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My Embodied Multiracial Experience

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My Embodied Multiracial Experience

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Abstract

While there is some research on dance/movement therapy (DMT) and people of Color, there is no research specifically on the use of DMT with multiracial people. This heuristic study explored the embodied experience of being multiracial and how that experience could inform the practice of DMT to better meet the possible needs of multiracial clients. The researcher was a 24 year old multiracial female graduate student. Data collection lasted for 12 weeks and consisted of experiences in which the researcher's multiracial heritage was highlighted. Data was collected through three self-interviews and artistic journaling. The researcher used Forinash's adapted form of manual analysis to analyze the self-interviews and Moustakas' organic approach for heuristic research data collection to analyze the artistic journal. Analysis yielded three major themes, each with sub-themes, that captured the researcher's embodied multiracial experience: Identity (Belonging/Not Belonging, In-between, and Appearance), Insensitivities (What are you?, Exoticism, External Labeling, and Racism), and Multiracial Pride (Acceptance). Implications for multicultural competency in DMT include embodying in-between and finding stability, finding stability within belonging, and using embodied self-awareness to investigate patterns of responding to microaggressions and explore empowering responses. The researcher also found implications for multicultural competency for general counseling practices with this population, as well as directions for future research.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The population in the United States is becoming more racially mixed each year. The amount of people identifying as multiracial in the United States is steadily growing due to increased globalization and the United States' decreasing social stigma surrounding interracial relationships. Brittain, Umaña-Taylor, and Derlan (2012) reported that the 2010 U.S. Census showed a 32% increase in people identifying as biracial and multiracial compared to the 2000 Census. While biracial individuals have existed in the United States since the nation's birth (Kelley & Root, 2003; Townsend, Fryberg, Wilkins, & Markus, 2012), the U.S. Census only gave people the choice to choose more than one race beginning in 2000 (Kelley & Root, 2003; Townsend et. al., 2012). It is unknown whether the 32% increase from the 2000 to the 2010 Census is due to an actual increase in the multiracial population or an increase in people recognizing that they now have the option to identify as more than one race. Whichever it may be, it stands that the United States has a larger and steadily growing multiracial population.

Along with the statistical increase of the multiracial population, in the past few years, there appears to have been an increased focus on interracial relationships and multiracial people within American media, such as commercials and movies. In 2012, a Cheerios commercial featured a family with a Caucasian mother, African American father, and their biracial daughter. The commercial sparked a slew of angry and racist remarks, which subsequently raised a discussion of race relations in the United States today (Goyette, 2013). Another example of biracial prominence in media is the 2014 movie, "Belle." The movie dramatizes the story of the biracial British aristocrat Dido Elizabeth Belle and her role in the campaign to abolish slavery in England (Jones & Asante, 2013). While this story was set in the 1800s, it brought to light some difficulties that mixed race people face even today. Additionally,

television shows and other commercial ads are featuring more interracial couples and magazines are beginning to produce articles on multiracial people. Is it possible these forms of media want to reflect the racial shifts in the United States, as well as address the curiosity of monoracial people in our changing society? Funderberg (2013) speculated that monoracial people, or people with one racial heritage, are curious and interested in mixed race people because of what mixed race people's existence means for the United States' changing racial climate. Funderberg states, "We look and wonder because what we [monoracial people] see—and our curiosity—speaks volumes about our country's past, its present, and the promise and peril of its future" (Funderberg, October 2013, paragraph 2; brackets added for clarification). Funderberg's assessment of monoracial people's growing fascination with mixed race people as a way to understand the racial shifts in the United States is an interesting one. This gives insight into the increase of media's portrayal of multiracial people, particularly those conveying their experience. However, it also raises the question of how monoracial people are going about satisfying their curiosity. How and where are they getting their information? What are they asking? Are their methods sensitive to the person they are addressing, meaning not racist, discriminatory, or insensitive? Are they finding sources that give a full picture of the multiracial experience or ones that hone in on only one aspect of it?

