

A Portrait of the Male Art Therapist
and the Overall Impact on Men Seeking Therapy

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ABSTRACT

The historical division of genders provides a parallax view of human development that is deeply rooted in world cultures. This pilot study explored this historical division and its influence on gender issues within the field of art therapy where men are underrepresented. Postmodern theories of intersectionality were applied to Eurocentric male privilege (EMP), within a current sociocultural drift away from a traditional heteronormative paradigm. Qualitative research methods were combined using a hybrid form of community based participatory research (CBPR), a process that more closely follows participatory action research (PAR) and heuristics to develop interview questions which were triangulated with reviewed literature. A group of eight individuals both students and practitioners in art therapy contributed their unique perspectives of men in the field which was distilled into a research portrait. Transcripts of recorded interviews were analyzed thematically to uncover patterns of perception and common themes related to men's experiences in the field of art therapy. Participants were extended the opportunity to openly identify themselves within the research which presented unique ethical challenges. Participants highlighted a potential correlation between men's underrepresentation in the field of art therapy, experiences in art therapy education, and clinical work with clients. These findings may highlight the need for men to be recognized as a multicultural category within the field of art therapy for which cultural competence and humility should be emphasized.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

As a man—and the researcher of this study—I treasure the professional and personal relationships I have with other art therapists regardless of gender. It is this researcher's belief that art therapy is a rich field of caring professionals who creatively and cooperatively hold therapeutic spaces for all people in need of mental and emotional therapy and counseling. Evidence collected in this research supported the researcher's experience that the profession of art therapy was predominantly female which may lead to biases that potentially make male clients averse to therapeutic assistance. The study examined and explored art therapists' attitudes toward men in and outside the field. The impact of these attitudes illuminated potential barriers to men seeking therapy.

As a White man who has chosen to earn a degree in art therapy, a field predominantly populated by White women (Junge, 2014, p. 26), the researcher was reasonably drawn to consider the number of other men in the profession. As a result of these considerations, the research was designed as a pilot study to create a literary portrait of male art therapists as well as in men in art therapy education. Shaun McNiff (1976) delivered a presentation to the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) that became seminal literature for the study. In the presentation, McNiff stated,

When Harriet Wadeson called from Washington to invite me to participate on her panel, *Identity of the Art Therapist: Professional Self Concept and Public Image*, and to speak about what it has been like to be a male in [a] predominantly female profession, my first response was: 'Oh, that's right. I am different.' (p. 1)

In that observation McNiff (1976) embraced minority status within the field while still embodying male privilege in Western culture, amplified by being a White male. He illustrated

the diversity and intersectionality of men in art therapy and perhaps he had unconsciously shouldered his personal responsibility to police his male privilege by exercising self-control, regulating actions that affected the general order and welfare of the profession.

Like McNiff's (1976) experience, a similarly low male to female art therapist ratio has been quantified by Elkins (2003) and again by AATA (2021). The researcher attended their first on-site residency at St. Mary-of-the-Woods (SMWC) campus in 2018 and was the only male in a cohort of 47 students, 40 years after the McNiff paper was written. Formerly a women's college, SMWC became co-ed in 2015. The male to female ratio in the field, however, remains relatively the same. According to Junge (2014) art therapy was founded as a women's profession, further stating "the establishment of organized art therapy [was] by white women" who adhered to prevailing gender roles saying,

There is no doubt that art therapy is a women's profession. I believe it is crucial to consciously recognize the meaning of its being one so that we may move past the inherent power imbalances and discrimination. (p. 26)

Problem Statement

The number and perception of the male art therapists in the field and in education may influence art therapy's availability to men who seek therapy. It is possible that therapy averse men may be best served in culturally (male) informed art therapy treatment. Few male art therapists combined with gender disparity in academic programs, may affect meaningful art therapy interventions for men. Furthermore, the predominance of women within the field may have skewed research and inhibited the development and provision of culturally competent services for male clients.

Research Questions

The research explored questions that emerged from the researcher's experience: 1) How does art therapy collectively perceive male art therapists in the 3rd decade of the 21st Century, and what is the nature of that understanding? 2) What are art therapists' experiences with the male gender within the field? 3) What are art therapists' ideas and opinions concerning male clients? and 4) How is gender considered and reflected in art therapy education?

Basic Assumptions

This research is predicated on an American Psychological Association (APA) paradigm and the researcher does not agree with the assumption found in the *APA Dictionary of Psychology* edited by VandenBos (2007). There, "Male privilege" is used only in the definition of "emasculatation" (p. 360) which is equated to "castration." In that way, male privilege is only expressed in terms of its loss, as an indispensable attribute of "maleness" (p. 619) as opposed to "masculinity" which is defined as presumed characteristic social role behaviors (p. 624). The researcher assumed a perspective from the current sociocultural environment within Western society in which all gender variations participate.

An assumption that the global male population in traditionally male dominated cultures were currently at risk of emotional and psychological hardship (i.e., mental, and emotional stressors) as this population's hierarchical advantages in those various cultures is supplanted by sociological shifts. Recent changes to gender roles and the current social redefinition of men and manhood led the researcher to assume that art therapy could effectively unpack male privilege as it is being supplanted. It is further assumed that adequately informed treatments could be devised for men who may contemplate seeking male-friendly therapy and therapists.

Statement of Purpose

This research had three purposes. One purpose was to assemble a current literary portrait of male art therapists. Davis (2003) described this understanding of portraiture as “a written narrative, ...imprinted with the researcher’s understanding” (p. 199). The study needed to restructure “the subject” with accountability for the sociopolitical nature of all experiences and recognize individuals’ differences (p. 25).

Another purpose of this research was to determine if there were connections between the ratio of male-to-female art therapists, the impact of this ratio on the education of future art therapists, and the efficacy of art therapy in the treatment of men which may have implications for further research to establish meaning across various settings. Although some earlier studies have collected pertinent data about the role of gender in art therapy (e.g., Elkins et al., 2003), the samples are small and not generally representative of the field as the studies age and cultures shift. This study was designed to add more recent data to the understanding of art therapy practice and education, to better serve the population of men.

The final purpose of this research was to examine and reframe the population of men as a multicultural category needing to be understood as a population with unique needs brought about by cultural changes with psychosocial consequences. Jackson (2020) supports this purpose, writing, “while cultural competency hinges on understanding the psyche of a person, it can be actualized only if those who provide services to individuals implement this knowledge into their programs and services” (p. 107).

Definition of Terms

Art therapy

According to the American Art Therapy Association (2021) art therapy is “a mental health and human services profession integrated to enrich lives through active art-making and

other creative processes with applied psychological theory within a psychotherapeutic relationship” (Definition of Art Therapy, para. 1). Art therapists are further identified as those having completed a graduate degree in programs specifically developed to meet the extant standards of the field.

Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) emphasizes joining with the subject community as full and equal partners in all phases of the research process (Houkupa et al., 2004, p. 162)

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is a set of behaviors and attitudes that come together among professionals to enable effective work in cross-cultural situations. According to VandenBos (2015), it is an acquired skill based on knowledge that is appropriate for and specific to a given culture and the capacity to effectively function in cultures other than one’s own (p. 273).

Cultural Humility

According to seminal literature by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998), cultural humility is cited by Greene-Moton et al. (2019) as, “a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances... and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations,” (p. 123). Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998) state, “Not a discrete end point but, a commitment and active engagement in a lifelong process that individuals enter into on an ongoing basis with patients, communities, colleagues, and with themselves” (p. 118).

Directive

According to VandenBos (2015) a directive is a specific statement by the therapist to the client that requires an action, feeling, or a particular thought when they confront a particular problem (p. 316).

Eurocentric male privilege (EMP)

For the purposes of this study, the term Eurocentric male privilege (EMP) is derived from the intersection of two generally understood tendencies. Eurocentrism is a tendency to interpret the world in terms of European or Anglo-American values in which Western authors consciously or unconsciously universalize their own experience to others. According to Pokhrel (2011) “Eurocentrism is anti-universalist in nature but presents itself as a universalist phenomenon.” This understanding is then combined for purposes of the study with male privilege, the assumption that being a male in a patriarchal society gives a boy/man greater access to available resources (i.e., entitled). This definition is not dedicated to White male privilege but extends to other races and ethnicities, such as African American men, which according to bell hooks, (2015) “Some black men may refuse to acknowledge that sexism provides them with forms of male privilege and power, however relative. They do not want to surrender that power in a world where they may feel otherwise quite powerless” (p. 108).

Harm’s Touch

Fish (2016) wrote a chapter in her book on art-based supervision titled, “Harm’s Touch: How We Are Affected by What We Witness” (pp. 105-127). Fish described Harm’s Touch as “the experience of witnessing another person’s pain.” According to Fish, exposure to harm’s touch offers more than solitary witnessing that may lead to vicarious trauma. It is what happens when the traumatic event remains unprocessed by the caregiver, leaving them feeling more alone and personally bound to the experience. Fish said,

Unlike vicarious trauma, harm's touch offers benefits as well as risks. Those who process the material that they witness deeply may find important personal value in their empathic experience. Once its value is understood, the painful part of the story can be released without residue. (Dr. Fish personal communication, 2021)

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a complex and cumulative effect when multiple forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect to form the experiences of marginalized people or communities. Hill, Collins, and Bilge (2016) stated,

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experience. The events and conditions of the social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. (p. 2)

Intervention

According to VandenBos (2015) an intervention is any action intended to interfere with, stop, or modify a psychological process or is a reference to a psychotherapists' action to address the issues and problems of a client (p. 255).

Masculinity

VandenBos (2007), defines masculinity as "possession of social role behaviors that are presumed to be characteristic of a boy or man, as contrasted with maleness, which is genetically determined," (p. 624). Alternative definitions are that United States' society socializes boys and men to conform to a definition of masculinity that emphasizes toughness, stoicism, acquisitiveness, and self-reliance. According to Clay (2012) "This socialization may lead to aggressive, emotionally stunted males who harm not just themselves but their children, partners and entire communities." A collection of masculinities has been defined as gender fluidity liberating men from stereotypes according to Kimmel (2010):

Disaggregating the term ‘masculinity’ into its plural masculinities is one way to address that second dimension of power’ ... Some men are disempowered by virtue of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, able-bodiedness. But all men are privileged vis-à-vis women. (p. 216)

Men

The category of men was predominantly understood in this report as *cisgendered*, meaning those who were born with a specific biological gender marker (penis) and are identified with the pronouns, he, him, his. Whenever alternative forms of manhood are indicated, they will be referred to with a similar but specific identifier such as transmen (female to male), gay men (homosexual), as well as non-binary or gender-fluid (gender of choice is fluid, not dictated by cis or trans gender status). In the same way, females may be assumed cisgendered unless otherwise identified (Killerman, 2017).

Modernism

According to VandenBos (2007), both modernism and the modernist paradigm are characterized by faith in scientific method seeking control and prediction of behavior in terms of laws and principles. Modernism assumes that human behavior is ultimately rational.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is defined in VandenBos (2007) as, “a society in which different ethnic and cultural groups have equal status and access to power but each maintains its own identity [and] characteristics” (p. 675).

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to enquiry that involves researchers and participants working together to understand a situation and change it for the better. (Institute of Development studies, 2021).

Policing/Self-policing

Policing or self-policing refer to the actions of a person or group to ensure fairness in an area of public life. It is generally understood that the person or group is, or is perceived to be, in a position of authority (Wood, 2003). In the act of self-policing the one with authority reflects the act of policing onto themselves and exerts self-control to ensure fairness.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is the construction of knowledge and truth through discourse and lived experience, with a similar construction of the self, and relativism in all questions of value (VandenBos, 2007, p. 662). According to according to Leavy (2015), it is an umbrella term for a diverse body of theories that rejected unification into a grand scheme.

Psychiatry

Psychiatry is, “The medical specialty concerned with the study, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental, behavioral, and personality disorders. As a medical specialty, psychiatry is based on the premise that biological causes are at the root of mental and emotional problems” (VandenBos, 2007, p. 853).

Psychology

Psychology is, the scientific study of the mind and behavior with origins in philosophy, a diverse scientific discipline comprising several major branches of research according to VandenBos (2007, p. 860).

Voice

The term voice refers to the idea that participants in this research needed to express themselves (i.e., find their own voice and speak for themselves) apart from having their experience interpreted, coded, or labeled by the researcher. This method is consistent with feminist standpoint theory according to McHugh (2014, p. 137).

Justification of the Study

Spencer et al. (2014) wrote that social interactions develop meanings that are shared, and “take on common definitions of emotions, experiences, and ways of acting” (p. 86). In that way gender norms are taught. Conscious and unconscious cues from early childhood establish what it means to be a of a certain gender without ever being told specifically. This study aimed to look at gender experiences in art therapy, art therapy education, and for men seeking therapy. This study also aimed to contribute to the education of art therapy and its development as gender norms continue to shift as foregrounded through history in the literature.

In addition to a needed research portrait of male art therapists, the study triangulates participant views through a multi-dimensional lens of the research about men seeking therapy, the nature of gender related privilege, and the loss of traditional Eurocentric male privilege as a part of the experience of men today. According to Spencer et al. (2014) “critical theory privileges agents’ own knowledge and understandings, with an assumed epistemology that personal understandings are a [trustworthy] basis for social criticism in themselves” (p. 91).

According to the literature, a current portrait of the male experience in art therapy did not exist. The study, although modest and with a sample size for the scope of a graduate thesis offers a thematic analysis of collected data that begins to fill the gap in the literature. This pilot study serves as a base for further inquiry and development.

CHAPTER II

Review Of Literature

The review of literature will highlight history and the development of maleness through a lens of Eurocentric culture. Influential theories and approaches that have shaped the study will demonstrate strengths and challenges in the characteristics of everyday existence for men as it has changed in the context of current culture.

The chapter begins with seminal literature that instigated the research. Historically grounded literature provided the foundations for development followed by theoretical models that influenced that development. Applications of the theoretical model were applied to the broad category of social divisions, social systems, and family through which men can now be better understood. Under that heading themes in the literature included how men interact with men, or men in a male context which is also introduced and examined. The relationship of art therapy to a broad understanding of male art therapists is explored, developed, and considered as a factor in men currently seeking therapy. The literature review is then summarized, and implications for further research are noted.

Seminal Literature

Seminal resources for the study began with a 2007 *Special Issue on Men in Art Therapy*, published in *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, AATA. It's importance to the study is summarized best by one of the contributors to that special edition. Vick (2007) revealed:

When I became involved in this special edition of *Art Therapy*, it occurred to me that while the focus is ostensibly on men in art therapy, it functions on two levels. First, of course, is the concept of the men who work as art therapists; men in art therapy. Very quickly, however, it became clear to me that this idea is bound up with the issue of male

recipients of art therapy services; men (and boys) in art therapy (p. 2).

The researcher approached the study in a similar way to Vick, which is to say the subject of men as art therapists was integrally bound to the issue of men who sought therapeutic services. An article by Robert Tavani (2007) observed that he was the only male graduate in his art therapy program at the University of Illinois, Chicago in 2003. Tavani also cited an Elkins et al. (2003) study that found 91.3% of all members of the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) were women (6.2% men, 2.5% not specified). Comparatively, according to the AATA (2021) report on member demographics, 88.3% of AATA members identified as female, a drop of 3 percentage points from 2003 though still a majority. Male identified members had also fallen to 3.9%, a decline of 2.3 percentage points. Since 2020, however, “Gender Identity” options for AATA members added non-binary, transgender female, transgender male, and gender non-conforming categories that acknowledges and validates gender diversity within the organization, segmenting earlier categories.

Chronologically Grounding Literature

Modernist male-centricity was thematically translated into Eurocentric maleness for the study and was traced to Sumerian culture, 2900-2500 B.C.E. in Wakeman (1985). The mother goddesses in these ancient cultures were equally named in Sumerian god lists, according to Wakeman (1985, p. 11) but migrated from equal status into a male dominated pantheon. In which female deities were expunged by 2000 B.C.E. (Jacobsen, 1973). The pantheistic nature of worship was replaced by a singular god named Enki, from the male-centered epic *Tale of Gilgamesh* (George, 2020; Sandars, 2007) in which the first half describes Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, and Enkidu (Enki) a wild man created by the gods to stop Gilgamesh from oppressing the people of Uruk. In these references the dual nature of maleness and manhood were first identified. Enkidu’s wildness was eventually civilized through sexual initiation (the only

reference to women in the tale) and then he challenged Gilgamesh to a test of strength. Gilgamesh won the contest and the two became friends (with homoerotic overtones) symbolically uniting the wild and the civilized characteristics of a male dominated society.

