the definition of difference and assigned a new capacity 'affinity' to the pair.

Difference is the felt incapacity to confront/prevent the similarities between oneself and others; **Affinity** is the felt capacity to do so. In the poem, the women are both different from the abuser and share affinities with him.

Alienation/Inclusion (Russ)

The norm pair Alienation/Wholeness is on page 35 of de Courville Nicol's book (2011). The definition of alienation has been changed as well as its pair, wholeness.

Alienation is the felt inability to confront/prevent the lack of envisioning alternative sources of feeling/being part of a group or system; **Inclusion** is its pair.

Russ believes that the fact of the poet being very vulnerable about his situation in the first stanza is a means of effecting inclusion and of inspiring inclusion in those reading the poem. In the final stanza of the poem, inclusion is seen as a future state and the result of social struggle.

Invulnerability/Vulnerability (Russ)

Invulnerability is the felt incapacity to avoid closing oneself to others and to the outside world; **Vulnerability** is the felt capacity to do so. The norm pair has been adapted from the original vulnerability/invulnerability (p. 40)

Seduction/Disgust (Albertha)

The felt inability to confront/avoid or prevent one's being seduced by more powerful forces that are harmful to one's wellbeing. The felt ability to do so. This is adapted from de Courville Nicol's norm pair disgust/purging on pg. 37

Grief/Mourning (Avi)

Another norm pair: grief/mourning had to be adapted. The definition of the norm pair in de Courville Nicol's book (p. 34: Grief names the fear produced by the perception that one lacks the ability to confront the loss of a cherished force through the integration of this loss, while mourning names the desire triggered by the perception that one has the ability to do so)) did not adequately describe the meaning of mourning in Avi's poem. In Avi's poem, there was a strong sense of wariness about the indifference from the outside world towards the Palestinian's suffering, including their grief/mourning.

Grief names the fear produced by the perception that one lacks the ability to confront the indifference about the loss of a cherished force by oneself or others through the recognition of this loss, while **Mourning** names ability to do so.

APPENDIX J: TABLE OF ALL NORM PAIRS USED IN ANALYSIS

<p>⁴⁵IN/CAPACITY (norm pairs that express feelings of powerlessness/powerfulness)</p> <p>page numbers are from de Courville Nicol (2011) that offer descriptions of the norm pair or see Appendix J for descriptions of modified or new norm pairs</p>	<p>LITERARY DEVICES</p> <p>(Examples)</p>	<p>FOUND IN</p>	<p>IN/CAPACITY FORMED AS A RESULT OF THE ANALYSIS OF LITERARY DEVICES (I.E., POETIC ANALYSIS)</p>
<p>Threat of death/Survival Modified Norm pair</p>	<p>Threat of death</p> <p>Imagery <i>Nightmares rip me open and expose me to suicide my suicide (Dreams)</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, Dreams, Kaddish for Mr. Ringo, My Daughter’s Freedom, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	
<p>Despair/Hope New Norm Pair</p>	<p>Hope</p> <p>Imagery <i>Grab the buckets, douse the fire! /Show that you know how! (Es Brent)</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, Dreams, Kaddish for Mr. Ringo, My Daughter’s Freedom, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	
<p>Danger/Safety New norm pair</p>	<p>Danger</p> <p>Imagery <i>Your banged-up hands/The clench/That threw ours/And other bodies. /Against walls, doors, and mirrors We landed tight (Kaddish for Mr. Ringo)</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, Dreams, Kaddish for Mr. Ringo, My Daughter’s Freedom, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	

⁴⁵ For each poem, I limited the list of norm pairs to what I thought were the in/capacity feelings that best represented the poems and that were the poem’s “major” emotional themes. I was also strongly guided by the preliminary analysis conducted by the poets.