Personal observation of some popular media depicting the multiracial experience seems to deliver only aspects of the experience which, in my opinion, feeds a skewed perspective back to interested monoracial audiences. Many monoracial writers and filmmakers have attempted to capture the multiracial person's experience; however, the trope of the tragic mulatto/a (a person of mixed race heritage who is sad because they are unable to fit into either racial world and is typically seen as trying to pass for White, but whose Black heritage is discovered to the

detriment of the person) (Pilgrim, 2012; Tragic Mulatto, 2015) is often portrayed rather than a more encompassing and less antiquated view. Perhaps tired of being misrepresented and ready to share their own voice, mixed race filmmakers, authors, artists, and bloggers are creating documentaries, books, art, comic strips, and blogs regarding their personal experiences. While these media capture the many complexities and varied experiences of multiracial people, they only reach a specific niche population - other multiracial people.

Before continuing on to professional psychology's views and information on the multiracial population, it is important to understand and clarify how the word *race* and other descriptors of race are being used in this thesis. I refer to *race* as the combination of an individual's phenotype (physical appearance/visible biological traits), sociocultural factors, such as cultural identity or the social distance between two groups (Quintana, 2007), as well as how the individual self-identifies (Root, 2003). The term *monoracial* refers to an individual with parents from the same single-race heritage (Kelley & Root, 2003) or an individual who identifies as coming from a single-race (Root, 2003). *Biracial* describes an individual with a parent from one racial group and a parent from a different single racial group (Poston, 1990). The descriptor *multiracial* is a broader term used to describe an individual with parents from several racial groups (Poston, 1990; Kelley & Root, 2003) and personally identifies with two or more of his or her parents' racial groups (Root, 2003). Within this study, multiracial will encompass the term biracial. As already evidenced, multiracial may also be interchanged with the terms *mixed race*, *mixed race heritage*, or *mixed*, and will be specified if referencing a group versus individuals.

From a professional standpoint, psychology and counseling literature has a more fleshed out knowledge-base of the multiracial experience than that of popular media. Literature has shown that multiracial individuals encounter unique racial experiences that differ from the

experiences of monoracial people and specifically monoracial minorities (Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005; Kelley & Root, 2003; Townsend et.al., 2012). Some common experiences include feeling pressured to identify with one racial group (Herman, 2004; Nazawaka, 2003), feeling as if they do not belong within one racial group, and racism (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Miville, et. al., 2005). Additionally, much literature has been devoted to multiracial identity development (Cheng & Lee, 2009; Edwards & Pedrotti, 2008; Herman, 2004; Miville et. al., 2005; Poston, 1990; Townsend et al., 2012), which suggests that identity development and identification are important concerns for this population. While the aforementioned literature provides a description of the multiracial experience, it does not fully convey the depth of feelings within these experiences. Neither does it provide insight into how these experiences may present themselves as unique problems presented in therapy or hindering therapy.

Under the umbrella of the counseling and psychotherapy field is dance/movement therapy (DMT). DMT is a form of psychotherapy based on the mind and body connection (ADTA, 2014). It emphasizes feeling expression and bringing unconscious processes into consciousness. It has been used to address body image (Krantz, 1999; Pallaro, 1997) and can facilitate cultural expression through movement (Chang, 2009; Hanna, 1997; Pallaro, 1997). Many multiracial experiences revolve around individuals' physical appearance due to genetics (Bradshaw, 1992; Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Root, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008), and how they culturally identify and choose to express their cultural identification (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Poston, 1990; Root, 2003). Because of DMT's ability to help individuals process and express their feelings related to physical appearance and cultural expression, DMT has the

potential to be a beneficial form of psychotherapy for multiracial clients. Despite this potential, there is currently no research on the use of DMT with the multiracial population.