According to Wakeman (1985) it was during the time of deity redefinition, ancient Sumeria also shifted away from a nomadic culture and became agrarian, farm based (i.e., a static) economy. Farming emphasized the need for stability, urban structure, and building which organized a social hierarchy (i.e., government) and military might (i.e., defense of static assets) which were stereotypically considered masculine attributes. In the past decade, Talwar (2010) stated, “In the field of art therapy the dominant perspective on human relationships is largely derived from male, Eurocentric teaching,” (p. 11) and indicated a continuing trend.

Influential Theories

Modernism

Bass and Malamuth (1996) stated, “Societies in which men dominate women are so common that male dominance has been considered a human universal,” (p. 179) and further affirmed, “Nature and culture [of masculinity] cannot be meaningfully separated: they are mutually influential on each other and jointly influential on the nature of the gender gap,” (p. 182). Certain religious images and symbols often were uncritically used to legitimize the dominance of men over women (LaChat, 1988) that dated back to Judeo-Christian references and Middle Eastern doctrines. Seminal literature for this research fell into categories, each early publication led to other, more recent resources with key concepts. Categories included the history of men in Western culture (George, 2020; Mill, 2019; Sandars, 2007) compared to literature that contradicts these historical views (Buss & Malamuth, 1996; LaChat, 1988; Poewe, 1980; Rogers, 1975). Recent literature that continues to contradict and refute historical views

(Myers, 2016; Palahniuk, 2018) includes postmodernist gender theory (Burt, 2011; Dillabough, 2001) to establish models and methods for a framework of innovative approaches for the study.

In this study, it was understood, according to the American Psychological Association (VandenBos, 2015), that the word “traditional” was used to describe the theory of modernism. It was defined as, “characterized by faith in scientific method, pursuit of control and prediction of behavior, explanation in terms of laws and principles, and the assumption that human behavior is ultimately rational as opposed to irrational,” (p. 662). Modernism was thereby characterized as *rationalism*, or a belief that knowledge of reality is obtained by reason alone which does not rely on experience, and stated, “All human knowledge can be brought into a single deductive system,” (p. 882). Colloquially, modernism entails the pursuit of a singular truth through empirical investigation.

Postmodernism.

Many cultural critics began discussing postmodernism in the late 1960s and early 1970s. in a way that adopted and supported hybridization over purity, inclusion rather than exclusion, and intuition rather than reason (Rosenau, 1992). According to Tavani (2007) “If men in the postmodern age are surrounded by different cultural attitudes, it would seem that their own attitudes toward profession and gender inevitably would be affected” (p. 6).

Modernism and Postmodernism Compared and Contrasted.

In some instances, the literature conflicts around the construct of postmodernism as an innovation that may redefine the nature of *truth*. In *The Poverty of Postmodernism* by O’Neil (2002) projected an attitude that postmodernism was an innovation that *disrupts* continuity for the sake of change over substance. O’Neil stated, “Nowadays ideas circulate like fast-food and like it are garbaged in favour of the next idea almost without assimilation,” (Introduction, para.

2). In reviews of O'Neill's book, an anonymous reviewer defends the postmodern turn in social sciences writing that O'Neill's claims were:

a rejection of the current celebration of knowledge and value of relativism. This is on the grounds that it renders critical reason and common-sense incapable of resisting the superficial ideologies of minoritarianism [minority rule] that leave the hard core of global capitalism unanalyzed. (Anonymous, 2021)

Other literature that contributed to this research was, at the time of publication, pivotal in determining cultural values and influenced both theory and study that changed the direction of the culture they studied. One such example is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 2nd ed., American Psychiatric Association (1968). In this version, homosexuality was declassified as a pathology and was designated an influential marker in cultural evolution by Drescher (2015). Though not a direct component of this study, the impact of this declassification emerged in the literature as an overall understanding, a shift from modernist hegemony to postmodern gender fluidity.

Other publications in this review informed a further reconsidered and redefinition of earlier masculinity studies. Research revealed the shifting nature of maleness couched in terms of masculinity and further segmented into masculinities from traditional, modernist theory to non-traditional, postmodern intersections (Clay, 2012; Dillabough, 2001; Franklin, 2007; Gallardo, 2014; Garcia, 2009; Haywood & Ghail, 2003, Walling, 2018). Gaps appeared in the literature, and exposed missing links for which further research was indicated to either fill gaps or identify weaknesses in gender theory.

Talwar (2010) stated, "A social justice-oriented art therapy practice ... means complicating the modernist perspectives that continue to dominate art therapy" (p. 11). It was

meaningful that in the literature, men constructed the standard from which all multicultural categories arose as Talwar (2010) wrote,

When art therapists move from modernist art therapy concepts invested in a single “truth” to be uncovered as part of becoming “whole,” to incorporating postmodernist concepts—ones that draw from feminism, antiracism, intersectionality, and queer theory, all of which advocate for multiple truths and realities—they have begun to embrace a practice invested in principles of social justice. (p. 7)

The researcher inferred from Talwar (2010) that privileged men were the source of modernist truth and by default, social injustice. This perspective of history provided a point of departure and a baseline from which the shift from a modernist paradigm to a postmodern model for men was measured in the following theme developed from the literature.

Contributing theories to the research were what Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) refer to as a “worldview” (p. 6) that was understood by the researcher to be a unified set of beliefs (a.k.a., a philosophy) and the research topic of men in art therapy and men who sought therapy was viewed philosophically through a social constructivist lens (p. 6) through which the researcher could better understand their world and results could be understood.

As the subject, the male art therapist could not be separated from the broader context of art therapy for the study and diverse participants individually contributed their expertise and experiences to jointly produced a preliminary portrait. Spontaneity was present in the research milieu by using a conversational format in interviews which kept the researcher removed from a positivist theory and generated an inductively constructed pattern of meaning (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018, p. 9).

Social Divisions, Social Systems, and Family

In a postmodern world, the traditional modernist reality of the term White male privilege was considered for this study but abandoned for the more inclusive term Eurocentric male privilege. It was understood, however, that White male privilege was an aspect of EMP with more privileges than others in the group. To describe male privilege accurately across ethnic and racial lines, the term Eurocentric male privilege (EMP) was chosen as an amalgam of Eurocentrism and male privilege culturally held and exercised by most males in Western cultures regardless of race or ethnic identity. The existence of Eurocentric male privilege was found to be pan-cultural in the literature, demonstrated by Guerrero (2018),

Men constantly work in a state of oblivion. Oblivious to how we are able to speak or behave without any regard of the audience or environment around us. Oblivious of the power we wield not necessarily based on merit, but because of the sociological factors and advantages associated with *appearing* male... As a man, I can say from my own personal experience, that what makes privilege of any kind so dangerous is how easily we deny its existence. Through denial, we protect the privileges we hold from being fully acknowledged, thus preventing it from truly ending. (para. 7)

Dillabough (2001) stated in a chapter subtitled, *Modernist Traditions and Emerging Contemporary Themes*, “Without an understanding of the relationship between theoretical conflicts in social theory...the development of gender analyses...will remain elusive,” (p. 17). This research was built on the premise of gender and the contradictory relationship of Modernism to Postmodernism. Multiculturalism, was the generally accepted theory in this research that viewed cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups as a collection of categories that deserved special acknowledgment of their differences. These differences existed within a dominant culture (Eagan, 2019) and contrasted with the

understanding of equality as different from but the goal of equal treatment in a homogenized social system.

Talwar (2010), an art therapy educator, stated, “Like many art therapy programs, mine requires a course in multiculturalism, yet understanding the complexity of identity and difference cannot be achieved in one 15-week class,” (p. 3). Talwar is describing multiculturalism as a relativistic, inductive, postmodern theory that is a “means [of] addressing trauma and violence from an intersectional perspective... taking into account poverty, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of social oppression” (p. 3). A less picturesque description of multiculturalism from VandenBos (2015), qualifies multiculturalism as, “The condition of a society in which different ethnic and cultural groups have equal status and access to power but each maintains its own identity and characteristics,” (p. 675). McNiff (2009) stated in the manner of a warning that applies to men as a multicultural category, “In cross-cultural research, a fundamental taboo is the projection of a personal theory of behavior and values onto other cultural groups” (p. 101).

According to McCarthy and Edwards (2011), social divisions are contexts in which social characteristics were the basis for differential treatment, including access to resources, and judgmental evaluations (Social Divisions: Discussion, para 1). Social divisions were also associated with inequalities intrinsic to hierarchical order between categories or groups of people. They were theorized as stratification (Social Divisions, para 1) and the boundaries between categories and groups generally depended on individual biological characteristics (i.e., race, gender, ethnicity, etc.). Also, according to McCarthy and Edwards, boundaries may also be experienced as either external, imposed by the social systems, or internal, incorporated into an individual’s identity. Social divisions were expressed in various aspects of everyday family lives and experiences and their expressions included systematic differences between family members

(familial) and between families within groups of people (community). Social divisions that were especially important in relation to families included were defined as age (generation) gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and class.

The concept of postmodernist family culture, according to McCarthy and Edwards (2011) used multiple interconnected realities and explored unremarkable or normal ways of doing things as in a Phenomenological approach. The understanding that these normal attitudes and behaviors may be historically idiosyncratic (i.e., out of sync with history) according to Davidoff et al. (1999) represented postmodernist concepts of intersectionality and yielded multiple truths applied to the concept of family. Some aspects of perceived normality were material [tangible] reflecting shared objects like family photographs, a domicile, or a family car. Other aspects were more ephemeral reflecting attitudes, for example, work or money management, beliefs (e.g., childrearing or spirituality), or philosophical (e.g., what it meant to be good or bad). In Davidoff et al. (1999) tensions existed between the notion of families as sets of individual realities that were simultaneously seen in a localized family reality which was greater than the sum of its parts. As in most social systems, family culture was dynamic and embraced differences of individual views and the tensions that may result.

Men and Family

What also emerged in the literature was *family of choice* (as opposed to *family of origin*) which is commonly defined as a concept “Intended to capture the commitment of chosen, rather than fixed, relationships and ties of intimacy, care, and support” in McCarthy and Edwards (2011, Families of Choice, Definition, para 1). This concept accentuated the intersectionality of *gender-based social alienation* and homophobia as the *non-heterosexual* individuals form families and was seen as the clearest example of this phenomenon. It was noted by the researcher that Blow (2008) pointed to minimal research on therapist matching based on gender and even

less on complicated issues like having more than one client in the room at a time (e.g., marital or family counseling) when the therapist's gender was good for one but not the other (p. 83).

According to Sax and Robertson (2017) the man of the family paradigm in which the man was the sole or chief provider (breadwinner) for the home shifted in 21st century economies. Women began, in some instances, to earn more than their male partners. Haywood and Ghail (2007) coined the term "Reconstituted father II" as a theory of gender relations that suggested family, transformed into a wide range of formations that were now common (p. 50). According to McCarthy and Edwards (2011) "This way of thinking also opens-up the possibility that family may be found in all kinds of social settings, not just domestic sites" (Introduction, para. 6) and included non-married cohabiting partners, non-cohabiting fathers, the non-blood-related children that occur within self-defined family structures in increasing numbers include extended emergent families with ethnic minorities in parallel with openly gay/lesbian partnerships, alongside *traditional* extended family, and incorporated into the concept of a nuclear family. The researcher understood the complexity of family presented as an opportunity for the art therapist to engage the individual, or family in the process of self-definition. Interventions that allowed expression of both unique and traditional variants that were as rich in number as the clients' visualizations that defined them, on their terms.

Systemic Dominance and Subordination

O'Neil (2002) singled out *control over women* as the primary aspect of the traditional, modernist male role, and Scher (1990) described two main proscriptions of masculinity being, "to be unlike women and to be in control" (p. 322). According to Kimmel et al. (2003) the mythic creation of the American cowboy, willing to venture into unknown territory and "tame it for women, children, and emasculated civilized men" (p. 188) suggests that men may have lost their way in current gender identities and expression. Though Kimmel did not cite EMP

specifically, it was suggested that men were embittered as they lost EMP while other men searched for new forms of masculinity.

According to Brooks (2010) “Two extraordinary facts become obvious when one examines the research of gender patterns in friendships. First, most men are quite lonely. Second, most men are highly dependent upon at least one woman for emotional comfort and support” (p. 21). Brooks then seemingly contradicted this dependence by describing a power imbalance in which men's emotional inexpressiveness (a stereotype) was often used to gain leverage within a relationship and maintain male power (p. 36). This was a tension within the male paradigm. In seminal literature on therapeutic treatment and study by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998) the non-judgmental term power imbalance called for cultural humility as opposed to merely cultural competence. Cultural humility was described as an active, non-paternalistic, ongoing engagement with not only individual patients, but communities and colleagues who jointly formed an alliance to unpack the intersectionality of postmodern truth. Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998) encouraged, “Advocacy partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations” (p. 117).

According to Connell (2005) the subordination of women is connected to the male hierarchy of power and to an active oppression of both black and gay men. Connell also contrasted this position with another group of authors who *equated* the oppression of men with the oppression of women and therefore they denied that there was any hierarchy of oppression (Pleck, 1976, 1977; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974; Snodgrass, 1977). These equations were understood by the researcher as a move against feminism that considered ambivalence as inherent in a sex role framework (p. 24) and claimed that logical sex role analysis considered the two roles reciprocal, defined by expectations and norms, attached to biological status, and not requiring an analysis of power.

James O’Neil’s seminal scholarship on the nature of men and family systems was published in 1982, four decades prior to the study. The ensuing years have seen many societal shifts for both men and the study of mental health. O’Neil (2015) revised his earlier points of view and stated, “What it means to be a man today is different than what it meant 20 years ago.” He went on to say, “There’s a paradigm shift occurring in our country regarding what it means to be masculine, and many men have had difficulty adjusting to that transition” (p. 1). His assessment of the gender discrepancy continued,

That shift might have been a factor in the 2016 presidential race. President Donald J. Trump’s vow to *make America great again* seemed to resonate with the nation’s male voters: Exit polls showed the widest gender gap among voters since exit polling began in the 1970s, with men favoring Trump over Hillary Clinton by 12 percentage points and women favoring Clinton over Trump by the same margin—for a total gender gap of 24 percentage points. (p. 1)

O’Neil (1982) identified “control over women” as a critical component of the traditional male role. Scher (1990) described two primary precepts of masculinity as “to be unlike women and to be in control” (p. 322). According to Goldner (2020) discourses on dominance with male clients included philosophies of psychopathology, psychotherapy to facilitate diversity, and mental health beyond stereotyping, categorizing, and dominant subjectivities. Sajnani and Kaplan (2012) and Sajnani et al. (2017) advocated for a critical reflection on gender through the lens of intersectionality (Mohanty, 2013; Talwar, 2010) and referred to the dynamics of power and oppression that shape intersectionality between multiple individual identities transcending gender that included class, race, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, and disability (Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006) and attempted to understand marginalization and defended the dominance of certain identity stances.

Men Among Men

At the suggestion of an original advisor for this study, Dr. McNutt brought the researcher to a revelation through personal conversations (Personal communications June 2020 – July 2021). These were a series of dialogues about Socratic questioning as a means of conducting research and the Homeric lens through which Western literature orients privilege through a male, literary tradition. Belsky (2007) maintained that there are those in the academy who have seen the Homeric philosophy as it lost influence on contemporary thought in favor of diversity in literary studies. In the abstract of their publication, Graziosi and Haubold (2003) considered masculinity through nuanced language in Homeric poems focusing on two words: ἠννορέη, a positive quality understood as manliness, and ἀγηννορέη, excessive manliness in a pejorative sense which recalls the epic of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, his counterpart. This Homeric lens brought the ancient rise of men in Western culture into focus and illuminated the future of Western culture based on the seminal works of Homer (c. 800 BCE–c. 701 BCE) specifically *Iliad*, Homer and Francis, P. (2012) and *The Odyssey*, Homer, Le Bossu, R., and Pope, A. (1977) creating a Homeric view of the world. These works are the base from which the modernist paradigm of *men among men* were shifted to a postmodern view of men in the world were measured.

The Man Box. A term that the literature used to describe the dominant form of masculinity in the United States was *hegemonic masculinity*, which Heilman et al. (2017) and others have described as the *Man Box* (i.e., a scale of attitudes that referred to sets of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society) that placed pressure and a rigid set of expectations on men to be and behave a certain way (p. 8), (a.k.a. manly). Because it was a hierarchy, according to Edwards and Jones (2009) hegemonic masculinity marginalized men who do not perfectly fit the description of a real man. “Because no

man perfectly fits the description, all men are limited by hegemonic masculinity through policing of behaviors seen as “violations” (Edwards & Jones, 2009). The researcher believed that with no man perfectly fitting the description, each male was compelled to prove masculinity (i.e., maleness).