Oppression/Emancipation (p. 33)	<p>Oppression</p> <p>Sounds and rhyming <i>Insane, pain, disdain</i> <i>(We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders)</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, Dreams, Kaddish for Mr. Ringo, My Daughter's Freedom, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	
Fear/Courage Modified Norm Pair	<p>Fear</p> <p>Imagery <i>And without cranial walls to flee this class madness</i> <i>I am the done</i> <i>(Dreams)</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, Dreams, My Daughter's Freedom, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders, Kaddish for Mr. Ringo</i></p>	
Humiliation/Dignity (p. 39)	<p>Humiliation</p> <p>Imagery <i>Some women pushed out of the family: Old women in shelters, unmarried sisters. Or they can stay, take care of the children, work as a maid</i> <i>(My Daughter's Freedom)</i></p>	<p><i>Dreams, My Daughter's Freedom, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	
Complicity/Shaming New norm pair	<p>Shaming</p> <p>Refrain <i>And you stand there looking on/With futile, folded arms</i> <i>And you stand there looking on</i> <i>(Es Brent)</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, Dreams, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	
Appeasement/Anger (outrage) Modified norm pair	<p>Outrage</p> <p>Rhythm and pacing <i>did you sell out, sell dear;</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, Dreams, My Daughter's Freedom, We Plead</i></p>	

	<p><i>sell high? leaving fresh dealt humanity high and dry to die? (Dreams)</i></p>	<p><i>Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	
<p>Exploitation/Affirmation New norm pair</p>	<p>Exploitation</p> <p>Imagery <i>Women forced into marriage -not by Islam- by rural custom, by their families. For land, for money, for a dowry (My Daughter's Freedom)</i></p>	<p><i>My Daughter's Freedom</i></p>	
<p>Dependence/Support Modified norm pair</p>	<p>Dependence/Support</p> <p>Imagery/metaphor <i>We need a captain who is strong (We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders)</i></p>	<p><i>Es Brent, We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders, My Daughter's Freedom</i></p>	
<p>Dependence/Independence (p. 36)</p>	<p>Independence</p> <p>Imagery/metaphor <i>But my daughter studies in Montreal, in Quebec, in Canada. She is twenty-three, completing a business degree (My Daughter's Freedom)</i></p>	<p><i>My Daughter's Freedom</i></p>	
<p>Seduction/Disgust Modified Norm Pair</p>	<p>Disgust</p> <p>Word Choice and hard "a sounds <i>No one seems to accept Blame/For causing such disdain (We plead integrity from</i></p>	<p><i>We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i></p>	

	<i>our Leaders)</i>		
Diffidence/Assertion New norm pair	Assertion Word Choice/Syntax <i>Title – We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i> <i>I implore you today</i> <i>We want committed leaders with dignity/Integrity and empathy</i> <i>(We plead integrity from our leaders)</i> <i>We must protect her</i> <i>(My Daughter’s Freedom)</i>	<i>We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders, My Daughter’s Freedom</i>	Yes, in <i>My Daughter’s Freedom and We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i>
Alienation/Inclusion Modified norm pair	Alienation/Inclusion Imagery, metaphor running a race, also through <i>all in one</i> near the end of the poem <i>(Dreams)</i>	<i>Dreams</i>	
Disunion/Solidarity New norm pair	Solidarity Imagery <i>One with all with everyone able to seize humanity’s day</i> <i>(Dreams)</i>	<i>Dreams</i>	
Isolation/Connection (p. 34)	Connection See Solidarity	<i>Dreams</i>	
Giving up/Perseverance New norm pair	Perseverance Non-stop rhythm series of questions asked Word choice <i>grab, seize, fight</i> <i>(Dreams)</i>	<i>Dreams, Kaddish for Mr. Ringo</i>	Yes, in <i>Dreams</i>

Invulnerability/Vulnerability Modified Norm Pair	Vulnerability Imagery of the first stanza where the poet reveals his despair <i>(Dreams)</i>	<i>Dreams</i>	
Settledness/Unsettledness New norm pair	Unsettledness Rhythm and pacing in the series of questions <i>who owns you?</i> <i>who owns me?</i> <i>do you own?</i> <i>(Dreams)</i>	<i>Dreams</i>	Yes, in <i>Dreams</i>
Orderliness/Spontaneity New norm pair	Spontaneity (see unsettledness)	<i>Dreams</i>	Yes, in <i>Dreams</i>
Deprivation/Plenty New Norm Pair	Plenty Word choice <i>no want</i> <i>or walls to hold hope</i> <i>away</i> <i>(Dreams)</i>	<i>Dreams</i>	
Inhumanity/Humanity New norm pair	Inhumanity/humanity Imagery throughout the poem <i>(Dreams)</i>	<i>Dreams, Es Brent</i>	
Difference/Affinity Modified norm pair	Affinity Imagery <i>These streets: the</i> <i>backdrop as</i> <i>undertow/That sucked,</i> <i>held, released us/ Into</i> <i>battle/ White powder,</i> <i>firewater, Bruises and</i> <i>fists</i> <i>(Kaddish for Mr. Ringo)</i>	<i>Kaddish for Mr.</i> <i>Ringo</i>	
Addiction/Abstinence (p. 41)	Addiction/Abstinence Imagery <i>Against the hits of a</i>	<i>Kaddish for Mr.</i> <i>Ringo</i>	