As a multiracial person and budding dance/movement therapist, I researched both media and scholarly literature, hoping to find articles and other materials that reflected my general experience more completely and accurately. With my multiracial heritage, I have experienced a variety of racially focused occurrences, such as racial mix-ups (people thinking I am from a racial heritage that I am not), exclusion, internal confusion over identity, frustration, and pride. Overall, my experience as a mixed person has been both complicated and simple at the same time. I know my racial mix has given me a unique view of the world that is hard for others to understand and, therefore, may be a source of curiosity. What is simple to me in interracial relationships is complicated and/or unfathomable to some monoracial peers. What is complicated and intricate relational navigation for me, is simple and straightforward for monoracial peers. How do I explain these intricacies and simplicities? How do I understand and feel these experiences within myself to explain to others? Through a series of events in which my awareness of my multiracial status was highlighted, I began to contemplate what the experience of being multiracial is and how it looks and feels in my body. Finally, I wondered how DMT might be helpful within the experience and/or how this experience might advise the practice of DMT. From these ponderings, two research questions arose: What is my embodied experience as a multiracial person? How can my experience inform multicultural competency in DMT?

The purpose of this study is to understand my body-felt experience of being a multiracial person in the United States. Within the transformative paradigm of research, the researcher(s) aspires to be culturally competent, acknowledge the multiple realities that exist for participants

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and the social inequalities that might shape these realities, and transform and empower the participants through the research process (Mertens, 2005). Research within this paradigm strives to give participants, typically those whose views are underrepresented in research, a voice in hopes to lessen the inequalities which participants face on a daily basis. This paradigm is wholly in alignment with my interests in research. As a researcher and a therapist, I believe research should not only create more understanding and compassion for the research participants, but should also directly benefit them by creating a direct change within the process. Additionally, I am most interested in research that addresses social issues. This study was conducted through this transformative lens. Through deepening my understanding of my embodied experience and studying it through the transformative paradigm, I hope to increase cultural sensitivity in regards to multiracial concerns within the field of DMT.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Embodiment

In order to fully understand my first research question, the terms *embodiment* and *embodied experience* must be understood. Embodiment is the lived experience of a body actively engaged in the world around it (Hervey, 2007; Koch & Fischman, 2011; Overton, 2008). It is an integration of mind (perceptions, cognitions, and affect) and body (behavior, sensations, and expressions) as a person engages with their social and physical environment (Hervey, 2007; Koch & Fischman, 2011; Overton, 2008; Siegel, 1999). On a more specific body level, embodiment can be thought of as attending to the body's sensorimotor processing, through openness to the body's shifts and sensations (Hervey, 2007). This attention causes the embodied person to act in the world. In a broader sense, embodiment encompasses a person's physical body, phenomenological experience, and sociocultural environment, as the body is both a physical object and a living, engaged organism (Overton, 2008). In sum, the embodied experience is the whole self, body and mind, present and interactive within the world.

While embodiment is a term and concept, it is also a theory. Embodiment theory holds that the mind and body are one, with the mind's cognitions based in the body's sensorimotor processing (Koch & Fischman, 2011). On an individual level, the body reflects and expresses the mind, and therefore, is integral in understanding it. A body's expressions, movements, and interactions with the environment help explain a person's perception, cognition, affect, attitudes, behavior, and their relations (Koch & Fischman, 2011). These embodied and affective responses are highly individual, and can hold specific meaning for the responder (Hervey, 2007). By attending to our own sensorimotor experience, we gain insight into our motivations, emotional responses, and thoughts (Fogel, 2009; Hervey, 2007; Koch & Fischman, 2011). Fogel (2009)

referred to this as embodied self-awareness. Fogel described embodied self-awareness as the act of being wholly aware of the self, body, and emotions during the experience. It is the integration, awareness, and full feeling of the body and mind's response to the actions taking place (Fogel, 2009). In using embodied self-awareness, we can uncover meaning from the felt experience.

Embodiment and DMT. A key focus of DMT is using the body to find meaning in actions and behaviors in relationship to self and the world. Both DMT and embodiment theory share the core belief that the body and mind are connected. However, DMT extends this idea one step further by stating that the body, mind, and spirit are inseparable (K. Larsen, personal communication, September 11, 2012). The body, mind, or spirit can be used as an entry point into addressing an issue in therapy and one can be used to move the other two. For instance, moving the body moves the spirit and mind by triggering, altering, or creating neuropathways in the brain (S. Imus, personal communication, September 20, 2012; Siegel, 1999). Another similarity is that movement clarifies the congruence or incongruence between verbal and nonverbal integration and mediates our internal and external worlds (S. Imus, personal communication, September 20, 2012). In other words, movement expresses the inner self to the external environment, and provides a platform for nonverbal dialogue for the two to communicate. In the same way embodiment can illuminate cognitions or bring meaning behind perceptions, DMT strives to make the implicit explicit via movement (S. Imus, personal communication, September 20 2012). Dance/movement therapists use movement as a way to allow clients to enter into and nonverbally explore relationships with their inner selves, the therapist, or others in a group (Koch & Fischman, 2011). Through this exploration, the dance/movement therapist and client are able to identify patterns of relating. It is through the