In Connell (1995) the researcher found a seminal publication that identified specific forms of masculinity politics such as the National Rifle Association (NRA, gun lobby) as a central defense of hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1995) identified a changing political dialectic that involved masculinity therapy since the 1970s along with other social shifts as a reaction to counter-cultural therapy. According to Connell (1995) a pro-liberal feminism escaped out from under traditional male roles. Haywood and Ghail (2007) stated, “Key questions for pro-feminist men are whether men can change and what it means methodologically to answer this question [the question of change] in a valid way” (p. 110). As if to answer this question two years earlier, Connell (2005) stated, “The classic barrier to friendships among heterosexual men is homophobia” (p. 133). Connell released the 2nd edition (2005) in which gender-based social alienation was described as a part of and a reaction to social trends and placed an emphasis on separation from the feminine to maintain the deep masculine. In Myers (2016) the researcher explored the opposite view of men in the process of transformation into the 21st Century. Myers (2016) stated, “The shrinking number of heterosexual men who are emotionally functional and able to sustain a relationship built on truth is radically affecting the balance of power between men and women” (Ch. 1, Para. 3).

In the opinion of this researcher, Connell (2005) suggests, the alienation of males from traditional perceptions of masculinity, was fueled by a concurrent dissolution of traditional EMP with overtly masculine paradigms rushing in to fill the identity vacuum that remained. As an example, Palahniuk’s (2018) *Fight Club: A Novel*, originally published in 1996, made into an

equally popular film, *Fight Club* (Fincher et al., 2002) was an informal study of late 20th Century male alienation suffered by a mild-mannered office worker and expressed in terms of a psychotic break between the über masculine man that unconsciously emerged as an alter ego and was at odds with the protagonist's disenfranchised masculinity. Palahniuk (2018) wrote "it sounds like some dangerous psychotic killer wrote this, and this buttoned-down schizophrenic could probably go over the edge at any moment in the working day" (p. 179).

According to Kimmel and Aronson (2004) men among men was characterized in prisons as a "dark mirror" of gender relations among men that required *toxic masculinity*. This was a concept already discussed as a part of the Homeric tradition as ἀγνηγορία, excessive manliness in a pejorative sense. Prisons in the U.S. were predominantly populated with men according to Wagner (2012) using data from a U. S. Department of Justice statistician, Glaze (2010, p. 6) and among this population order was self-established.

Kimmel and Aronson (2004) offered vivid examples of the enactment of men among men as a reaction of those who feel repeatedly disrespected (p. 632) which were substantiated in Kupers (1999) who observed that when men would eventually lose their ability to enmesh with other prisoners or to please those above them in the prison hierarchy (including other prisoners, prison guards, and staff) they would disobey, disrespect, or even assault the offending other, including officers. The officers, in reaction retaliated in kind. According to Kupers (1999) a cell extraction would be ordered in the event of retaliation and several padded officers in helmets would charge into the prisoner's cell to subdue and remove him. This was supposedly not a rare event in super-maximum-security prisons supported by Kimmel and Aronson (2003) "The entire spectacle reflects toxic masculinity gone awry in a context where one group of men (the staff) asserts total domination over another" (p. 632). In Kupers (1999), a graphic account followed,

John, a thirty-five-year-old African American man, had been in prison for seven or eight

years. He had a history of mental hospitalizations dating back to age twelve, had been diagnosed as having bipolar disorder with psychotic features, and was taking strong antipsychotic medications when I interviewed him in the Security Housing Unit of a state prison. He told me that he believed the guards were singling him out for persecution, so he ‘bombed’ one of them with excrement. They performed a cell extraction (four or five guards spray a recalcitrant prisoner with mace or pepper spray in his cell and then rush him and subdue him) and placed him in the cell with a plexiglass (Lexan[®]) outer door, where I found him. He also told me he suffered from hallucinations, did not relate to the other guys because ‘they would yell and argue,’ and he was ‘very depressed and extremely paranoid.’ It seemed to me that his disciplinary Infractions were to a significant extent precipitated by his psychosis. It remains unclear what happened on September 11, 1997, but John was found unconscious in his cell and had to be transferred to a hospital where an inoperable, trauma-induced blood clot was found in his brain. He will remain in a vegetative state for the rest of his life. (pp. 9-10)

In this story Kupfer (1999) demonstrates the detachment from an individual male’s ability to enmesh with others or to please those above them.

Men at Work. Heilman et al. (2019) reported for Unilever, a major U.S. manufacturer that, “our economies and societies are paying a steep price due to restrictive ideas about masculinity” (p. 5). Heilman et al. (2019) then outlined a concrete example of cultural damage and said that their research added to a growing recognition that rigid ideas about masculinity were a drain on economies, and therefore our collective lives regardless of an individual’s gender. Following this thought, the researcher reexamined a section called *Cold War Masculinities* in Kimmel and Aronson (2004, p. 162) that described a working man’s success in the 1950s as dependent on not asserting initiative or competing aggressively with other men to

enmesh with coworkers to please those above them in the corporate hierarchy echoing the prison environment. The working man was characterized as the “organization man” and was deeply rooted in the shift from industrial capitalism to monopoly capitalism in the late 19th Century. During this shift, according to Kimmel and Aronson (2004, p. 162) middle-class men were increasingly employed by corporations and these corporate entities emerged as the major employer and required men to define themselves as corporate dependents that needed to fit in and to have “personality.”

The latter years of the 20th Century were an interim period that followed the trajectory of the organization man according to Kimmel and Aronson (2004) and the man’s contempt for his corporate confinement (prison). This contempt was palpable in the opening pages of Palahniuk (2018) *Fight Club: A Novel*, an apocalyptic account that described an unnamed narrator who made his living investigating accidents for a car company. This nameless protagonist provided a portrait, of sorts, of the organization man. This unnamed character was inescapably drawn to an alter ego, Tyler Durden in the novel, with whom the narrator started a fight club, a secret society that offered young professionals the chance to beat one another to a bloody pulp. Palahniuk (2018) summarized that contempt as a shared experience with the other men, “You do the little job you’re trained to do. Pull a lever. Push a button. You don’t understand any of it, and then you just die” (p. 6).

A team of New York Times reporters, Uchitelle et al. (2006) documented a growing trend among young and middle-aged men in the U.S. in a response to the organization man. Able-bodied men, out of work and not looking for work were identified as “These men aren’t included in the unemployment statistics because they’ve given up looking for a job. They may be from middle-class families, most of them are white, and many have some college education. Their ranks are growing rapidly.” In the opinion of Murray (2007),

A bachelor's degree in a field such as sociology, psychology, economics, history, or literature certifies nothing. It is a screening device for employers. The college you got into says a lot about your ability, and that you stuck it out for four years says something about your perseverance. But the degree itself does not qualify the graduate for anything. Sax and Robertson (2017) described a pathology of self-loathing and self-contempt, alienation from the EMP's expectation and birthright.

Men Seeking Therapy. From the literature, there was a spectrum of outlooks on the nature of men and their acceptance or reticence when seeking help. It appeared in older, dated but seminal literature that men were historically averse to psychotherapy (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Barbee, 1996). According to Haywood and Ghail (2003) men continued to avoid admitting a need for help and stated that "a large body of empirical research supports the popular belief that men are reluctant to seek help from health professionals" (p. 33). In the literature, more men had more recently opened to the concept of psychotherapy (Adler et al., 2019; Beel et al., 2017; Blow et al., 2008; Carey, 2011). What appears as openness may, in fact be mandated by a higher authority (e.g., court, armed services, alcohol and or drug rehab, or medicated assisted treatment).

In contrast, according to Beel (2018), there were calls to customize therapy for men in the last few decades as researchers became aware of the impact masculinity had on men and their psychological health, their willingness to seek help, and their experience of therapy. To one crucial point of the researcher's study, "Male gender-informed counseling is increasingly recognized as an expression of multicultural counseling" (p. 600). Male friendly or male-informed counseling recommendations from research were incorporated into many therapeutic approaches in the literature. Male-friendly counseling literature spanned diverse therapy approaches and were incorporated into cognitive therapy (Mahalik, 2005a) psychoanalysis

(Pollack, 2005) existential therapy (Nahon & Lander, 2014) interpersonal therapy (Mahalik, 2005b) and psychodynamic therapy (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2002).

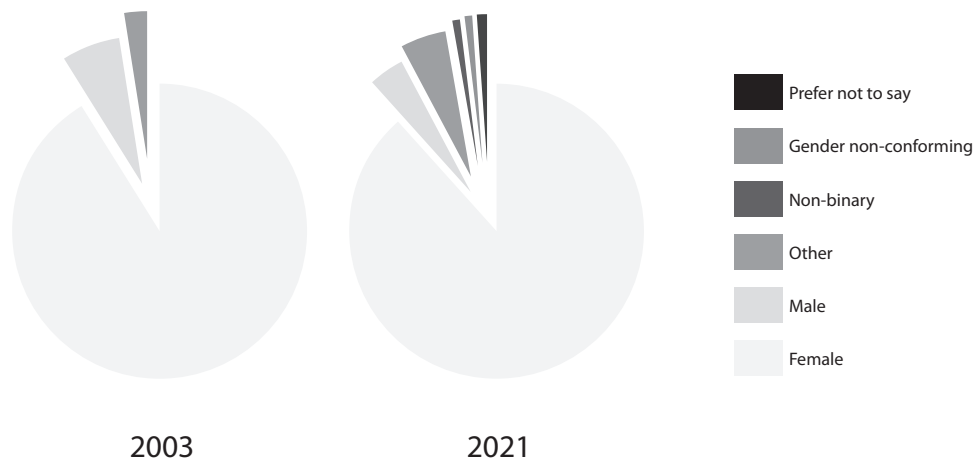
Therapeutic adaptations for men were also identified in various phrases such as *male-friendly therapy* (Brooks, 2010; Kiselica, 2005), *therapy for men* (Good & Mintz, 2005; Haldeman, 2005; Mahalik, 2005a, 2005b), *gender-aware therapy* (Morse, 2012), *male engaged therapy* (Kivari, 2011), *masculine-sensitive psychotherapy* (Englar-Carlson, Stevens, & Scholz, 2010), and *therapy for men* (Good & Mintz, 2005; Haldeman, 2005; Mahalik, 2005a, 2005b).

Therapist Gender. Available literature that focused on the efficacy of art therapy with males seeking therapy were sparse. Gender inclusive studies were more prevalent, and some are incorporated into the study's literature review. There were no qualitative studies that considered how the profession of art therapy viewed the men in its ranks by way of a literary portrait. No available data reflected the broad spectrum of masculinity in art therapy or viewed the male art therapist through the present-day lenses of gender fluidity, identity as an art therapist, and other postmodern intersections.

In the opinion of Carey (2011, May 22) reporting for the New York Times, "The profession of psychotherapy is at risk of losing its appeal for a large group of sufferers — most of them men — who would like to receive therapy but prefer to start with a male therapist." This opinion was supported in part by, Riddle and riddle (2007) who suggested that "the practice of art therapy... and art therapy's future will benefit if we can identify, support, and nurture the strengths of men within our field," (p. 11). With more men in the field of art therapy, it was understood by the researcher that the number of men as clients could be expected to increase as would the aggregate knowledge of men as a population. In indirect support of this research, Riddle and riddle (2007) suggested the need for a better understanding of men in the profession that incorporated men's needs and presented the male art therapist's contributions to art therapy.

Conversely, one study in the literature, Kaimal & Ray (2017) claimed that in reference to therapist's gender preference, "Demographic variables like race/ethnicity, age, or gender did not have any impact on [art therapy] outcomes" (p. 165). Blow (2008) has appeared earlier in the study under the topic of therapy in family and marital counseling, the citation is reiterated here because of the intersection of therapist matching based on gender when the therapist's gender might be good for one but not the other. In Blow (2008) literature on the role of gender matching in therapy concluded, "Good therapists are good therapists in spite of their gender" (p. 83). According to Sue (2019) clinicians often assert that "good counseling is good counseling" (p. 31) and good clinical practice subsumes cultural competence. In this way cultural competence is to be a subset of good clinical skills.

Elkins et al. (2003) is reiterated here, in their report that 91.3% of all members of the American Art Therapy Association (AATA), were women (6.2% men, 2.5% not specified [other]), according to Tavani (2007, p. 1). Recent demographics from AATA (2021) report that females comprised 88.3% of 1150 members that responded. Males accounted for 4.1% and 4.8% were other (not specified). New gender categories were introduced in 2020 and in 2021 and those new categories reported 1% identified as non-binary, 0.6% identified as gender non-conforming, and 1.1% preferred not to say. Figure 1 illustrates these data in two adjacent charts for comparison.

Figure 1*AATA Membership Comparative Gender Identification, 2003/2021*

Note. The 2003 data was visually adapted from Elkins et al. (2003) and the 2021 data was visually adapted from American Art Therapy Association (2021) and are presented here to illustrate minimal changes in the gender consistency within the field of art therapy over the time period while the gender identity categories proliferated.

According to Sue et al. (1982), a multiculturally competent mental health practitioner possesses an understanding of three dimensions including 1) the practitioner's attitudes and beliefs about the many aspects of diversity; 2) an understanding of one's worldview and sociopolitical influences; and 3) the skills, intervention techniques, and strategies necessary for serving each client group. The latter point being the most germane to the study. The quality of a therapeutic alliance, however, deserved attention according to Blow (2008) because therapy was foregrounded by client preferences and/or expectations when they enter therapy. Goldner (2020) referred to adolescent's internalization of "positive masculinity" as a theme that described the relationship between the male therapists and male clients that included verbal and non-verbal facets that challenged possibilities and breached or circumvented gender norms (e.g., alternative sexualities), (p. 3). Pikus and Heavy (1996) examined client preference regarding a particularly

salient therapist characteristic, that of therapist gender (p. 36) and found that of all male clients studied, 10% preferred a male therapist, 58% had no preference, and 32% preferred a female therapist. Among women in the study, 12% preferred a male therapist, 32% had no preference and 56% preferred a female. The researcher noticed that in the study, there were 41 males and 75 females suggesting that there may have been more females seeking therapy than males (p. 39). The study did not identify that a male therapist was always an option.

In older studies, both Johnson (1978) and Koile and Bird (1956) assessed the preference of college students in independent studies where students preferred to see therapists of the same gender as themselves (p. 36). In Johnson (1978) Clients based their preference for a male or female therapist on a belief that a therapist's gender had an impact on the understanding of their problems, or students felt more comfortable talking with people of a particular gender. Given that many (but not all) clients enter psychotherapy preferring to work with a therapist of a particular gender, it would be important to examine the impact of this preference on the process and outcome of the subsequent therapy outcomes, (p. 40). Conversely, Blier et al. (1987) employed a similar design but reported no differences between male and female clients' preference to see therapists of either gender (p. 36). Goldner (2020) referred to adolescent's internalization of "positive masculinity" as a theme that described the relationship between the male therapists and male clients A measure of initial client preference would allow a cleaner test of client preferences of gender (p. 40). In a seminal paper on art therapy specifically, McNiff (1976) touched upon the gender imbalance in art therapy when he wrote,

I must admit that on a day-to-day basis in my work as an art therapist I am not the only male around. There are plenty of men in the fields of art, mental health, and college teaching. ... I often say moralistically that more men should be involved....The unequal distribution of males and females in the field of creative arts therapies is not ideal, though

one learns to live with disequilibrium. (pp. 2-4)

In more recent literature, a contrasting report focused on art therapy in which Elkis-Abuhoff and Gaydos (2008) state, “The art therapy profession is split by those with either a *feminine* or *masculine* perspective” (p. 141) then went on to offer a theoretical solution, “Merging art therapy with medical institutes, schools, correctional facilities, and other institutions will bring new art therapists into a generation that is neither male nor female, but one that benefits all of society regardless of gender” (p. 141). According to Brooks (2010), it has only been within the past few decades that gender has been highlighted as a meaningful component of psychopathologies. In comparison to even some seminal literature, Pikus and Heavy (1996) maintain that interventions (as a whole) were oblivious to the role that gender variables provided a causal relationship to maladaptive or problematic patterns of behavior (p. 13).

According to Goldner (2020) male clients found it challenging to talk about their emotions and that sex and gender are powerful factors in organizing an individual’s identity. Goldner (2020) observed that the notion of gender in the context of therapy and counselling was often ignored (p. 3) and argued that art therapists should undertake a critical, reflexive analysis of art therapy practices. Wright and Wright (2017) expressed the need to explicitly recognize the influence of the hegemonic discourses and that the privileged position of the therapist be stressed. It was observed in responses that therapists devised alternative ways of talking such as the use of humor, self-disclosure, and a more casual approach to encouraged discourse about feelings (Mahalik et al., 2012, p. 5). Goldner (2020) concluded that opportunities to improve client mental health took place in emotional assistance and internalization of the male therapist [transference] who became an alternative father figure less tightly bound to a unidimensional presentation of gender (p. 7).