	<i>needle, sharp/spurts of abstinence/some of us did sustain</i> (Kaddish for Mr. Ringo)		
Condemnation/Forgiveness New norm pair	Forgiveness Title of poem (Kaddish for Mr. Ringo)	<i>Kaddish for Mr. Ringo</i>	
Victimhood/Surrender (p. 38)	Surrender Imagery <i>spurts of abstinence/Some of us did sustain</i> (Kaddish for Mr. Ringo)	<i>Kaddish for Mr. Ringo</i>	
Explosiveness/Calm New norm pair	Explosiveness Imagery <i>Volcanic under taut black shirts.</i> <i>Of a needle, sharp</i> <i>Your arms unbolted</i> (Kaddish for Mr. Ringo)	<i>Kaddish for Mr. Ringo</i>	Yes, in <i>Kaddish for Mr. Ringo</i> (imagery)
Grief/Mourning Modified norm pair	Mourning Imagery <i>Oh, our poor village, brothers, burns!</i> (<i>Es Brent</i>)	<i>Es Brent</i>	
Denial/Alarm Modified norm pair	Alarm exclamation marks <i>It's Burning, sisters!</i> <i>It's Burning!</i> <i>Oh, our poor village, brothers, burns!</i> (<i>Es Brent</i>)	<i>Es Brent</i>	Yes, in <i>Es Brent</i> (punctuation)
Indifference/Concern New norm pair	Concern Imagery throughout the poem (<i>Es Brent</i>)	<i>Es Brent</i>	
Besieged/Saved New norm pair	Besieged	<i>Es Brent</i>	In part, through the title of <i>Es</i>

	<p>Imagery <i>Stronger now that wild flames grow – All around now burns!</i></p> <p>Title <i>It is burning (Es Brent)</i></p>		<i>Brent</i>
<p>Forsakenness/Protectiveness New norm pair</p>	<p>Protectiveness</p> <p>Word choice <i>Some Pakistani men want to marry Pakistani-Canadian women, for immigration, to become a citizen. We must protect her. (My Daughter's Freedom)</i></p>	<i>My Daughter's Freedom</i>	
<p>Desperation/Supplication New Norm Pair</p>	<p>Supplication</p> <p>Word choice/syntax <i>We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders (title) I implore you today (We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders)</i></p>		<i>Yes, in We Plead Integrity from Our Leaders</i>
<p>Attack/Defend New norm pair</p>	<p>Defend</p> <p>Word Choice/Repetition <i>-not by Islam- -not according to Islam- (My Daughter's Freedom)</i></p>	<i>My Daughter's Freedom</i>	
<p>Doom/Fate (p. 38)</p>	<p>Doom</p> <p>Imagery <i>They can be hunted down and killed for that (My Daughter's Freedom)</i></p>	<i>My Daughter's Freedom</i>	<i>Yes, in My Daughter's Freedom</i>
<p>Sadness/Happiness (p. 38)</p>	<p>Sadness</p> <p>Imagery related to women's situation in Pakistan <i>(My Daughter's Freedom)</i></p>	<i>My Daughter's Freedom</i>	

APPENDIX K: FINAL DEBRIEFING WITH COMMUNITY POETS

Were you satisfied with your level of participation in this project? Would you have preferred more, or less, involvement? If so, why?

Would you have liked to be more involved in the overall decision-making process? (for example, in formulating the interview questions, or getting more involved in the data analysis?)

What did you like best about your involvement in this project? Least?

Is there anything that you would have liked to have done differently?

What is your evaluation of Sandy as the researcher in this project? For example, in terms of openness, transparency, accepting feedback, leadership? Could she have done something differently that would have made you feel better about your involvement in this project?

What do you think about the group dynamic as a whole, including the researcher and the other poets?

Based on your experiences in this project, would you have any recommendations to community organizations or/and activist organizers in terms of using art or/and emotion in their social justice efforts?

How do you think you benefitted or what did you learn from your involvement in this project?