physical experiencing that client and therapist are able to see the relational patterns and explicitly address them. Together, they broaden the client's relational repertoire instead of verbally analyzing relationships (Koch & Fischman, 2011).

With all of the similarities in theory, it is not surprising that embodiment and embodied self-awareness are tools often utilized in DMT to facilitate insight and growth. In DMT, as in every therapeutic process, clients reflect on life experiences in order to create meaning around the impact of these experiences (Koch & Fischman, 2011). Because memories, concepts, and language are stored within the body or are based within the sensory-motor experience (Johnson, 2008; Koch & Fischman, 2011; Siegel, 1999), revisiting these experiences via movement in the safe context of therapy provides clients the opportunity to explore the experiences and create meaning and connection in a new context (Koch & Fischman, 2011). By re-feeling and/or re-sensing our body patterns or sensations in a given moment, we can further explore our feelings about a given situation or event that might have been left unsaid or repressed (Koch & Fischman, 2011). By returning to these feelings and giving them a voice, we can further examine the event's impact on us.

In addition to assisting clients or patients, embodiment can help dance/movement therapists in processing clinical situations or concerns and empathizing with clients (Hervey, 2007). In difficult clinical situations, a therapist might revisit the experience individually or in supervision with an embodied approach. In doing so, the therapist actively attends to feelings and sensations and gains a better understanding of the counter-transference that is occurring within the therapeutic relationship. Embodiment might be used particularly in situations involving ethical decision-making, where answers are not as clear within the therapeutic relationship (Hervey, 2007). In these situations, a body intelligence and perspective are needed

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(Hervey, 2007). A dance/movement therapist might also embody a client or a client's feelings in order to gain a better understanding of the client. Through moving as the client, the therapist has greater insight into what it is like to be that client and may gain a better idea of how to proceed therapeutically (Hervey, 2007). Embodying a client during a session is used to further the therapeutic relationship. This shows the client that the therapist is with her in her experience, and gives the client immediate feedback into how she feels in the experience as a reflection tool.

Embodiment and culture. While embodiment lends itself to furthering someone's comprehension of another's situation from an emotional and sensation level, how does it help in understanding conceptual differences between people, such as culture? The answer may lie in understanding how culture is embodied. Culture is a part of the lived human experience (Cohen & Leung, 2009; Voestermans & Verheggen, 2013). Root and Kelley (2003) defined culture as the embraced knowledge, practice of traditions (rituals, celebrations, etc.), and values of a group of people spanning over generations, and is influenced and impacted by historical events. Culture includes language and social norms (Quintana & McKown, 2008), and is largely considered what helps to define an ethnic group (MacAuliffe, Kim, & Park, 2008; Kelley & Root, 2003; Quintana, 2007). Culture is about communication between people (Cohen & Leung, 2009; Voestermans & Verheggen, 2013) and more specifically, it is about communication of how to live within or interact with a certain group of people. Due to the inherent interactive quality and communication aspect of embodiment, it is not surprising that culture is embodied in almost every aspect of our lives.