Veterans and Mental Health. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was prevalent among pathologies affecting men in combat related settings and suggested that men suffered more often than women in military service in certain circumstances. A representative study by Agarrwal (n.d.) and the National Guard surveyed those deployed from 2005-2007 (n=>25,000). It is deceptive that three months post-deployment PTSD positive scores were 18% of women and 14.5 % of men because twelve months post-deployment there was a minor drop in PTSD among females, 17.9% vs. a dramatic increase of nearly 10 percentage points or 24.1% of males that were tested positive for PTSD. A study by Mittal et al. (2013, p. 91) found that treatment-seeking veterans with combat related PTSD were conscious of mental illness stereotypes but considered PTSD less stigmatizing than other mental health disorders. These same veterans reported concerns about being labeled as mentally ill and reported this factor to be an impediment to help seeking in the early phases of returning to civilian life and the readjustments it required (p. 90).

Gender differentiated studies of military personnel and mental health were less descriptive of the need for mental health resources for the current military population and those reintroduced back into civilian populations. According to the literature, reintroducing combat veterans back into society required therapeutic measures to process military training and actions to contain destructive tendencies. Of note were studies dating back to 2013, comparing the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-V, (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and DSM-IV, (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) where conflicting evidence was found producing a moving target for diagnoses and treatment. One example was found in Hoge et al. (2014) as the definition of PTSD underwent substantial changes in the 2013 edition of the DSM-5. According to the study by Hoge et al., (2014) study in an analysis of all soldiers,

Thirteen percent screened positive for PTSD by DSM-IV-TR (2000) criteria and (12%) screened positive by DSM-5 criteria. In soldiers exposed to combat, (19%) screened positive by DSM-IV-TR and (18%) screened positive by DSM-5 criteria (0.66).

Discrepancies arose when soldiers with complete data who met DSM-IV-TR criteria, (30%) did not meet DSM-5 criteria, and 27% met only DSM-5 criteria. (para. 3, Results)

In a more recent analysis by Hepner et al. (2021, p. 3) about 2.2 million troops were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. In this incursion, active-duty service members with a confirmed diagnosis of PTSD increased from 0.4 % in 2004 to 5.2 % in 2012 (Institute of Medicine, 2014).

Nielson et al. (2020) wrote that concerning veterans and mental health, strict adherence to traditional masculinity was associated with more severe PTSD in vets and transitions this study into the issues of LGBTQ+ veterans that express the shifting paradigm of masculinity and the intersection of sexuality. Until 2011 openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual men and women were not permitted to serve in the military. According to Sullivan et al. (2016) a *Blue Discharge*, or other than honorable discharge was extended to LGBT service members in WWII and continued until 2011. This discharge status was deemed *other than honorable* and disqualified all who received a Blue Discharge from the GI Bill and VA benefits. Acceptance for LGBTQ+ in the military expanded with the lifting of the transgender ban in 2021.

The intersection of veterans and mental health was also illustrated in the work of a military reporter, Mills-Gregg (2020, February 11) and a series of highly public veteran suicides completed in VA parking lots over the last five years. These occurrences led to a recent report on one such death, in 2018 in which the Inspector General found *institutional failures* that led to mental health clinicians not being alerted to the patient's condition before his death. Mills-Gregg (2020, January 15) had reported earlier that a VA Inspector General (IG) investigated the phenomenon and a report found faulty *care coordination* in the history of the VA patients who

died by suicide, represented by an estimated 20 veterans that kill themselves every day in the U.S. The IG staff that found *institutional failures* with patient care stated,

The failure to involve treatment team members following the patient's suicidal statements or to follow up on the consult documentation resulted in missed opportunities for a clinical provider to further evaluate the patient's condition and provide treatment that may have prevented the patient's suicidal behavior. (para. 4)

Evidence in Campbell et al. (2016) suggested that impaired verbal memory may be more severe in PTSD patients caused by combat compared with other sources of trauma. This evidence suggested that impaired verbal memory may impede traditional (verbal) forms of psychotherapy and the researcher recognized an opportunity for art therapy to be applied to these cases. Campbell et al. also found that new treatment approaches were needed to address the needs of combat veterans and suggest that art therapy may integrate sensory and declarative memory and their evidence supported a reduction of PTSD symptoms in a number of populations (Harber, 2011; Henderson, Rosen & Mascaro, 2007; Lyshak-Stelzer, Singer, St. John, & Chemtob, 2007; Pifalo, 2007, 2009; Tripp, 2007).

According to Mills-Gregg (2020) the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposed \$682 million *more* for spending on mental health issues in 2021. This included ramping up funding for suicide prevention as it faced Congressional scrutiny over this series of tragic incidents on VA premises. The budget request for fiscal 2021, totaled \$243.3 billion and in addition to resourcing mental health and suicide prevention, doubling the amount for a joint VA-Defense Department effort to create a merged electronic health records (EHR) system.

Alcohol, Other Drugs of Abuse (AODA), and Other Addictions. PTSD symptoms are often comorbid with substance abuse and other pathologies that arose from maladaptive coping strategies. Men are considered the significant number in those populations. According to seminal

literature, Wilson (1999) said that sex addiction was also an addictive disease that affects both men and women, but gender differentiation research provided evidence that approximately 25% of sex addicts are female and 75% are male which was also the ratio of men to women found in compulsive gambling and alcoholism (p. 9).

According to (2010), “Men’s troublesome relationship with the help-seeking process in general ... also seeks to explain why men are especially averse to psychotherapy in particular,” (p. 33-34). The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed.; DSM-4; American Psychiatric Association, 1994) was the first DSM that identified men as “five times more likely to be diagnosed with alcohol abuse, four times more likely to be diagnosed with illicit substance abuse, and three times more likely to be diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder,” (p. 14). The *DSM-IV* also declared men to be nearly the entirety of those diagnosed with *paraphilia* and the greatest number of those diagnosed with combat-related, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Brooks (2010), asserted that, “These gender differences have been found to hold across racial and ethnic groups and apply to men across the lifecycle,” (p. 35).

Cultural competency was indicated in drug and alcohol addiction treatment as violent tendencies, and criminal behaviors (Aletraris et al., 2014; Horay, 2006). Haywood and Ghail (2003) provided were considered the underlying issues of not seeking help related to substance abuse, depression, physical disabilities, or life stresses. They concluded that men are less likely than women to seek professional help which supports earlier evidence re: help-seeking resistance experienced by men. Other literature asserted that gender differences AODA issues appeared to hold across racial and ethnic divisions, and applied to men of all ages (Rogers, 1975).

The publication *Addict Aftercare: Recovery Training and Self-help* was written by Zackon et al. (1985) and is considered by many to continue as the standard for evidence-based treatment since 1985. The publication codifies evidence-based therapy for programs funded by

the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This researcher found the publication still in use during their 2020 clinical internship in a medically assisted treatment program. The researcher also observed that the publication mentioned the word man once, the word men once, woman once, and women two times. The point being, that these words were used anecdotally and never in the context of gender sensitive treatment. The word gender was not found in the publication indicating that gender-specific interventions and directives are not incorporated into the psychological structure of SAMHSA supported programming.

Literature Summary

The foundations of EMP were examined through the history of Western civilization and noted authors' views of the strengths and weaknesses of evaluating the role of male dominance in Eurocentric culture through a present-day lens. The impact of gender based sociological and psychological changes were foregrounded as those who have historically marginalized other populations (men) who have entered the process of EMP being supplanted, shifting masculine paradigms. Sometimes intractable and toxic, the multicultural category of men was best understood within the literature when men were identified as a subset of all populations with the toxic masculine components of EMP compartmentalized into underlying pathologies.

Growing acceptance of transgender and gender fluid states of becoming and being in the literature were also examined and indicated that male-female differentials in the psychotherapy professions was arriving at a theoretical goal of equilibrium if not a literal state of equilibrium. According to Elkis-Abuhoff (2018), this equilibrium foreshadowed a generation that is neither male nor female, but one that benefits all of society regardless of gender. This state was accepted by the researcher as an ideal and at the same time idealistic.

The advantages and limitations of the study's constructs of male art therapists and men seeking therapy were reviewed. Evidence in the literature foregrounded interview questions in the study's methodology and informed both the intent and bias of the researcher. Emergent themes and exceptions in the literature produced a pattern of diverse intersectionality from which the researcher learned, which informed the remainder of this report and may encourage others to extend this research. The methodology used in this study is outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The current research was a qualitative pilot study within the art therapy community. This chapter systematically outlines the steps taken to complete the research by reiterating the research question and presenting the research design. The research sample is described by their selection and composition and data collection is outlined followed by the methods used to analyze the research findings. Finally, the chapter addresses the validity and trustworthiness of the study along with the ethical concerns involved in the research.

This study utilized elements of CBPR, PAR, and heuristic approaches. It was conducted as a requirement of the MAAT program with an emphasis on counseling at SMWC and was approved by the SMWC Internal Review Board as a qualitative research study intended to use CBPR. According to Leavy (2018) qualitative research is an expansive and evolving field with a wide range of research approaches and multiple perspectives (p. 2). Qualitative research includes CBPR which involves a specified community in all aspects of the research according to Sandelowski (2004). However, the research more closely resembles the similar but distinct method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) defined as “an approach to enquiry that involves researchers and participants working together to understand a situation and change it for the better” (Institute of Development studies, 2021).

CBPR is one of the more promising fields of inquiry as an alternative research method (Guta, 2013; Jamshidi, 2014) because it generates knowledge foregrounded in human experience as an evaluation paradigm for collaboratively addressing social disparities. CBPR has emerged as an alternative research method and an evaluation paradigm for collaboratively addressing health, in the study mental-health, disparities. CBPR also emphasizes the participation, influence, and control of their narrative by group members (e.g., art therapists) in the process of defining

knowledge and encouraging change (Guta, 2013, p. 433). It is noted that CBPR resembles PAR but remains a distinct method. In PAR, participants identify worthy problems for investigation and analyzed their own situation to indicate solutions (Leavy, 2016).

As opposed to the traditional clear distinction between researcher and those being researched (Jamshidi, et al., 2014) CBPR and PAR pose distinctive ethical challenges, lacking organized guidelines. The researcher established emergent ethical principles that identified and avoided ethical conflicts such as Socratic questioning in effort to explore participants' views as opposed to substantiating researcher bias inherent in heuristically generated questions. Ethical principles were also applied toward accuracy of transcripts, anonymity of third parties, and the preservation of the participants' individual voice. PAR was inherently more ethical than traditional research approaches because the definition of the research problem was informed if not dictated by the participants, bracketing researcher self-reporting bias.

Required data was gathered through a literature review and standardized, structured, and semi-structured interviews with questions, and talking points heuristically generated by the researcher based on informal conversations within the field concerning the topic between 2018 and 2021. The research questions came from the researcher not from the participants together as a community.

Representatives of SMWC and the broader (non-SMWC) art therapy community were identified in a snowball sampling method to include students, faculty, and the field of art therapy. Eight interviews with representatives of diverse populations were conducted. Codes for repeated themes were induced from the interviews by the researcher—not in collaboration with the research participants—thereby incorporating a more heuristic approach used to elicit overarching themes.

Participants

The study relied on a sample of eight participants from inside the world of art therapy. Their views of the male art therapist and the men who sought therapy, including art therapy or more traditional therapies, were collected through formal questioning and Socratic conversations during an interview process. Flexibility allowed the researcher to draw out participants' individual constructs and the meaning they ascribed to their world indicated by their distinctive voice not from the researcher's interpretation. An understanding and respect for voice provided relative meanings from participants, adding richness and depth to the research through ancillary discussion and interaction (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018, p. 8).

Initial participants were selected and included in the research study for attributes including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, gender, gender identity, age, or marital status. The study was completed with participants referred using a snowball method, due to time constraints and other limited resources. According to Naderifar, et al., (2017) snowball sampling is considered an accepted, nonprobability method of selection that located both anticipated targets as well as hidden populations. In snowball sampling, one participant referred the investigator to another potential participant that met selection criteria. According to Leavy (2016) a *snowballing* approach to participant recommendations found "expert" informants, (p. 229).

The gender labeled participants voice their narratives in the study, in chronological order of their interview were Mr. A. Chu, Mr. Greb (pseudonym), Ms. Wam (pseudonym), Mr. D, Anthon, Ms. T. Harris, Mr. M. Galarraga, Mr. R. Bonk, and Ms. B. Fish. The anonymous participants in the study no longer have any detectable connection to their data in the text language and are also cited anonymously in pseudonyms that cannot be directly linked to them.

Participants volunteered their gender identity during the course of interviews. Three Ciswomen were participants in this research with four cismen, one transgender man illustrated in Figure 2. In the study, one African American, one Asian, and one Latinx joined five who self-identified as Caucasian White, all represented in Figure 3.

Figure 2

Participant Gender Identity

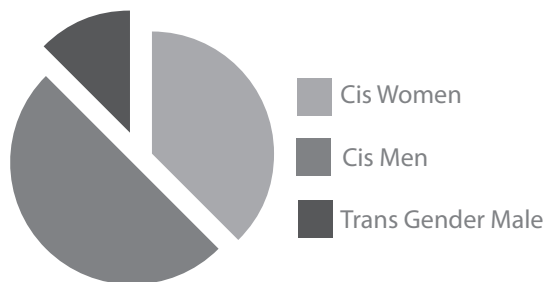
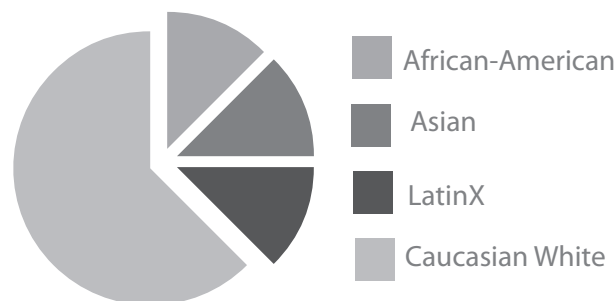
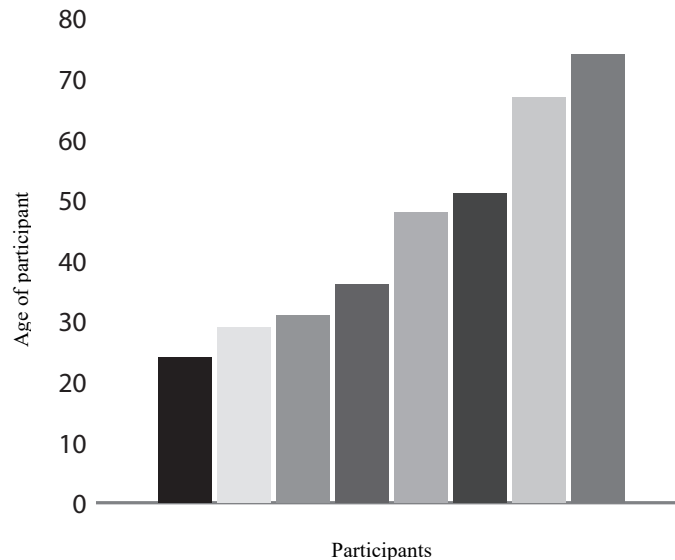


Figure 3

Participant Ethnic Identity



Participants included gatekeepers to the field of art therapy defined as those in academic programs that train art therapists, active, and retired practitioners. The study also included current students of art therapy and those nearing the end of their coursework. The age range of participants in the study were distributed across the ages of 24 to 74 years-old, represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4*Age Distribution of Participants***Research Design**

Each participant was asked standardized questions in a consistent order in a recorded interview format. The interview format was conversational in tone and elicited additional topics and questions answered by each participant. Transcriptions of recorded interviews were individually coded and themed by the researcher for qualitative analysis who then synthesized data into emergent, overall themes with exceptions.

Research Instruments*Instrument 1*

A list of structured questions for the interview format is included in Appendix A, built on Socratic questioning and fueled by the subject responses, e.g., how did you come to believe that?; do you have any evidence to support that?; does anything in your experience illustrate that?; if we accept what you are saying, what are some implications?; and how might someone

object to that position? According to Paul et al. (2016) there was no good way to lead a Socratic discussion and the emphasis was put onto thinking along with the subject as the discussion ensued. The researcher listened deeply to each response from participants. Deep listening added to an overall discussion which became more important than the question itself, (p. 58).

In a form of research alliance, each participant was invited to submit an interview question that related to the research topic. Questions collected in this way were collected for future studies and appear in Appendix A under the heading “Participant Contributed Questions” for further research. They also allowed the researcher to distance themselves from wholly defining the research problem during analysis and as a reference for triangulating participant responses against researcher defined questions. Participant contributions to interview questions are also included in this report’s Discussion and Conclusion chapters.

Interviews

Interviews were approximately 45-to-70 minutes in duration depending on the interviewee’s availability and time constraints. All interviews were conducted using Zoom[®] virtual conference software, recorded, and transcribed with the subjects’ permission. Individual participants were allowed their unique voice in the research with six out of eight participants choosing to be identified in the final report. Participant experience was designed to be conversational, immersive, and heuristic. Participant/researcher dialogue was focused on an individual’s experiences, points-of-view and preconceptions as opposed to a detached, clearing away of preconceptions as in phenomenology.

