

MVFF

EDUCATION GROW EXPLORE CONNECT DISCOVER

October 6-16

An animentary by CARLOS HAGERMAN & JORGE VILLALOBOS



CURRICULUM GUIDE
GRADES: 6-12

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Instructor Resources

A Letter to Educators	ii
Discussion Questions	iii
Interpretive Essay Prompts	iii
Additional Resources	iv
Standards	iv
About CAFILM	iv
Art Quotations	v

Student Handouts

About the Film	1
Contextual Information	2
Viewing Activities	3
About Film Festivals	9



Dear educators,

Thank you for attending the 45th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's screening of *Home Is Somewhere Else*. We are excited to return in our 2022 fall season with a combination of both in-person screenings for local schools and online screenings for those of you joining us from afar.

This year, our film selections for school screenings continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe this film will be a powerful and engaging text to use in your classroom. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before, during, and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your screening experience.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

Sincerely,

The CAFILM Education Team

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the main events that occur in this film? What has changed between the start and the end of each chapter?
2. What are the primary emotions you felt during this film? What are some secondary emotions?
3. Consider the editing and the tempo of this film. Did things move quickly or slowly? How come?
4. What do you see in this film that reminds you of other stories from your life or other stories you know?
5. What are some background details you noticed in this film? How do these details provide information about the time or place in which this film was made?
6. Consider other films you've seen. What makes this film unique or important? What are some connections between this film and other films?
7. Were there any voices or perspectives you thought were missing from this film? If so, how might the inclusion of those perspectives have changed the film and its message?
8. What images were most striking? How did this film use animation to show the inner emotional and psychological worlds of the characters?
9. Which chapter's animation style do you think was best suited to the story it was telling? Why?
10. What would you consider "basic human rights"? Were those basic human rights respected or violated for the youth in this film?
11. What was the significance of language in this film? What did the languages used in the film reveal about the characters or themes of the film?

INTERPRETIVE ESSAY PROMPTS

1. In what ways can young, undocumented immigrants fight for or assert a place in the United States?
2. How does immigration policy impact children differently from adults?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Brinca Animation Studio Official Website

<https://brincataaller.com.mx/>

Founded by *Home Is Somewhere Else* directors Carlos Hagerman and Jorge Villalobos, Brinca Animation Studio has ten years of experience making animated films that focus mainly on children's and social issues.

Mexican Animation Doc 'Home Is Somewhere Else' Bows at Annecy

<https://variety.com/2022/film/global/annecy-contrechamp-home-is-somewhere-else-1235292211>

An interview with directors Hagerman and Villalobos.

TheDream.US Education Resources

<https://www.thedream.us/resources/education/>

A hub of curriculum and education resources relevant to DREAMers, curated by TheDream.US, the nation's largest college access and success program for DREAMers.

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9.B

Apply grades 9-10 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning").

ABOUT CAFILM

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CAFILM Education programs.

The California Film Institute and Mill Valley Film Festival are located in Marin County, California, on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary homelands of the Coast Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo peoples. This includes the Southern Pomo and Graton Rancheria Tribes. These tribes were removed or displaced from their lands. We recognize this history and the harm to present-day Coast Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo peoples and to their ancestors. The California Film Institute commits to moving forward from a place of authenticity and working with present-day tribes to elevate their stories, history, and present-day legacy through film.

Follow the Mill Valley Film Festival on social media

 @millvalleyfilmfest  @MillValleyFilmFestival
 @mvfilmfest  californiainstitute #MVFF45



ABOUT THE FILM

This 2D feature “animentary” includes three personal stories about immigrant youth to highlight the complexities and challenges they face today. Voiced by the actual children and their families, the stories are woven together by spoken word poet José Eduardo Aguilar, also known as Lalo “El Deportee,” the film’s host and MC whose vibrant “Spanglish” breaks codes, switches standards, and pushes the viewer to decipher his poems. Each story has its own unique visual animation style drawn by three different teams. The animation allows us to truly see and feel these characters’ worst nightmares, alongside their colorful hopes and dreams for a better future. It allows for a deeper exploration of our characters’ inner worlds than would a “traditional” documentary.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

Director and Producer Carlos Hagerman was part of the team of directors of Alejandro González Iñárritu's production company before opening his own company where he has produced and directed award-winning documentaries including *Those Who Remain* (IDA Humanitas Award 2009), *Back to Life*, and *No Place Like Home*. He also co-produced *Plaza de la Soledad* (Sundance 2013) and *Rush Hour* (SXSW 2018). He is a founding partner of Brinca Animation Studio.



Director and Producer Jorge Villalobos works as a writer, director, and producer of animated and live action projects. He directed several children's series for Canal Once, Mexico's Public TV channel. His animated and fiction short films have won over 20 international awards. Since co-founding Brinca Animation Studio in 2012, Villalobos and Carlos Hagerman have worked as a team, co-producing and co-directing animation projects for children as well as communication tools for human rights organizations like UNICEF and the Mexican Human Rights Commission.

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

We are the creators, directors, and producers of this project. Our professional collaboration started 20 years ago. This is the first time we'll share the director's responsibility in a feature length documentary. Carlos has been directing and producing documentaries for almost 14 years, all of them dwelling on the subject matter of migration and family. Jorge comes with 25 years producing and directing animation; his main interest and expertise has been children's content. We are very close friends. Professionally, we have previously shared creative responsibilities such as writing scripts, and directing shorts and TV series. Eight years ago, we founded Brinca Animation Studio, where we have co-directed and co-produced projects focused in two main fields: children's content and human rights. This project is the true culmination of many threads and processes in the making for years.