Culture is encoded in the simple acts of life, the way we eat, breathe, walk, run, play, and move through the world (Cohen & Leung, 2009). According to Voestermans and Verheggen (2013), this is because cultural norms, both in linguistics and behavior, are created through

interactions and coordinated meanings between people within a group. When an action is created and repeated, especially one that occurs between at least two people, a verbal label is given to that action and then continued and repeated with the understanding that that label means that specific action. Voestermans and Verheggen give the example of throwing a ball as an act of playing. Two people throw a ball back and forth to each other and label the action of throwing and catching the ball as *playing*. Later, when one asks the other if they want to play, the other understands that the asker wants to throw and catch a ball. These two might spread the idea to others as they are seen playing or want to play with others, and so the action and its label become integrated into the community. In creating these labels for repeated actions, group norms can be formed. Voestermans and Verheggen went on to argue that since norms are created in this way, culture (or cultural norms) is not necessarily an omnipotent force on humans that is the sole motivator for humans to act. Despite this, the body performs cultural and societal norms, thereby reiterating and perpetuating these norms (Sekimoto, 2012). The body learns how to perform these norms to the point they become habitual and engrained and from this patterned body, the cultural norm lives through the body's performance of it (Sekimoto, 2012).

The body's performance of culture can be broken down into two forms: pre-wired and totem embodiments (Cohen & Leung, 2009). Pre-wired embodiments refer to actions, behaviors, or body postures that all humans do, such as walk, eat, sit, stand, etc., but are not enacted in the same way due to cultural influence (Cohen & Leung, 2009). Because culture holds values and influences the ways in which these common actions are performed, the actions pre-dispose the members to certain thought patterns and mood states. Therefore, culture is literally embodied through our everyday actions. Totem embodiments, the second route of embodiment, are actions or gestures that hold no meaning except to the people within a culture (Cohen & Leung,

2009). They are created and exist purely for symbolic purposes. An example would be a thumbs-up gesture in the United States to mean okay or good. In other cultures, this might hold a different meaning or no meaning at all (Cotton, 2013). However, generally Americans or people who have adopted American culture understand the meaning behind this gesture.

While totem embodiments are clear signs of culture on the body, pre-wired embodiments are more subtle and nuanced (Cohen & Leung, 2009). Because of this, pre-wired embodiments are harder to detect as having cultural bearing on us and seem natural. It should be noted that totem embodiments may feel natural as well; however, these are easier to identify, especially when there is an incongruence between the totem action across cultures. Theorizing from the work of Cohen and Leung, Maass (2009) commented that totem embodiments are actually much more limited in their pure form and even challenged some of the totems that Cohen and Leung used in their study. Maass argued that some of their examples were actually more in-between a pre-wired embodiment and a totem embodiment. For instance, Cohen and Leung's example of the act of hand washing as a totem for purification is not as unique as a pure totem, such as the thumbs-up example. While it is a learned behavior, the gesture quickly prompted the association of purification in participants from various cultures and suggested to Maass that there must be some pre-wiring or predisposition to the behavior. If this is the case, then pre-wired embodiments and the embodiments that fall in-between the two are more widespread than Cohen and Leung originally thought. Additionally, Maass highlighted the implication that pre-wired embodiments are ways of indoctrinating cultural values to group members. Cultures encourage various body actions and postures that trigger cognitive processes such as social concepts/orientations (individualistic vs. communal, universalism vs. particularism), moral codes (honor, pride), and norms (gender roles and hierarchy). Maass gave the example of a culture

encouraging males to have an erect posture and direct eye-gaze, which if both erect posture and direct eye-gaze are universally associated with dominance, the culture could be physically maintaining its patriarchal hierarchy through its encouragement of those particular body comportments for men. This idea that culture is in control of shaping the body is in direct opposition to Voestermans and Verheggen's (2013) argument that culture is created by humans and therefore cannot be used as a catch-all excuse for human behavior and cultural clashes. These two opposing views suggest that an engaged body-mind and the cultural norms of the group are in a constant feedback loop. This idea aligns with embodiment theory's principle that the whole self is interacting with the environment around it.