In the study a heuristic element was incorporated to, according to Leavy (2016), accentuate connectedness and foster a relationship between the interviewer and participant to produce in-dwelling. Kapitan (2018) observed that in the presence of heuristics, participants turn inward with attention and focus on some detail of their own experience for deeper, more

expanded understanding, (p. 146). Interviews were central to the study's design and according to Brinkmann (2014, p. 277) interviews are a social practice that hold cultural history which appear practical and pragmatic.

Data Collection

Interview data was collected over a three-week period between May 1 and June 5, 2021. The initial participants were chosen by the researcher from recruited individuals accurately fulfilling selection criteria on page 45, elected and/or included for attributes including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, gender, gender identity, age, or marital status.

Participant selection criteria was then shared with participants and each participant recommended additional participants that met the needs of the study. The initial list of recruits was built using convenience sampling filtered by the research selection criteria. From a selected base, snowball sampling presented additional participants until data saturation of 8 participants was reached.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis has been poorly branded, yet widely used in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and has been rarely appreciated in the same way as grounded theory, ethnography, or phenomenology. The researcher adopted the view that qualitative thematic analysis was a method that could be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions which was supported by Braun & Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is believed to be the best method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within the interview data set and offered a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for the researcher, early in their research career (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There are various approaches in the literature in which to conduct analyses of narrative data from either a thematic view, with a focus is on “what” is said or a focus on the “telling” of the story, how it is organized, and the experience of storytelling. Technically, this research employed a “dialogic/performance analysis,” according to Bochner et al. (2014) where both thematic and structural components demonstrate how dialogue emerged “intersubjectively and collaboratively” (p. 213). A thematic analysis followed a common six-step (phase) process: familiarize, code, generate themes, review themes, define and name themes, document outcomes (Lowell et al., 2017; Leavy, 2016).

Phase 1, Familiarization with the Data. Recorded and transcribed interviews were studied repeatedly and triangulated with each other as well as the literature. Intersectionality of various diverse participants emerged from reading the data and allowing concepts in their voices to incubate over a period of weeks. This intersectionality dislodged researcher-anticipated themes. The process of familiarization with the data continued through the thesis writing process and will most likely continue after the thesis submission and publication.

Phase 2, Generating Initial Codes. According to Leavy (2016) units of measurement in content analysis (CTA) were focused on words, sentences, grammatical structures, tenses, clauses, ratios (of say, facts to opinions) or even other themes (p. 316). Using Saldaña’s (2021) description, a code was a word or short phrase that symbolically captures an impressive point or feature that contained an essence or evoked an attribute that was used in interviewee’s language to communicate information, (p. 3). Individual interviews (and some reference texts) were also coded according to the interpretive functions of codes, coding, and analytic memo writing. These codes were triangulated as additional data with the participant data.

Phase 3, Searching for Themes. King (2004) suggested, when searching for themes, the best place to start was with a few predefined codes to help guide analysis. However, he warned

that starting with too many pre-defined codes may prevent the consideration of data that conflicted with previously made assumptions, while starting with too few predefined codes left researchers lacking direction, overwhelmed by the amounts of complex data. A theme may be initially generated inductively from the raw data or generated deductively from theory and prior research (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended that researchers work systematically through the entire collection of data, giving full and equal attention to each data item, and identify interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of themes across the participants. The researcher deduced initial codes then looked for outcomes that are agreed upon by all participants (Guion, 2002) which suggests that if all are looking at an issue from different points of view but arrives at a particular outcome then it is more than likely to be a true outcome (i.e., triangulating).

Main themes and subthemes emerged from the data inductively and the researcher found codes that do not seem to belong anywhere. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended the creation of a *miscellaneous* theme, interpreted by the researcher as an exception to place those codes that do not seem to fit into main themes. These exceptions seemed marginally relevant at first but played a significant role in adding to the background detail of the study (King, 2004).

The researcher used an inductive, latent approach with semi-structured interviews and open-ended dialogues. This method allowed the data to determine themes and the researcher interpreted the subtext and assumptions underlying the themes that determined what participants' statements revealed about their assumptions and social context (Caulfield, 2019).

Phase 4, Reviewing Participant Data. A thematic analysis produced an insightful complement of findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006) even though there was no clear agreement in the literature about exactly how the researcher could apply the method. Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provided a highly flexible approach that was modified for the needs

of the study providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). Conversely, this flexibility was open to inconsistency and a lack of coherence from the research data (Holloway & Todres, 2003). The researcher sided with Braun and Clarke (2006) and King (2004) who argued that thematic analysis was a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, that highlighted similarities and differences, and generated unanticipated insights.

Phase 5, Defining and Naming Themes. Eight themes and 1 exception emerged from the data after coding, refinement, re-coding, and distillation. In the following list (+) indicates a positive influence of some theme aspects on the participant and (-) indicates a negative influence. Using (+-) indicates that certain aspects of the theme were ambivalent and could influence the theme in either direction (+) or (-).

Phase 6, Reporting the Final Analysis. Individual participant's responses were scrutinized and compared to establish repetitive themes from recurrent codes in Table 1. Participant demographics, volunteered during interviews have been randomized and deidentified to protect participant privacy. Codes appear in the order in which they occurred in their respective interview. The individual codes were then induced into individual emergent themes. It was from these coded themes that the study's thematic descriptions were established, and those descriptions follow. A + symbol following a theme indicates positive influences on participants. A – symbol following a theme marks negative influences that follow. A theme description with both a + and – symbol indicates ambivalent influence:

Community. (+), Subthemes and codes; lineage, attitudes of art & art therapy, art, ethics, psychology, gestation & pivotal moments, relationships, transference, sexuality. The definition and presence of *communities* was broad and as varied as the participants in the study.

Consistently, participants ascribed value to their associations with others as an inextricable part of their histories and present-day relationship to the field.

Identity. (+), Subthemes and codes; Gender, race, diversity, privilege, mother, children, family of choice, sexuality, (-) conflict, therapy resistance. The *identity* of both the therapist and the client were influenced by their self-ascribed identity that included many themes as sub-themes.

Values and Beliefs. (+), Subthemes and codes; Religion, spirituality, socio-politics, mother, children, family of choice, helping profession, policing privilege. *Values and Beliefs* were present in all participants' views of themselves, their views of male art therapists. This theme was a positive influence on the participants.

Privilege. (+-), Subthemes and codes; Diversity, gender, place, health, gender, timeliness, (-) masculinity, socio-politics, frustration, therapy resistance, defiance. *Privilege* was a sociocultural theme with implications on both the therapists and the client. It combined ambivalent influences, both positive and negative influences and was expressed as a powerful sub-theme in many other themes.

Socioeconomics. (+-), Subthemes and codes; Client, art therapists, identity, gender, values, health, frustration, socio-politics, timeliness. *Socioeconomics* presented in two ways in the study. Participants included socioeconomics in their discussions of art therapy, gender, and male art therapists. Each subtheme of socioeconomics could be positive or negative based on the specific instance.

Table 1*Thematic Frame*

Participant	Emergent Themes	Individual Codes
1	Christian, Student, Diversity, EMP	Values and Beliefs, Lineage, Community, Attitudes of Art & AT, Personal / Demographics, Gender / Identity / Race, Client, Diversity, Privilege, Conflict
2	Midwest, Jewish, Gay, Masculinity	Art/AT, Gender, Lineage / Community, Sexuality, Threat / Conflict / Challenge, Privilege, Masculinity, Identity
3	Catholic, Student, Mother, Children	Gender, AT/ Therapy / Competence, Mother / Safety, Conflict / Transference / Countertransference, Gender/ Therapy, Family Resistance, Diversity and Privilege / Masculinity, Cultural Blindness and Denial
4	Retired, Gay, Socioeconomics	Community / Sexuality, Socio-Politics / Place / Health, AT / Community / Lineage / Ethics, Socioeconomics, Gender / Privilege / Conflict, Race, Timeliness Frustration
5	Black, Children, Religion Socio-Economics	Gender / Privilege / Hierarchy, AT / Lineage, Diversity / Race / Privilege / Conflict, Socioeconomics, Religion / Spirituality, Art
6	Gay, Sex Offenders. Socioeconomics	Art / Psychology, AT / Lineage / Gestation, Gender / Diversity / Discrimination / Conflict, Privilege / Defiance / Transference / Intersectionality, Sublimation, Harm's Touch
7	Transgender Male, White, Loss-Trauma, Toxic Masculinity	AT / Lineage / Intersectionality / Psychology, Identity / Symbolism / Art / Compelled, Loss-Grief -Trauma, Spirituality / AT, Gender- Spirituality / Transcendence, Gender-Conflict / Privilege, Gender Intersection, Toxic Masculinity
8	White, Privilege, Values, Socioeconomics	Lineage / Relationships / Transference, Pivotal Moments, Privilege / Power / Conflict, Values / Motivation, Male Art Therapist, Transference, Identity, Gender Issue, Socioeconomics

Participant: Randomized with volunteered demographics de-identified to protect individual privacy

Emergent Themes: Induced from individual participant codes

Individual Codes: Listed in order of occurrence in each interview

NOTE: Art therapy is abbreviated as AT. Individual codes are separated by commas. When individual codes related (or intersected) with one another they are separated by a forward slash within commas.

Conflict. (-), Subthemes and codes; Threat, challenge, privilege, power, conflict, loss-grief, trauma, transference, therapy resistance, sexuality. *Conflict* was generally experienced as a negative influence that incorporated several themes as sub-themes.

Male Client. (+-), Subthemes and codes; Sexuality, privilege, intersectionality (-) loss-grief, trauma, transference, socioeconomics, defiance, therapy resistance. The *male client* theme was a combination of those characteristics that participants included in their understanding of the male therapy client. It included many themes as subthemes and was *polar*, either a positive or negative influence in the participant's dialogue.

Exception. (+), *Harm's Touch* (Fish, 2016) is a term to describe how people are affected by what they witness. and was mentioned by name by one participant as an important aspect of art therapy education, addressing the individual art therapist's connection to and release of clients' distress. Other participants referred to the principles of Harm's Touch though not by name. Harm's Touch was also mentioned explicitly by Fish when describing personal identity, values and beliefs, relationships and as the residual impact of client contact.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Validity in qualitative research according to Guion (2001) relates to whether a study's findings are true in the sense of accurately reflecting a situation and certain in the sense of being backed by evidence (i.e., the weight of evidence supports conclusions). Guion (2001) also suggested that if all participants are looking at an issue from different points of view but arrive at a relatively singular outcome then it is more than likely to be a true outcome, offering validity and trustworthiness through triangulation]. The researcher reviewed the coded data transcripts for emergent themes and whether the themes formed a discernable pattern for triangulation. Once a set of themes had been derived, they were refined (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Trustworthiness is another term researchers use to describe research findings as worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) refined by the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to parallel the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability. The study sought to conduct a trustworthy thematic analysis in tandem with a framework per Lincoln and Guba (1985). The researcher coded individual interviews and found emergent themes which were triangulated to other participants, other codes, and to the literature. For dependability, the study was logical, traceable, and documented as clearly as possible (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The research process featured member-checking to allow each participant to judge the accuracy and dependability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Total objectivity was not ideal in qualitative research according to Ahern (1999). The researcher's role in the study required reflexivity to identify areas of potential bias and to bracket those areas. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended establishing a range of findings that supported as well as contradicted themes to minimize researcher bias. They also stated that "good qualitative research" was a diverse report of perspectives about the topic (p. 129). Consensual validation was obtained by using of more than one data source in which both perspective and coded data were analyzed by comparing data from multiple interviews to reviewed literature.

Ethical Implications

According to Kapitan (2018) any research that interacted with people, would in turn, affect them, so a research study was, by default, an intervention aimed at investigative discovery. Even Socratic questioning designed to draw upon the participant's reflective process may "lay open thoughts, feelings, and tacit knowing not already in someone's awareness" (p. 194). In this way, some degree of risk always accompanied research. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) the anonymity of participants was at the center of ethics and aliases, or pseudonyms were to be used for individuals and places to protect participant identities.

Participants could decide to claim their voice by being identified within the research or decline identification through anonymity or de-identification. The research acknowledged individuals' thoughts and views as their unique intellectual property that could become primary research material for other studies. A two-step process asked for each participant's preference on the IRB approved informed consent form which was substantiated during the recorded interview. Participants were advised during the interviews that there was not obligation to answer any question. Though demographic information was volunteered during interviews (e.g., age) it was

with the understanding that it would be used for demographic reporting only and not attached to individuals.

The researcher was sensitive to participants that work with the public and for the sake of anonymity of those clients, remotely identifying information has been redacted from interviews and member checked. The researcher was also reminded by Leavy (2016) that they must always begin where the community was, with their needs and not from the desire of any individual, including the researcher, however well intentioned (p. 505).

Researcher Bias

According to Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) the researcher's past experiences with the research problem and personal experiences potentially influenced results. Also stated by Cresswell and Cresswell (2018), good qualitative research contains comments by the researchers about how their interpretation of the findings was shaped by their background, such as their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin (p. 314). Because The researcher was a White, gay, cismale, in late adulthood investigating the field of art therapy, which was predominantly female, there were influences from previous experiences brought to bear on the research topic and on the collection of data. The data derived from participants was triangulated among participant responses and available literature to bracket researcher bias from the themes being analyzed.

Interviewer bias, according to Frey (2010), is a relationship between the interviewer and the way in which they asked questions, distinct from bias that arose from the content or wording of questions themselves. According to Kapitan (2010) the well intentioned, sensitive, and caring researcher who had the best interests of the subjects or the profession firmly in mind also had interests "defined by the researcher and not the subjects" (p. 122). This inherent bias was bracketed by thematic analysis of subject response transcripts to construct emergent themes

regardless of the interviewer's conscious or unconscious expectations and the themes were triangulated to other interviews and a literature review.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Research reports are often written about people with the emphasis on the voice of the researcher, not the voice of the person. In this research, a voice was given to participants and empowered them to be heard on subjects about which they might otherwise remain silent or are silenced by others. The researcher's commitment to voice acknowledged the right of participants to be represented and to identify themselves in a way that made their experiences and perspectives available to others.

In the study's results, the researcher has segmented the overarching themes into categories of intersectionality, in which themes and codes existed in unison, but in less significant and still meaningfully nuanced ways. Because the emergent codes and themes were derived from interview questions in the form of ancillary talking points, results are couched in the order of the semi-structured questions from which they came. Sections and segments of participant provided data were woven into the itemized themes to contract a virtual dialogue between participants in these results.

Emergent Themes: Intersectionality and Synthesis***The Male Art Therapist***

The first series of interview questions were centered around the subject's relationship to the field of art therapy: 1) What first attracted you to art therapy? 2) How and when did that attraction start? 3) What was the moment you first considered becoming involved with art therapy? The second series of questions were also centered around the subject's relationship to the field; 4) How has gender played a part in your identity as an art therapist? 5) How would you describe the male art therapist? 6) Who or what influences (or influenced) your answer to #5 the most? and 7) How does gender imbalance in the education and practice of art therapy influence

art therapy's efficacy with male clients? From these questions the following themes emerged and supporting dialogue from participant interviews follows in conceptual, not chronologic, order.

Community

Community was an emergent theme and the following intersections occurred in participant dialogue.

Community and Art Therapy. It was a standard response in participants' answers that art therapy was an *unknown* field until each participant was enlightened by someone in their self-defined community. These relationships developed into a *lineage*, an intersectionality with a sense of community and interlinked personal identities.

Participant Mr. A. Chu typified the response of most, if not all participants, saying, I didn't know anything about art therapy. I didn't even know that there was such a thing. Doing therapy for one person is also like talking to yourself, and I felt that. I wouldn't say that I knew exactly what art therapy was [for several years]. To be honest, I'm not sure if I know the answer to the question at this point. I feel that every day there's a new insight.

Participant Ms. B. Fish stated,

I was first attracted to art therapy when I met Pat Allen, becoming friends with me when she saw my artwork. People [in general] were really interesting. I liked the idea of being able to make...images with other people.

Participant Mr. R. Bonk said of his personal experience and introduction to art therapy, "I had always used art as my coping mechanism growing up as a child. I don't think that I realized art therapy was a *thing* until I entered college." Participant Mr. Greb [pseudonym], said,

Growing up, I was always interested in art and was always painting and drawing. My Grandma made a whole kind of show, where she would read a book, and then make

snacks or things kind of themed to whatever the book was.

Participant Mr. D. Anthon said,

A friend's father taught at the University of Illinois and he I went to her house for dinner one night. He was talking to me about this new field called *art therapy*. I could take my past life, put it together with my current life and make a career of this for myself.