Carlos is a first generation Mexican from his father's side: a family of immigrants that came to Mexico at the break of the Spanish Civil war. Jorge lived the past four years as an immigrant in Miami before coming back to Mexico. We understand in different ways what migration means in a family.

We are telling this story as a multilayered, multi-character, magical realism, poetic animation. We want this journey to be an experience of emotions. It's a subjective journey, because we go inside these young minds and hearts. Not as a metaphor; through animation we actually see these characters' worst nightmares being displayed before our eyes, alongside their naive dreams of a better future. As storytellers we strive to disappear and let these teenager, young adult and girl voices do the talking. Voices that are shouting, "This is how it feels."

If we could describe this film as one image, it wouldn't be a black and white photograph from Magnum; it would be the opposite. More like a large canvas mural of Diego Rivera, full of colors, of characters, of stories, of relationships between the parts.



The audience is in for a ride, but it is not a rollercoaster in a theme park. It's more of a gondola in a tropical forest at sunset, where the gondolier—or shall we say a Mexican American Cerberus—is Lalo El Deportee, a young spoken-word poet foretelling what dangers are ahead. His language is not that of a narrator that explains the history, the context, the statistics; it is a wild voice of bicultural lingo which breaks codes and switches standards. His poems, like riddles, push the viewer to decipher them as the light is going down, and anything can happen.

BEFORE VIEWING: ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Directions:

For each statement below, draw an X on the spectrum line indicating how much you agree with the statement. Then, write two to three sentences to explain your reasoning.

If there is time, compare your responses with one of your peers.

It is easy to immigrate to the United States.

←-----→

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

The United States government generally treats immigrants and refugees fairly.

←-----→

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

When people immigrate to the United States illegally, it is unfair to the people who immigrated legally.

←-----→

Strongly Disagree **Strongly Agree**

DURING VIEWING: NOTEATCHER

Directions:

This film consists of three chapters about different real-life child immigrants. As you watch the film, fill out this notecatcher to track your observations about the people in each chapter.

	How did the protagonist in this chapter end up in the United States?	How did their family get divided, and how were they impacted?	What beliefs do they have about the United States and/or immigration?	What did they do to try to change their life circumstances?
Chapter 1: Jasmine's Pursuit of Happiness				
Chapter 2: A Tale of Two Sisters				

DURING VIEWING: NOTEATCHER

	How did the protagonist in this chapter end up in the United States?	How did their family get divided, and how were they impacted?	What beliefs do they have about the United States and/or immigration?	What did they do to try to change their life circumstances?
<p>Chapter 3: Between Dos Mundos</p>				



AFTER VIEWING: RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Directions:

Respond to each question, referring to specific scenes, events, and dialogue from the film as evidence for your interpretation.

1. How were the central characters in each chapter affected differently by being separated from their families?

2. Did you see any similarities or differences between the immigration experiences shown in this film and the experiences of your family or other families you know?

3. How do you think the United States government should treat undocumented immigrants who are brought to the United States as children?

4. The film uses a mix of Spanish, English, Spanglish, and loanwords. What words stuck out as memorable, important, or unfamiliar? How were these words, and language in general, important to the story?

5. Did watching this film change your perspective on immigration and immigration policy at all? If so, how?

AFTER VIEWING: MIRRORS AND WINDOWS

Directions: Sometimes when responding to film or literature, you might hear texts described as either **mirrors** or **windows**. Mirrors are those stories that reflect your own world, showing an experience that is familiar or relatable, while perhaps providing a fresh perspective. Windows, on the other hand, are those stories that let us look into a new and unfamiliar world, a world beyond our own lived experience. Think about these terms in relation to the chapters of *Home Is Somewhere Else* and respond to the following prompts, using evidence from the film to support your writing.

1. Of the three chapters in the film, which one was the best mirror: a story that reflected a story you see in your own life, and gave you a way to see your own experience from a new perspective? What was relatable about this story and what was unique about the way the filmmaker chose to tell it?

2. Of the three chapters in the film, which one was the best window: a story with insight into a world, identity, or experience you were unfamiliar with? What was unique about this story, and what was unique about the way the filmmaker chose to tell the story?

AFTER VIEWING: FOUR C'S

Directions:

Respond to each prompt in complete sentences, citing specific scenes, events, and dialogue from the film as evidence for your response.

CONNECTIONS

What connections do you draw between the film and your own life or other learnings?

CHALLENGE

What ideas, positions, or assumptions do you want to challenge or debate in the film?

CONCEPTS

What key concepts or ideas do you think are important and worth holding on to from the film?

CHANGES

What changes in attitudes, thinking, or action are suggested by the film, either for you or others?

Adapted from Harvard Project Zero's Think Routine Toolbox:

<http://www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/the-4-cs>

ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

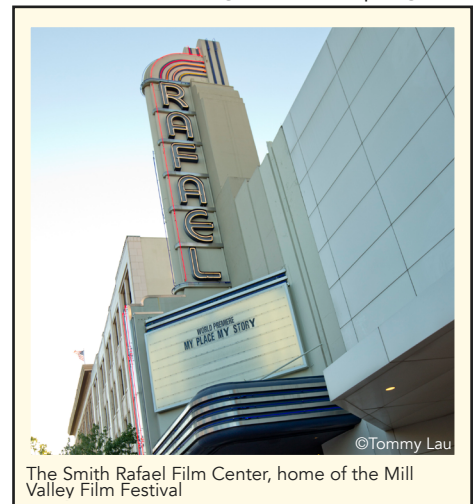
History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway (www.filmfreeway.com) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.