To review, embodiment theory views the body both as a living organism and the body as an object (Overton, 2008; Voestermans & Verheggen, 2013). It is our material body made up of skin, organs, bone, blood, etc. and it is how we experience the world through our senses and feel emotions. Genetics dictate the basics of its appearance and general functionality; however, social practices within family, occupation, and society influence its expression. The body is expressive and conveys meaning about the identity that we construct for ourselves or that has been constructed for us (Voestermans & Verheggen, 2013). It is also the site where various social constructs (race, gender, class, etc.) intersect (Sekimoto, 2012) and influence the construction of an identity. The body's lived experience is based on how it interacts with and is viewed by others. Overton (2008) describes the relationship between the body object and the body subject as the whole body interacts with the environment:

Behavior emerges from the embodied person actively engaged in the world. Thus, embodiment is the claim that perception, thinking, feelings, and desires -that is, the way we behave, experience, and live in the world -are contextualized by our being *active*

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agents with this particular kind of body (Taylor 1995). In other words, the kind of body we have is a precondition for our having the kind of behaviors, experiences, and meanings we have. (p.1)

Because the physical body influences the interactions a person has within a sociocultural environment, using embodied self-awareness can help to better understand a person's sociocultural phenomenological experience (Overton, 2008). An embodied approach to understanding someone's experience may give a more encompassing picture of the individual's way of navigating the world as a racial/cultural being. In thinking about the widespread nature of pre-wired embodiments and how they instill cultural values within a cultural group, how does this affect people who grow up with two or more racial/ethnic cultures? How do therapists, specifically dance/movement therapists, navigate the intricacies of culture during treatment?

DMT and culture/race

Since its beginnings in the 1940s, DMT has evolved to reach a wide range of people from different backgrounds in diverse settings. Currently, DMT is used as a therapeutic modality in 38 countries, the United States included, all around the world (ADTA, March 23, 2015). Just within the United States, dance/movement therapists work with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

DMT itself is a favorable modality for working with clients from various cultures (Pallaro, 1997). The DMT tenant, movement is a basic mode of communication, is valid across cultures (Pallaro, 1997). Therefore, the use of movement as a form of communication works in a multicultural group. Additionally, specific topics, such as the intersection between body image and culture, DMT has been proven to address body image as it relates to the unique concerns for clients from specific cultural backgrounds (Pallaro, 1997). In a group format, DMT can provide

a safe environment to explore universal human themes such as alienation, individual and group identity, ethnic projections, Otherness, and cultural idealization (Plyvänäinen, 2008). DMT has also been used or proposed as a means to support acculturation in various cultures (Pallaro, 1997; Posada de Valenzuela, 2014; Plyvänäinen, 2008). While DMT can be used to treat clients across cultures, the success of a culturally sensitive DMT session relies on the competency of the dance/movement therapist.

In order to accommodate the many cultures DMT engages with, dance/movement therapists must be flexible and adapt how they use DMT in order to meet the clients' needs in a culturally appropriate way (Hanna, 1990). This is especially true as culture dictates the lens through which health, both mental and physical, is viewed and treated (Hanna, 1990). Treatment that does not align with a client's cultural beliefs may lead to resistance or drop-out (Hanna, 1990; Pallaro, 1997). As DMT strives for best practice, having cultural competency within practice and training is necessary in order to provide clients and patients with the best service. Despite DMT's ability to serve the culturally diverse and the desire for cultural competency within the field, there are only a handful of articles or book chapters on DMT and culture published within the American Journal of Dance Therapy, other creative arts therapies' journals or books (Boas, 2006; Caldwell, 2013; Chang, 2008; Hanna, 1990; Pallaro, 1997; Posada de Valenzuela, 2014; Plyvänäinen, 2008). While few, these articles and book chapters are helpful and tend to provide therapists general instructions on how to be culturally competent or delineate specific concerns and how to work with clients' of a certain cultural background. Both of these types of knowledge are key when dealing with culturally diverse clients.