Community and Lineage. Participant Greb continued their discussion of community and mentioned,

I had no idea about *art therapy*. [At school] for my undergrad, I went in for painting and drawing, and I was loving that. Then one of my friends was like, ..., while you're signing up for classes, have you heard of art therapy?

Fish shared,

Harriet Wadeson, who was teaching, was the director of the master's program [at the University of Illinois, Chicago] and was probably the most published art therapist at that time. *Art Psychotherapy*, [Wadeson (2010)] was a foundational book in so many ways for me. She did debates with Edith Kramer. She had a degree in social work as well.

Wadeson's mentor and teacher was Hanna Kwiatkowski at the National Institute of Health (NIH). McNiff and Wadeson both got their PhD's at the Union Institute. I would say Wadeson is right behind the founders [of art therapy] and was a contemporary of Judy Rubin.

In this and other ways, participants connected art therapy to a lineage within the community, which could be attributed to the community being smaller than other counselling fields. Anthon succinctly stated his lineage to art therapy saying, "I met Don Seiden [Director and founder of the art therapy program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago]. It was a light bulb moment." As for Bonk,

[My practicum instructor] was probably one of my closest allies and mentors [expressing community] because she's seen me through my changes and through my [gender] transition. She's really helped to help me see things from different perspectives and help me to stop and look at how my own personal changes affect the way that I see the world of art therapy. How that changes my role as an art therapist.

Anthon said of his lineage in the community of art therapy which also intersects with gender in the field,

Dr. Abby Calisch was my professor in the graduate school of the Art Institute of Chicago, and she convinced the hospital [where she worked] to create an expressive therapy department. It's not just a gender thing. She was the one who created it from the very beginning, and then when she left, she gave it to somebody else. And then he left, she passed it on to me.

As if he was reflecting on his lineage in a rediscovered way in the moment of his interview, he said, "That's an interesting connection."

Participant Ms. T. Harris said, "It was a poster that I saw while I was completing my master's in Fine Arts degree at University of Indianapolis." She also shared

I spoke to my academic advisor about it, ... and got in touch with Kathy Gottschall [Founder of the MAAT Program at SMWC, and sure enough... I was maybe [in] the second cohort [2002]. I worked under Joani Rothenberg for a while and had some of her groups, then she supervised me. Art was always the most consistent therapy I had, especially for my culture.

Harris said, "That's [art is] what I've used to get through a lot of life." In reference to our follow up discussion of art and therapy in a convergent trajectory in art of the 21st Century, she said

“Yes, art and therapy have been converging throughout the 20th century. I think it’s always been there.”

Community and Gender. On the topic of gender in the field of art therapy, Chu said, I didn’t know that this profession was a majority of women. ... I came to residency for the first time in my cohort out of 26 people, there were only two males, including myself, and then I realized, this is not what I expected. I still don’t feel the difference between me and a female counterpart. As a male art therapist, I’m not sure if I have something special to offer that a female counterpart cannot.

Bonk also discussed gender disparity in the field, saying, “In the academic world, I think I could count on one hand the number of men that I remember encountering either as staff or as fellow students. [then repeated] I could probably count them all on one hand,” as if this may have been an unrecognized reality prior to his interview for the study. He clarified his admission by saying, “This may be biased by studying at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College which has a foundation as a women’s college and is [still] heavily populated by women faculty and students.”

Anthon said “I do think that men approach things a little bit differently. I think that it’s good to have a variety on the faculty at any university.” In addition, he noted that in reference to the gender dynamic within the AATA organization,

When we get together [at a conference focus group for men during AATA conferences] there’s about as many gay men as there are straight men. ... All the women thought that we would be out there at this men’s *secret meeting* bashing women in the field. They [these focus groups] were exclusively male. [When] women wanted to come, none of us had a problem with that at all. I think that both men and women [in the profession] try really hard to manage the [gender] intersectionality that we all face.

Harris, said when asked to describe men in the field that they are, “Very, very open, fun, creative and very honest. Very down to earth and grounded. Very professional.” Participant Ms. Wam [pseudonym] said, “Male art therapist? They’re very open, they’re very in touch with their feelings. They’re tolerant. They don’t have a large ego. They are just very grounded.” She went on to characterize this behavior as, “Relative to my father, I think that’s extraordinary, but that’s my experience.” According to Fish “The male art therapist is different than the female art therapist,” and stated that men are,

Somewhat isolated from the rest of the community of art therapists. I think the ones that have done the best in relating to the group [of art therapists] have been gay. ... I don’t know if that has to do with being gay or stepping away from [conventionality] ... making a space to go into that deep place.

Returning to Anthon,

Male art therapists ... I would say that a lot of us are tortured. We are aware of our privilege, yet we still have privilege, and we can’t really dismantle that privilege. This [AATA] is an organization that is predominantly women [and] women should have major roles. I don’t begrudge that. I do think that it is it is hard for us [as] men to understand our place and not take advantage of who we are, but to also not shrink from who we are either.

He summarized his view with an affirmation, however, saying “When [we] do fight back,” speaking of conflicts between men and women in the field, “Men so often back down.”

With a different, and opposite perspective on the community of men within art therapy, Galarraga was clear “In my multicultural competency course, I remember the main professor was male, attending the local counseling education and supervision program.” Our interview conversation intersected gender, privilege, lineage, and conflict as he went on to say, “I was

disappointed with the course because there was intersectionality brought up but not dissected, just glazed over.” Galarraga relayed in his interview that he chose to exercise consumer privilege and express his disappointment for which he felt chastised by the director of his program. Lineage as expressed by Galarraga was a negative influence as opposed to a positive one experienced by other participants. He explained, “It was my reality.”

Galarraga continued touching other areas of intersectionality in the study as he recalled, “Originally I wanted to center my thesis topic on the male in art therapy,” [proximal to this research],

I remember sitting in our thesis planning course, identifying that [men in art therapy] was the topic of choice. One professor who was leading the planning course said, ‘That’s not a topic of importance,’ and that individual [when] thinking about identifiers, was an older White, cisfemale, heterosexual. It was soul crushing.”

He also articulated disappointment in terms of a lost opportunity for a meaningful contribution to the field, saying,

I had to do some research to understand the male art therapy identity, and what it means to bring that identity to a space, especially when providing art therapy. When you [the researcher in context of this interview] asked what a male art therapist looks like, I think a male art therapist looks like a male identified person who navigates life as a male and has these [male] social constructs ascribed to them. At the same time, this individual has the skill set of being compassionate, empathetic, helpful for patients as they navigate through different emotions and emotional turmoil, they may have experienced, and are bringing to the therapeutic space.”

Privilege

Privilege emerged in a robust way in the participant interviews. According to Chu “When Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997, I can still see that for people born after that, we see Westerners as more, better than us in all ways” Harris broadened the discussion of privilege to include the voices of many groups,

They didn’t just start with the European White woman. [in reference to European Female Privilege] It didn’t start there. Being a male, being a minority in the field, [the same] as African American female or other. Being a minority is something that White females are [beginning to] face [in the community of art therapy]. They are holding on to it [art therapy]. I learned a lot when I was the only one [African American at SMWC]. This is a strong White female profession, no matter what way you look at it. A lot of these art techniques [in use] come from other cultures and [other] times, but who has the privilege to say, ‘I did it first,’ or ‘I got recognized?’ [by usurping African American cultures]. I was the only African American female in that program. That’s imbalance. That’s all I’m saying. Find your voice. If that voice is African American, male, gender equality, whatever. I’ve always had art, so I think everybody’s experience is different no matter who you are. My art was my voice through [the MAAT] program, so it wasn’t about me as much trying to connect to them to validate who I was. Finding the information that made me feel, ‘oh, this is who I am.’

According to Galarraga “I think my impression of it EMP is how it has been utilized and, in many spaces has been harmful.” He also offered an example,

I worked with [clients] in ways that were culturally informed by their own cultural values and their own cultural backgrounds. Students that I had were Black and it was interesting

to get the perspective on their dynamic with the on-site, Harm's Touch¹ supervisor. I would often bring up the dynamic of race, seeing EMP as a function of race. It establishes privilege.

Greb said about privilege viewed through the lens of his clients,

I guess because my gender is more, queer rather than strictly cisgender. I always bring that in [when discussing gender]. I feel like I bring in race more than gender because most of my clients are Latinx. I do a lot of research, given that most of my clients are Latinx.

Identity

The identity of each participant had elements of societal norms, gender expectations, and personal convictions or passions. The theme of *Identity* became a conglomerate of several *identities* intersecting with other codes and themes. As an example, Fish peripherally mentioned identity in a specific way,

I don't know that I would have been able to have children at the same time [as I practiced]. My passion for the work has been hard on relationships. [A partner might say] Why would you want to be in a place where people are restrained? [As if to say,] It's fine to be an artist, but an artist that spends time in psychiatric hospitals is a little over the top. I think being an artist as a woman is [already] challenging. It's that woman behind the man thing always ringing in my ears.

Greb summarized identity in a forthright, and more complex way when he said,

¹ This was an unaware reference according to the participant. His class had incorporated the concept without citing the work of Fish (2016). Harm's touch: How we are affected by what we witness, in Fish (2016). *Art-based supervision - cultivating therapeutic insight through imagery* (pp. 105-127). Taylor & Francis Ltd., Routledge.

In democratizing the [therapy] space, really focusing on the person, studio art therapy has always been integrated into my identity as an artist. I don't resonate [with] traditional hegemonic masculinity. That's not something I relate to. I've never really had a strong group of male-identified straight friends, so I've always been more comfortable around women and queers in general. [The male therapist is more fluid], and the plurality [means] I'm thinking in heteronormative, norms centered, and I kind of fit that too. I know a handful of others who are queer and male, and art therapists. Straight cismale therapists that I know, for the most part are pretty cool. It's [as though] I'm bringing baggage from my own experience with straight cismen and [transferring] that. Upon further reflection, it [identity] becomes more nuanced, i.e., more than binary, because my gender is more queer [non-binary] rather than strictly cis[male]. Early on, when homosexuality was being conceptualized and created, it was [considered] gender inversion and [referred to as] a woman inside a man. It's multifold any time we [consider] identity. [It's] inherently the case. Only recently did we start to deconstruct sex, gender, and sexuality to find what are some relatively independent factors. What are the intersections and what does that mean?

Socioeconomics

Socioeconomics was a pronounced theme though not all participants discussed socioeconomics directly. For some, it was a cultural issue and as such an intersection of identity. For others, who were students just coming out of an educational program, it may have been premature to discuss socioeconomics. Anthon, for instance, observed, "I think a lot of people go back to school and get their degree in art therapy and then they don't go on to practice. They don't go through the hard knocks of getting established as a professional." Harris had socioeconomic concerns when entering the field,

I had children. I didn't have a supportive spouse at the time. Nobody understood what art therapy was, [indicating] a hocus-pocus [as opposed to serious] career. I needed to do it, [because] it just wouldn't get out of my head. ... When I was going through my divorce and being real about the marriage, [art] was just a casualty of divorce. That was a paradigm shift in myself.

Fish, for instance, said

I tried to live as an artist for a while then got a job at a hospital. I wanted to be paid for making art and I wanted to protect my art. Life as an artist is not hospitable. I've [also] been a very practical art therapist.

Anthon was forthcoming about the individual art therapist's commitment to their field,

I was attracted to both the art component of art therapy and the therapy component of it, [i.e.,] that it could be a living. [Students] were making a big [financial] commitment to a field which could be a lucrative career for them. The female students who did take me up on the challenge, a lot of them are now running programs. They're out there making really decent money in the field, so you don't have to be a starving artist.

In support of Anthon's thinking, one anonymous participant mentioned their six-figure income, saying, "There is a way of making really decent money. The individual has to be a participant." Harris added a passage about socioeconomic factors which intersected broadly with privilege, ethnicity, and community,

You can't say all White males are the same. It is all about the money [with some White males]. That's the defining tone of most White males, where the hierarchy is based on money. When I see them [White men] talking together it is more about who has, and not being on a lower [financial] spectrum.

A White male connects with a Black male to hold authority, I think. It is still that

sense of security and pride of being a White male, no matter where your economic status is. Among themselves [White men], it is more of a fight than one would think. A group of Asian men or a group of Black men and Hispanics work together more as a community.

Conflict

The theme of conflict was generated by participants when any two other themes were at odds with one another. Chu, saw conflict in the intersection of privilege and socioeconomics in his Hong Kong, colonized, heritage and said, “Inferior to Westerners, I would describe it as almost in the blood of my generation.” Fish incorporated conflict into the theme of community and lineage that intersected with privilege,

In one pivotal instance involving [a female instructor of mine], it felt competitive. Misuse of privilege can occur when lineage, academic power, and conflict intersect. In that situation, I left one school and moved on to teach in another graduate program, and that was a major shift for me.

When asked specifically about the presence of female competition in art therapy, Fish said,

There can be narcissism enabled by academic power when others want the light to shine on them. I had a strong teacher until I got strong. There was both transference and countertransference. When [a teacher] would stand up and say [things] in the middle of my presentations, it wasn't an encouragement, it was strange.

Imagine my history with [a] teacher ... in group class, we were told to sit on this orange rug, and the instructor would sit in the center, on a chair. We were on the floor in a circle around them, sort of like kindergartners. One of the assignments was to draw our transference to the instructor. It was a complex relationship.

Bonk told a different story of conflict at the intersection of identity, privilege, social injustice, with relation to values and beliefs. The participant's story was about transition and

transformation in the context of a spiritual experience of loss. This story was relayed with a sense of passion, perhaps reflecting his personal sense of loss of self and transformation, inherent to gender reassignment. The story also serves as a metaphor for the inner need to assign responsibility for injustice, not unlike being biologically mis-gendered at birth,

During the time that I was in high school, I had a very good friend. I was a very strange looking kid. I didn't really fit in well, and as things usually do, you drift apart. I moved away. I got a message from a mutual friend of ours that [this friend] had been involved in a murder suicide. [The] boyfriend had killed [them] and then killed [themselves]. It's not that I hadn't encountered death before. I had grandparents that had died. I had pets that had died. That wasn't a foreign concept. But something that happened so quickly and so violently. [They were] gone, and that shook me. I didn't feel like there was any sense of justice. This guy would have gotten prison time and [we] might have felt a sense of justice, but there wasn't because he killed himself.

On the emergent theme of conflict, participant, Greb asked,

How do we treat cisgendered straight men who are therapy averse as a rule? I guess it's a safety thing, [for example] because of my history of trauma with straight men and heterosexism.

For me I feel safer around women and queer folks than [in the company of] straight-man persecution. For me, it's a safety [issue]. We *poke* at that [straight-man persecution] and challenge it, and that doesn't mean we have to negate it completely. There could be areas that feel pretty good. I don't mean to be so radical that we leave everything [masculine] behind, especially in communities of color, where there may not be that extra privilege to just drop everything and leave. [As for *grief*] about the loss of Eurocentric male privilege, I think it's *predatory* because it's the threat of [privilege]

being lost. I don't know if there is grieving yet, but I think that liminal, in-between spaces [exist]. [That's] why it's so volatile and so scary for all parties.

Participant, Ms. Wam identified conflict racially with overtones of EMP intersecting with male therapist availability when she said,

Difference. How that power and balance played out and what kind of effect that a White [female] art therapist can have with children of color, maybe I'm not seeing it [EMP] because I don't want to see it in these kids.

Having a male listen to them, what kind of support that could give them and what kind of empowerment these kids could receive from a male versus a female, [or] a male therapist versus a female art therapist. In that same vein, I wonder about myself being a White woman and meeting with children of color, do they feel understood? What is their experience? What are their needs? Looking carefully at our understanding of the culture, our understanding of what their family looks like. It's complicated.

I've had some of the boys talk, almost in a sense that they are *the man of the house*. Mom needs to have them [take on that role] or they have heard statements that they are or should be in charge. The day that role is put on them, I think, relates in some ways they [expect to be] the ones that would be next in line to be in charge. A [deeply entrenched] patriarchal idea.

Anthon told a different story of privilege and conflict,

A woman social worker was attacked by a male patient. In a manager's meeting, this woman [manager] blamed the social worker for the way that she dressed. Women will tell you that there's a very valuable thing that women have with each other, that when men come into the room, it kind of upsets the apple cart.

Men don't necessarily have that [bonding]. [Perhaps] in sports, but they don't

always have it in other areas. In therapy, it is possible to have that kind of vulnerability. It can be an incredibly powerful thing to have a man who understands. It gets to you. Who resonates with me? It can be an incredibly powerful thing. Don't get me wrong, it's not to say that a woman can't have that kind of experience with the man. They can, but there's a slightly different edge to it. When men fight back [in the field of art therapy], it addresses that whole thing about the conflicts between men and women in the field because we [men] so often back down.