Much of the literature that describes general guidelines for cultural competency seems to align and build from each other. Hanna (1990) states that it is a mistake to assume that therapeutic approaches based on treating primarily middle-class White Americans will be appropriate for and suit people of various cultures. Culture dictates the lens through which health is viewed and treated (Hanna, 1990). Therefore, by understanding how an illness is thought to have originated, the healer (therapist) can better understand how to treat the illness in a way that will make sense to the client. As therapists, we must acknowledge that there is difference in culture when appropriate (Hanna, 1990) and we must be respectful and empathetic toward these perceived differences (Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997). Cultural difference is likely to be differences in values, beliefs, myths, ways of constructing social relationships (Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997), and expressive styles (Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997; Hanna, 1990). There are cultural differences in how clients learn and absorb information, as well as how different cultural groups approach and interpret their unconscious symbolic experience and defend against the experience of a loss of self-integrity (Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997). In order to meet the needs of clients while keeping all of these differences in mind, therapists should have a flexible style (Hanna, 1990). This entails being able to choose between evocative or directive therapy, creative and imitative techniques and interventions, and group versus family versus individual sessions. Similarly, Domasantes-Beaudry (1997) describes the concept of multicultural flexibility as the ability of an individual to shift between traditionalist (collectivistic/community-oriented culture that emphasizes self-other merger/interdependence, flexible body boundaries, and an external locus of control) and modernist (individualistic culture that emphasizes self-other differentiation, rigid body boundaries, and internal locus of control) cultural lifestyles. An individual that demonstrates multicultural flexibility can create a composite or combination of

styles that include verbal and nonverbal behaviors from both traditionalist and modernist cultures. This multicultural flexibility is helpful to have and use when working with clients with different cultural lifestyle orientations than the therapist's own. Therapists can also serve as models of multicultural flexibility (Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997). No matter what culture clients are from, dance/movement therapists should strive to foster the client's understanding of empowerment within his or her cultural context (Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997).

In addition to all of these guidelines, Hanna (1990) states that dance/movement therapists can become more culturally competent by studying cultures different from their own. Therapists must be familiar with/aware of the non-verbal cues related to their client's cultural group in order to better understand the client and avoid cultural biases, such as stereotyping and ethnocentrism (Pallaro, 1997). Further, comparing cultures, or different belief systems and ways of acting and behaving, can lead to personal insights and a re-evaluation of one's perceptions (Hanna, 1990). Perhaps in accordance with this suggestion, many articles and essays centering on multicultural competence in therapy address counseling and DMT with specific racial or cultural groups (Caldwell, 2013; Hanna, 1990; Pallaro, 1997; Pasado de Valenzuela, 2014). These articles typically describe important values and norms of a culture, providing therapists with cultural knowledge. Hanna (1990) reminds therapists that while knowledge of certain cultures is important in devising culturally appropriate treatment plans, generalization is problematic. Therapists should still check-in with clients about cultural norms and mode of treatment. While some studies address transcultural experiences (Plyvänäinen, 2008), there is currently no published research providing information on working with multiracial people.

Finally, if therapists must have cultural knowledge and understanding of their clients' cultures and acknowledge the differences between the cultures and their own, therapists must

know their own culture. As established within the earlier section, culture is hidden and enacted

through primarily nonverbal and unconscious means by members of a culture (Cohen & Leung,

2009; Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997). This makes it more difficult for members of a cultural group

to detect characteristic aspects of their culture because they view them as innate behaviors. In

order for therapists to be sensitive to the cultural needs of clients, therapists must understand

themselves as cultural beings, with deeply embedded biases and influences (Chang, 2009;

Pallaro, 1997; Pylvänäinen, 2008). Therapists who understand their own cultural biases and can

integrate that with their knowledge of their clients' cultures are more likely to be practicing

culturally sensitive therapy (Pallaro, 1997). Moreover, the culturally competent therapist

understands her clients' expectations (which are informed by their culture) for treatment and has

the ability to choose various interventions to fit those expectations. Other notes for therapists

include tracking when expressive or stylistic differences cause feelings of discomfort or

unknown-ness in them and having a sense of humor when discovering moments of difference or

mis-assumption (Domasantes-Beaudry, 1997). Domasantes-Beaudry states that having a sense

of humor might help the therapist be open and able to acknowledge the mistake.

　　　While this information is primarily focused on tracking the cultural differences between

the therapist and client, Mayor (2012) emphasizes viewing the relationship through a historical

racial lens. Therapists must also be aware that clients may not see therapists as individuals of a

certain race, but as members of the whole race (Mayor, 2012). All of the prejudices or

preconceived notions of a racial group will be imprinted on therapists by clients in the same way

therapists might unconsciously bring their own prejudices into the relationship (Mayor,

2012). This is an important awareness in preparing therapists working with people of Color. If

discussing race needs to be addressed, what racial group the therapist belongs to versus what racial group the client belongs to may heavily influence the direction of the conversation.