Galarraga had a view of conflict within the field of art therapy that intersected with art therapy education, privilege, and cultural competency. This passage appears in a separate intersection of themes involving the negative influence of community. In this instance he described conflict,

In my multicultural competency course, I remember the main professor was male. ... I was disappointed with how the course was run and how it was presented to us, especially because there was there was a lot of intersectionality brought up but not really dissected. They were glazed over.

I remember in that last class I created [an art] piece that was difficult for me to create as [it was] a response piece [specifically] to the course. As we went around the room [presenting our pieces], I waited till the end to speak up I said something along the lines of, 'you know, this experience in this course has been really disappointing.' It was disappointing to sit in the course of a semester where the first few classes we were taught by the professor, then for the second and third parts of the course, ... were taught by each other, presenting on different chapters. I said, 'that just didn't feel like it was worth my time nor my investment of money for the course. It felt like the course was incomplete and not actually providing multicultural competency [training] and other things.'

I got an email from the director. I was spoken to and told that this wasn't the place and time to share my reaction to the course [even though that was the point of the assignment]. I said, 'well, it had to be said,' like it was just the truth. It was my [intersectional, multiculturally incompetent] reality.

Values and Beliefs

Distinct from but related to individual identities, participants expressed characteristics of underlying values and beliefs which were a part of their histories. In some cases, these histories were directly related to their decision to be an art therapist and informed their work as art therapists.

Chu said, in reference to studying art therapy in the context of beliefs, I didn't really put water on this seed. Sometimes I prayed about it. I'm a Christian [and my pastor] was praying for people at the sanctuary and he was pointing at me and saying, 'Hey, you. The one with the hat, stand up. I have a word for you.' I was like, 'oh, this is unusual [for] me.' I'm not sure if you're Christian or not [referring to the research interviewer], but I had to share my church [and their relation to this story], that they are used to something like that, the work of a spirit.

I had never been called out in front of so many people. That was the first time. A guest speaker at church told me "God wants me to tell you that you will become a healer" [a spiritual calling]. My pastor was asking people to come up in front of the stage to pray or get prayed for if we want to know what God's plan is for us. So, if we believe that God has a plan for us, but we don't know what that is, we want to know about it and get prayed for by the pastor, we just go to the front line.

As though summarizing the influence of his previous story, Chu said, “I didn’t really have to study art therapy. I could [have] just enjoyed my life as it was. In that moment, I went out and I closed my eyes. I began to pray. The moment I closed my eyes, that just hit me. Wow!” Fish expressed values and beliefs in a different but still powerful way. This passage was cited earlier in the study under a different theme and appears here highlighting its intersectionality with values and beliefs,

I don’t know that I would have been able to have children at the same time [as being an art therapist]. My passion for the work has been hard on relationships. When I was writing my book [Fish, 2016] I would hunker-down for the weekend and just write. That’s one of the things that has been most difficult in my relationships. Sometimes I need to express it [the intensity of the work] and [other] people freak out.

Greb stated, “I had always done a lot of social justice work and volunteering. I’m Jewish, so that’s part of the cultural piece of *tikkun olam* (Hebrew: תיקון עולם) which is ‘fixing the world.’ So, I mostly volunteered.” For Wam, values and beliefs were expressed in religious and regional terms,

I grew up in a small Midwestern town. I grew up Catholic, and this was [the source of] Eurocentric male privilege in my immediate family, growing up in my family with my husband and my current family. It’s something that I grew up with at my school in my church.

Bonk claimed a *cheetah* spirit guide among his values and beliefs,

You’ll see this [cheetah] in a similar way to [his supervisor’s] artwork. [The supervisor] uses [a specific] image ... as a representation of [them], or a representation of [them] following a [specific image] as a way of guiding [them] to see differently. In the same way the cheetah is mine.

The actual animal [taught me] some things and I've learned some things about myself. While this is a big cat and it does have predatory instincts and it's very fast, it is also not the largest predator on the savannah. It could very easily get overpowered by larger animals. It brought me to this idea that I am aware [of] some forces beyond my control. There are times that I need to slow down, stop and rest in order for me to regain my energy ... similar to a cheetah that can only go for a few spurts at a time.

Galarraga was more circumspect saying only, "[Art therapy] seems like it aligns with my values."

Harris deeply embraced her beliefs and values when discussing her artwork, I painted [this] during church sermons on that altar [showing the researcher a particular painting during the interview]. I was painting as the pastor was preaching. Wow! That's my power bird [pointing to her own spiritual symbol of strength].

Changing conversational directions while looking at another piece of artwork Harris said,

This is a poem about slavery, this whole series [pointing to several artworks]. When people seek knowledge ... it's not a matter of changing what's there but adding to [it]. Being able to take your journey to something else, you journey to something else because it's a representation of the world we live in. I went to school to seek information about me, to better myself more than trying to change something that's been established for me to go through.

Personal Privilege

As an outcome of Socratic questioning, participants communicated about themselves and the field of art therapy through a lens of privilege. This lens was either internal, when a participant understood that they were the beneficiary of privilege, or external when a participant experienced the privilege of others. According to Chu,

I never really put Eurocentric and male together. To me, male privilege is also Chinese. Things that we experience, as a son in the house, you may receive more from your parents. As a son, you may receive a higher portion of inheritance than your sister, for example. Because most of the Hong Kong people are migrants from China, there's only a small portion of Hong Kong people who are originally from Hong Kong.

[When a male is 18 years old, the] Hong Kong government allows them to choose a piece of land, for free, to build their house. But if you're a female, you don't get that. I've been seeing male privilege as something that is within the Hong Kong local culture. From a racial or cultural perspective, Hong Kong was a British colony [referring to EMP]. On the topic of male privilege, there is also such a thing here in Hong Kong culture, as in the Chinese or Eastern culture[s].

Fish on the nature of EMP in art therapy and intellectual privilege said,

The male art therapist is different than the female art therapist. Male art therapists are almost always directors of things. ... If medicine is dominated by male physicians, dominated by gender, the character of that field will have the dominant gender's attributes. I think that in schools you will find a disproportionate number of male teachers in art therapy than you'll find in the general population.

I think we should be putting *shamanism* right up there with it [EMP]. I wrote in my dissertation about *ocularism*, [characterized as] we privilege what we see. The written word withstands time differently. Slaves weren't allowed to read. Women, by and large, were not allowed to read in many cultures. I think Eurocentric male privilege gets in their [men's] way.

I think there's an expectation that they [men] can control things more than they can and manage more than they can. Think about the women writers in the early 20th

century who were writing under men's names, to be able to be published.

The researcher reflected Fish's comments for clarification, "Eurocentric male privilege is being supplanted by a postmodernist view of different truths, as opposed to the absolute truth mainly purveyed by men in the society." Fish replied,

Yes, but I think that puts even more of a burden on the male privileged person. There's an awful lot of what is going on with shamanism and indigenous practices that is passed down in ways that were inconsistent with a Eurocentric way of looking at things.

There's also women's medicine and women's ways of knowing things that aren't written down in that kind of way. If we're going to *privilege* the written word, then we must find a way to open it up to other practices.

One of the things that I've tried to do in my work in support of inclusion is to support writings of people of color. One of the things I did early in the [AATA] Multicultural Committee was when we passed around shoeboxes full of [old] photographs from AATA early members of color. In those presentations we talked about scanning, we talked about writing articles, we talked about presentations. We talked about ways to solidify the memory of those things in a less ephemeral way. So, bringing my Eurocentric background to looking at their word-of-mouth heritage was one of the things that I've tried to do.

The researcher asked, "Literacy as privilege?" Fish said, "Yes."

Greb reflected on giving and receiving privilege as a spectator, [The term] Eurocentric [is a] colonization of ideals. Then they [cultures] have adapted it to what it looks like now. But it is [still] complex, permeating everything.

I think even as a student and new emerging professional, an intern, not even credentialed, I still hold so much privilege in that [therapy] room or virtual studio space.

[as a White cisgender male] I'm not able to say, "OK. It's egalitarian." No, I must continue, every time I hear something [privileged], responding [to that privilege] to show that I am disinterring [privilege], challenging covert and overt systems that are the root of these problems. [I do this] so we can learn about them, see them, objectify them, externalize them, manipulate them through the creative process, and then find new avenues of being.

For me, especially with queer theory and in my work with my clients, [it is] White supremacy I see as the root of these issues that are present for my clients and friends and communities. It's all tied to that Eurocentric male privilege because it's maintaining those power structures that subjugate the other for profit and maintenance. Current power dynamics, as it is in my practice, I counter them explicitly and implicitly, but mostly explicitly. It needs to be explicit. It has long been a covert influence with an impact on everybody involved.

In reference to privilege, participant Wam said,

I don't see the privilege, the power. I don't see those differences in these children that I do when I meet adults. Maybe a White male or a Black male, I don't see those differences of privilege and power in the children I work with.

Bonk introduced the concept of anti-gender privilege to this research,

There were ... instances where I maybe didn't have as much room to speak [as a man], not that I didn't want to. Recognizing my male privilege and recognizing that there are things about me that make navigating in the world a little easier ... and listening to the experiences of my classmates makes me want to stop and take a second and reflect upon my own situation to make me realize [my personal privilege].

At this point in the interview, the researcher noted that Bonk had introduced what became the code of privilege self-awareness and policing that privilege. Bonk continued,

This is an interesting perspective because I bring something to the table. That, or at least a different perspective to the table. I want to be transparent [about this] because I believe that this insight will also help to look at the Eurocentric male perspective, male privilege, in a different way.

I'm transgender. I was born female, and I transitioned to be male. I started transitioning during my schooling. It was an interesting experience. When people are adamant and refused to believe that male privilege is a thing, that's when I feel the need to chime in and say, 'take it from me. I know it exists because I've been on both sides.' I do this in instances when I feel that it is appropriate for me. Disclosure is not always something that I do.

I am at a point where I pass, where people can look at me and say, this is a man. They don't have to guess, or question based on my appearance. I have a lower voice. I have facial hair. I have more muscle mass. To me, I appear male for all intents and purposes. I am [male]. I believe that I am [male], completely. Just in the same way that anyone who might identify as gay or lesbian or bisexual or queer may look a certain way, but it's in instances where people refuse to believe that male privilege is a thing that I can bring it up.

The researcher asked, "When you interact with male clients, how do you see that same Eurocentric male privilege (EMP) as a part of their identity?" Bonk said,

Toxic masculinity. I feel obligated, compelled to bring this perspective and shine light on these ideas of toxic masculinity. Bringing up Eurocentric male perspectives and shining light on it.

Clients thank me, being able to speak [as a man] on the importance of looking inward and truly tapping into your creative self to express yourself in a healthy, constructive manner that does not harm anyone. It's essential to have people who are in that position of power, speak to those young men who may not otherwise want to listen to anyone else.

Anthon, speaking of privilege includes previously cited passages but are used here in conjunction of a broader quote that includes the context of personal privilege,

Over the years, being a male, and being a White male with all the privilege it gives me, I take away some of that privilege because I'm a gay man. You know, some of that privilege gets shot down a little.

In a field [art therapy] of predominantly women, so many interesting things come up for me. [When a woman] offered me [a] job and I accepted. She said to me, "if you had been a woman, I would never have hired you." Should I have refused the offer because this was going to be a bad situation? [Much later in that same workplace cited earlier in this research] a woman social worker was attacked by a patient. In a manager's meeting, this [same] woman blamed the social worker for way that she dressed. We had to remove her [the manager] from her position.

I worked hard to get to the position where my clients saw me as a human being and not as a White man. I chose to use that term. I chose it consciously. Because I think it's important to identify that I can't change the color of my skin no matter what I do. That's always how I'm going to be and [as an example] I had a young woman student who was Black, and first of my interns who was Black. In that internship, on a substance abuse facility, the powerful point of her and I working together was that the clients didn't see that she was my student.

They [the clients] didn't think of her as being less than me or underneath me in any way because that's the kind of relationship we had. It was more of a collegial relationship, and that's how the clients saw it. She came in there with her skin color, and they immediately accepted her race. As a new person would come on the unit, I would have to start all over again, building the trust immediately. Because I was White, I was not trusted.

The researcher noted that Anthon was reinforcing the concept of privilege awareness and self-policing and taking responsibility for that privilege.

Galarraga expressed a related concept of anti-privilege as an aspect of maleness when it intersects with ethnicity. Galarraga is not always perceived as Latinx,

Gender has played a part in the sense that it's been interesting to navigate through the profession of art therapy often knowing that I'm the one of one of you in the room [only male]. Not just when it comes to my gender, but even other parts [referring to his ethnicity]. But gender, specifically, I often found myself being one of the few in the room in my cohort. When I entered the [art therapy] program [and] because the cohort didn't have any males, I was assigned a Salvadoran ... supervisor. I felt targeted [as Latinx]. Good intentions, but that's what it was. It was often hard during my program to bite my tongue on things.

There were often times when I felt, especially from ... earlier experience and other [similar] experiences early in the program, that I felt the need to speak up and speak out when I felt uncomfortable with something. I played that male card where I was like, you know what? No one's going to speak up, so I'm going to speak up. As the person who looks very different in the room [both maleness and ethnicity], I'm going to go ahead and just speak my mind. However, it comes out, it comes out. If individuals don't

like it, they can process it and do with it whatever they need to. I guess there [may have been] a sense of male entitlement that played out.

To illustrate a point about personal privilege, awareness and self-policing, Greb treats many clients who are transitioning through different gender issues, and he chose to hypothetically share one client's trajectory through treatment,

[Let's say] I treat a Latin transgender man who's currently [both] transitioning and coming out. There are no Latinx transgender men models [in his environment], so centering those voices and bodies in gender redefinitions becomes a very lonely experience.

He has experiences of being on the other end [of male privilege] and being oppressed by that sensibility. 'I don't want to treat my girlfriend like that, but if I'm to be a man, I have to.' ... Because he's not out to his parents and he's living at home, he's still *here* [in this mental space] and he can't *cut it*. He went out with his girlfriend when she came to visit and he said, 'Yeah, I work my hair up into a man-bun and everybody was socially affirming, saying yes.' It's played out [as though] there's other ways of being a man and masculine presenting. Redefining what it means to identify as a man, socially transitioning.

Exception: Harm's Touch

Exception codes in the research, relative to individual themes had an impact on this research. Most exceptions did not expand across ranges of age, gender, ethnicity, or common experience but were present in various narratives and considered by the researcher. Only one exception was considered germane to the overall study.

Harm's Touch was a recurring theme in research data, though it was only named twice. Galarraga had a "Harm's Touch Supervisor" in one of his internship placements. He expressed

no knowledge of the concept's origin in the chapter "Harm's Touch: How We Are Affected by What We Witness," located in Fish (2016) *Art-based Supervision - Cultivating Therapeutic Insight Through Imagery* (pp. 105-127). The concept of Harm's Touch was an implicit code in several interviews but specifically named in only these two. As such, Harm's Touch was claimed as an exception theme in this research and a key finding of the research. Borrowing from the poetry of César Cruz (1997) a gang violence prevention advocate and Dean of Secondary Schools Program at Harvard University, participant Fish said,

The role of art is 'to comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.' I think it's true. Blaming clients for inherited strength, weaknesses, or attributes that they didn't earn, just shuts a door, and makes them pull back, angry, like January 6th [2021, referring to the U.S. Capitol insurrection]. Harm's Touch is the experience of witnessing another person's pain. I think the inability to share Harm's Touch is more than the solitary experience of it, because if you can't talk about it ... it's too hard for others that don't choose this path [healing professions] to hear. Talking about the screams echoing in your head from a kid in restraints and other abuse that happens at work to those in other realms of your life can hurt them and leave you feeling more alone with the experience.

You can be with sensitive people, but if you express yourself, you can pull them right into the situation with you. Harm's Touch may also affect people who are solitary to a greater degree than those who are not. That's interesting because I would say that many people in relationships are also solitary in their lives, unable to process Harm's Touch within their relationships. Men that I've been with want to fix stuff. You know, it's like if something's wrong and it's bothering you, 'let me do something to fix it,' and you can't fix this stuff. The only way to fix it is to process it, and they [majority of men] don't want to process it. They want to fix it.

The Male Therapy Client

The literature documented a cultural shift away from traditional male-dominant cultural paradigms (O’Neil, 1982; Scher, 1990). These literary sources establish earlier attitudes that continue among males in present (e.g., rural) culture and continue to use existing, maladaptive coping strategies to navigate change. As participant WAM said,

(My father) graduated high school in 1965, and so, very resistant to his feelings and to therapy in general. A lot of those same characteristics are true of my uncles, of my father-in-law, of my husband’s uncles. I would say, also of my husband. Resistant to the idea that you talk about your feelings and that therapy can be helpful. ‘You gut through it. You’re strong.’

This description of a dated, male-dominant paradigm now describes a population in need of therapeutic services.

More recent literature advocated for a reflection on gender through the lens of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Mohanty, 2013; Sajnani et al., 2017; Sajnani & Kaplan, 2012; Talwar, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Goldner (2020) referred to “positive masculinity” as a theme that described the relationship between the male therapists and male clients (p. 3). In recent decades gender has been highlighted as a part of psychopathologies and male clients as challenged by expressing emotions. Gender is a powerful factor in a client’s identity (Goldner, 2020; Mahalik et al., 2012; Wright & Wright, 2017) that supports male therapist [transference] as an alternative father figure loosely bound to a flat presentation of male gender as a means of addressing these populations in need.

Both scenarios are indicative of a need for male-informed interventions. Both also indicate a higher level of acceptance of therapy by males when delivered by male therapists.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

This chapter contains a discussion of the research questions a) How do art therapists perceive male art therapists? b) What are art therapists' experiences with gender in the field? c) What are art therapists' ideas and opinions concerning male clients? d) How were gender considerations built into art therapy education? Evidence collected in this study suggested gender was both a socially defined construct and a continuum between opposites (i.e., masculinity and femininity). An individual's perception of what it meant to be somewhere on that continuum came from their experiences and the messages received from others through culture, context, structures, and interactions.

This study assumed the efficacy of art therapy when treating traditional (talk) therapy averse males and assumed a correlation between men's underrepresentation in the field of art therapy and the number of men seeking art therapy. Moreover, it was assumed that men are best served when viewed as a multi-cultural category for which cultural competence and humility are foregrounded. By reframing the research questions, this chapter discusses how male art therapists are perceived within the field of art therapy, the impact of men on art therapy education and the efficacy of art therapy on the population of men as well as the nature of cultural competency in general, understanding of men as a distinct cultural category predicated on understanding the psyche of a person that can be actualized "only if those who provide services to individuals implement this knowledge into their programs and services" (Jackson, 2020, p. 107).

The literature presented two views, either men were still defined Homerically as *ἠνροπέη*, system dependent with a need to fit in (e.g., corporate manliness) or *ἀγηνροπέη*, conforming to an unspoken code (e.g., men in prison, excessive manliness) with a proscribed list of stereotypical male survival attributes such as act tough, never appear weak or vulnerable, don't snitch, stand

up for yourself if disrespected or challenged to fight, win the fight, and humiliate or destroy your opponent in any way you can, do not cooperate with the authorities, etc.

Key Findings

The predominantly female system of art therapy was found to be neither oppressive nor inherently sexist and this research gave participants from across a gender spectrum the power of voice that was both relevant and useful. Key findings of the study indicate that the relationship between male and female art therapists was multi-dimensional ranging from contentious to amicable or collegial. In general participants aspired to find mutual respect and equilibrium within the field. Another key finding was that male art therapists were not perceived by any gender participating in the study to exhibit typically male characteristics.

This study raised a question for the researcher, is there a relationship between gender disparity in academic art therapy programs that affects the development of male-informed art therapy curricula and interventions. The researcher also suspected that female predominance within the field skews cultural competence for male therapy clients.

This study found that the population of men could reasonably be identified as a multicultural category. If the view that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgment of their differences requires a dominant political culture, then a dominant culture shifting away from male domination (and the demise of EMP) requires that the treatment of men and treatments devised for use by other genders in the treatment of men should be subject to the same standards of cultural competency required for multicultural categories.

While specialties, career path, gender status, and experience varied for each individual participant, the eight participant interviews had common themes and one exception from which to triangulate trustworthiness of the research. These themes were prominent factors in

understanding participants through their journey in art therapy. With a dynamic quality, the research themes represent a variety of ages, gender identities, and cultures and brought together changing perspectives and found a literary portrait frozen in time. Each theme is discussed in more detail below.

The Male Art Therapist

The presence and study of male art therapists was inextricably linked to the male art therapy client supported by (Tavani, 2007; Vick, 2007). Results from interviews indicated that male art therapists were inconsistent with the prevailing description of men in general and the attitudes of men described in the literature (Bass & Malamuth, 1996; Guerrero, 2018; LaChat, 1988; O'Neil, 2002; Poewe, 1980; Rogers, 1975; Scher, 1990). Gender disparity in the field was demonstrated (Elkins et al., 2003; McNiff, 1976; Tavani, 2007; Vick, 2007), though the literature neither supported or contradicted some participant interviews in which male art therapists were characterized as facing issues of isolation, suffering, and otherness within the field.

No thorough demographic study of art therapists is available. Gender-based salary discrepancies, leadership positions, student scholarship availability, and the impact of gender influence in art therapy education was not found.

Community

Understanding the male art therapist required an understanding of postmodern gender theory with social divisions and systems (Burt, 2011; Dillabough, 2001; McCarthy & Edwards, 2011; Rosenau, 1992). The literature supported the view of male art therapists as a distinct community of males outside of traditional male values and characteristics (Leavy, 2016).

This study is different than other studies in the literature (Elkins et al., 2003) because a written narrative imprinted with the participants' understanding of the male art therapist has been

incorporated. The role of the researcher was to collect and interpret samples from the art therapy community (Davis' (2003).

The nature of *community* among participants was often described as an aspect of art therapy education. Community provided a lineage of other themes such as values, identity, and personal privilege relayed through instructors. Community also provided a context for conflict and resolution that would contribute to their personal growth and the greater benefit to the art therapy client.

Privilege

Regarding privilege as a gender issue usually ascribed to men, Guerrero (2018) stated “As a man, I can say from my own personal experience, that what makes privilege of any kind so dangerous is how easily we deny its existence. Through denial, we protect the privileges we hold from being fully acknowledged, thus preventing it from truly ending.” Literature broadly supported this point of view (Belsky, 2007; Guerrero, 2018; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016; Hooks, 2015; Kimmel, 2010; McNiff, 1976; O'Neil, 2002; Scher, 1990; Talwar, 2010; VandenBos, 2007; Wright & Wright, 2017). The literature also supported the findings that privilege exists among White women (Junge, 2014) and as the profession of art therapy is populated predominantly by White women, the influence of that privilege brings into question cultural competence when treating men (Beel et al., 2017).

Participants in this research are represented by Galarraga when he said “I think we’ve seen it get to a point as a society where [privilege] has been toxic. Individuals have felt entitled to use privilege when they can ... entitled to be less attuned and more blind.” Participants, in this way agreed with the literature in the overall sense of privilege and their response to the nature of privilege caused the separate and equal theme of personal privilege to emerge.

Identity

The literature supported various forms of self-identity based on an individual's circumstances (Talwar, 2010; VandenBos, 2015). The term *identity* touched on social and cultural divisions (McCarthy & Edwards; 2011) as well as multiple individual identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

A central theme of the literature was to build an understanding of contemporary (postmodern) male identity (Fincher et al. 2002; Goldner, 2020; Palahniuk, 2018; Wright & Wright, 2017). Another literary theme in the literature reflected an extensive history of traditional masculinity throughout Western civilization (George, 2020; Graziosi & Haubold, 2003; Jacobsen, 1973; Sandars, 2007; Wakeman, 1985).

Among participants, the theme of identity often encompassed gender, whether theirs or their client's. Primarily, the concept of identity was expressed in terms of their identity as an art therapist and incorporated several other themes such as values and beliefs, community, and personal privilege.

Socioeconomics

Individual participants discussed the importance of socioeconomics in personal terms as art therapists, but literature exploring socioeconomics in the profession of art therapy was scant. Traditional socioeconomics (e.g., male v. female income differentials) found in the literature generalized overall socioeconomic differences between genders and wasn't relevant to this study. If participants are viewed as stakeholders, however, research data indicates a need for further exploration and research of socioeconomics within the field.

Every participant had access to a graduate art therapy program at some point in their life and the socioeconomics of higher education was an unspoken, but relevant theme. Other participants were partnered [in relationships] and did not rely solely on their individual income

as an art therapist which has implications on the choice of art therapy as a profession of choice with gender considerations that intersect with the traditional role of males as the primary source of income in a family.

Conflict

The theme of conflict occurred when any two themes were at odds with one another. In the literature, conflict included incompatible and contradictory theories or differing points of view that eventually contributed to growth and understanding over periods of time (American Psychiatric Association (APA), 1968, 1973, 1994, 2003; Dillabough, 2001; O'Neil, 2020). Conflict awareness was the first step in mitigating conflict resolution.

Among participants, conflict within the field of art therapy intersected with the lineage in art therapy education, privilege, and cultural competency. Conflict presented among the participants as a power dynamic more than a gender related issue though a power dynamic between art therapy educator and male art therapy student was implied. Conflict as expressed by the participants also contributed to personal growth and understanding over time.

Values and Beliefs

Values and beliefs in the literature were characteristically broad, couched in terms of existing cultural values of their time and place (George, 2020; Graziosi & Haubold, 2003; Jacobsen, 1973; Palahniuk, 2018; Pokhrel, 2011; Sandars, 2007; Wakeman, 1985). These broad terms were sometimes mentioned symbolically or metaphorically (e.g., deities, Sandars, 2007; Wakeman, 1985). More recent literature has had an active role in determining cultural values (e.g., homosexuality American Psychiatric Association (APA), 1968, 1973, 1994, 2003). Recent literary resources contradicted traditional paradigms (Elkins et al., 2003; McNiff, 1976; McNiff, 2009; Pokhrel, 2011; Tavani, 2007; Vick, 2007) suggesting a need for further study concerning values and beliefs of the art the art therapist.

Within the study's participants, individuals identified underlying values and beliefs as an integral part of their identities. In some cases, these identities were directly related to their decision to be an art therapist or currently informed their work as art therapists regardless of their gender.

Personal Privilege

Literature both supported and refuted self-policing behavior as a personal responsibility (Connell, 1995; Edwards & Jones, 2009; Fincher et al., 2002; Haywood & Ghail, 2007; Heilman et al., 2017; Palahniuk, 2018). The characteristic of privilege awareness was consistently identified in interviews with men, women, and transgender individuals as being necessary in treatment and in the field. Guerrero (2018) summarized a postmodern approach to policing personal behavior as a need for personal awareness on the part of men:

Men constantly work in a state of oblivion. Oblivious to how we are able to speak or behave without any regard of the audience or environment around us. Oblivious of the power we wield not necessarily based on merit, but because of the sociological factors and advantages associated with appearing male.

Participants generally agreed that awareness of *personal privilege* was a necessary characteristic for all genders. *Personal privilege* emerged as a distinct theme and a description of how an individual chooses to exercise their values by managing their privilege. On the nature of personal privilege and male informed art therapy education, Fish shared an example of resistance to managed *personal privilege* within the predominantly female field of art therapy, saying "You don't [treat] marginalization by marginalizing. That's not how you fix things. It isn't that she who gets the power gets to abuse power over everybody else."

Exception-Harm's Touch

Harm's Touch, as an explicit term occurred twice in the data, but the concept of Harm's Touch reverberated throughout the literature as well as other participants' interviews. To cite Fish (2016), the developer of the term Harm's Touch, it is used to describe how people are affected by what they witness, as a self-aware trauma informed approach to self-care.

Throughout the literature, violence associated with men, masculinity, and sociocultural values was prevalent (Brooks, 2010; Connell, 1995; Edwards & Jones, 2009; Fincher et al., 2002; George, 2020; Glaze, 2010; Graziosi & Haubold, 2003; Hallinan, 2001; Heilman et al., 2019; Kimmel & Aronson, 2004; Kupers, 1999; Palahniuk, 2018; Sandars, 2007; Wagner, 2012). Even though violence and harm inflicted upon others were not presumed to be exclusively male traits, historical and ideological evidence supported a connection between masculinity and harm to others.

Harm's Touch informs any empathetic therapist, regardless of gender, but male art therapists were not perceived by participants to be like other men (George, 2020; Sandars, 2007). Perceptions of participants indicated that the male art therapist presents to the male client as a more understanding resource in treatment (i.e., male trauma-informed) while remaining separate from other male attributes and therefore best suited for treating some male clients.

Acknowledged Limitations

Significant qualitative relationships emerged from the data and were a representative distribution of the population being studied, however, the sample size of this pilot study may not be sufficiently representative of the field of art therapy for whom results could be generalized or transferred. Though eight interviews was a fairly robust sample for qualitative research, the number seemed to too small to draw relevant conclusions. Ultimately, the sample size was acceptable given the pilot study nature of the research problem.

The study, being qualitative, was also the product of a single person, with their point of view, and personal limitations of time and resources. Though the study process involved many others in its planning and execution, peripherally the risk of self-reporting bias was present with only the literature and primary data—the interviews—with which to triangulate findings.

Lack of available reliable quantitative data (e.g., income of art therapists) limited the scope of this analysis and could be considered an obstacle in finding trends relating to gender. There is a need for alternative research designs and methods for gathering data. Limited prior research on the fluctuating nature of gender identity and its effect on male therapy clients was unavailable. This research, however, will help lay a foundation for better understanding the research problem in future studies. This research also used self-reported data and is limited because it cannot be independently verified. The researcher has collected participant interviews at face value. Self-reported data may also contain potential sources of bias such as exaggeration, overrepresenting outcomes or unconsciously embellishing perspectives as more significant than the data suggests.

The study was confined to portraiture of the male art therapist and a speculative correlation to male therapy clients. Socioeconomic data provided by participants was volunteered during the interview process and not a specific question in the approved interview format. The practical implications of male art therapists, salaries across the field, and a specific measure of male or female bias in hiring practices was beyond the study's scope and the researcher's ability.

Future research should not only address these limitations, but also isolate the interview process away from data analysis, using different researchers to circumvent self-reporting bias.

Recommendations

The research indicated an opportunity to explore possible hiring biases in art therapy education to determine gender distribution among the various levels of faculty (e.g., adjunct,

assistant professor, associate professor, tenured professors, etc.) and administration. The researcher also perceived a need for demographic studies that expand the notion of portraiture to encompass the entire field of art therapy and art therapy education. Furthermore, future research should expand upon the chosen research model for reliability by using longitudinal methods to determine how culture changes over time. A further examination of how the male art therapist impacts art therapy education and the relationship to males seeking therapy is recommended.

Contradictory recommendations follow. One is that the scope of data collection (sample) and the population base be expanded to national or regional to explore the validity and reliability of this pilot study. Collecting data incrementally by several researchers with more complete and thorough research design could adapt the same or similar research model for different contexts, locations, or cultures. Data could be correlated and evaluated from an overview perspective. The other contradictory recommendation is to conduct a true CBPR research model with all its community involvement within the community of art therapists. Based on this pilot study, a smaller sample of participants using a comprehensive CBPR model would generate a more trustworthy basis for further study.

Conclusion

Thematic analysis of transcriptions from interviews with eight art therapists and art therapy students revealed commonalities among their experiences. They explored perceptions of the male experience as a minority in a primarily female field and the impact of maleness as a potentially oppressive intersectionality in a female-dominated field. These points mean fewer males in the field and warrants the question, does this then impact the clients' experiences? The research suggests but does not conclude the underrepresentation of men in the field of art therapy and the number of men seeking therapy. Further research is recommended to examine that relationship more deeply.

In an analysis of participant interview data, modern and postmodern theories were applied the referenced with literature building a research lens to examine how society has shifted away from traditional heteronormative paradigms. In this shift, this research found that men are now a multi-cultural community and as such deserve male-informed, culturally competent therapy to effectively meet their specific cultural needs. However, a synthesis of the literature and research findings revealed that men are not mentioned in current models of multiculturalism as a category of cultural difference. There is need for further research and reevaluation within the field of art therapy and in multicultural thinking that includes men as an intersectional identity.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Questions are standardized but open to several unlisted talking points. The questions directly inform research and talking points supply emergent themes through analysis.

What is the subject's relationship with the field?

1. What first attracted you to art therapy?
2. How and when did that attraction start?
3. What was the moment you first considered becoming involved with art therapy?
4. How has gender played a part in your identity as an art therapist?
- 4-B. (optional) How has gender played a part in your support of art therapy?
5. How would you describe "the male art therapist?"
6. Who or what influences (or influenced) your answer to #5 the most?
7. How does gender imbalance in the education and practice of art therapy influence art therapy's efficacy with male clients?

Men as art therapy clients, exploring EMP.

1. What is your impression of EMP?
2. Who is the male art therapy client?
3. If /when you interact with male clients, does EMP present as a feature of their identity?
4. How would you conceptualize treatment for someone who may not realize that they are grieving for the loss of EMP?
5. How does your gender influence your practice with male clients?

Addendum: Participant Contributed to Questions

- A) How does internalized sexism impact the field of art therapy and its perception of male identified art therapists?
- B) How does your gender affect your ability to develop a good rapport with your client?
- C) How does an older, gay, cisgender man in art therapy, navigate a profession that is predominately women?