Within the creative arts therapies in general, there is a lack of acknowledgment of race in research and training (Mayor, 2012). Mayor states that the general silence on this topic within the creative arts therapies is problematic, particularly as the majority of the therapists in this field are White. In this context, Mayor appears to be discussing race not as cultural groups, but race as a condition. This means that race is the condition under which we are born and accordingly placed within our racial caste system. It is possible Mayor may be referring to the model of development of social oppression by race and gender social status. In this model, created by Cheval Sandoval, the United States has a racial and gender caste system in which White, capitalist men are place on the top, White women are second, men of Color are third, and finally women of Color on the bottom tier (Root, 1992). While culture can address race, Mayor (2012) believes that specifically addressing this hierarchy as it pertains to the therapist and client through the creative arts therapies can create a corrective experience for the client. This in turn, will lead to greater intimacy between the client and therapist as they are moving past both individuals' exteriors and toward their internal selves interacting with each other (Mayor, 2012). Furthermore, race is less static than society believes it to be and can be played with using the creative arts therapies. Mayor specifies that because of their focus on the body and movement, drama therapy and DMT are ideal for such race play. Because both use movement and the repetition and exaggeration of movement to help clients expand their movement and roles repertoires, and thereby shift clients' consciousness, both drama therapy and DMT provide the opportunity to break through the ascribed stereotypical qualities of their race (Mayor, 2012). Additionally, clients of Color can potentially break the idea that White people, and White

heterosexual men in particular, alone can transcend the body while people of Color are limited by their corporeal selves and desires. This in turn can lead to greater social change to correct the racial discrimination and oppression that plagues our society and clients of Color (Mayor, 2012).

Mayor's chastisement and encouragement of the creative arts therapies to not only look at race within a societal context, but to also move toward greater social change within treatment is both bold and refreshing. Her assessment regarding the lack of acknowledgement of race may actually be a factor as to why no research regarding multiracial people exists in DMT. Typically, multiracial people have occupied a marginal status within society due to the rigid racial system (Sue & Sue, 2008b; Root, 1992). Therefore, research within the field of psychology and counseling regarding mixed race people only began to proliferate after the start of the multiracial social movement. Considering Mayor's call to action, the need for information on the multiracial population within DMT, and the need for multiracial people to have effective forms of therapy to address their specific needs, this study seeks to address all of these necessities. In order to better inform the current study and establish some understanding of the multiracial population, it is necessary to review the literature regarding mixed race people within the psychology and counseling literature.

Multiracial identity and experience

In gaining a better sense of the relationship between embodiment and culture, knowing common experiences of people of mixed race heritage is crucial in understanding the lived experience of this population. Literature has shown that these individuals encounter unique racial experiences that differ from the experiences of monoracial people and specifically monoracial minorities (Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005; Kelley & Root, 2003; Townsend et. al., 2012). Much of this literature is devoted to multiracial identification and

identity development (Cheng & Lee, 2009; Edwards & Pedrotti, 2008; Herman, 2004; Miville et. al., 2005; Poston, 1990; Root, 2003; Townsend et. al., 2012). This suggests that an important part of being multiracial is finding a personal (multi)racial identity. However, developing a racial identity is made more complex by discrimination and marginalization from various racial groups and society (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Miville et. al., 2005; Poston, 1990; Sue & Sue, 2008b), as well as navigating two or more cultures (Poston, 1990). The topic of racial identity development and other experiences multiracial people face will be the focus of the next sections.

Multiracial identity formation models. In the process of forming a racial identity, multiracial individuals are faced with societal pressures to choose one racial group over others (Herman, 2004; Kelley & Root, 2003). This can include discrimination and rejection from one or both parent racial groups (Giamo, Schmitt, & Outten, 2012; Miville et al., 2005; Townsend et.al., 2012). Depending on their physical appearance, they might face discrimination as minorities, as White individuals from minority individuals, or as the racially mixed people they are (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Kelley & Root, 2003). These experiences make it necessary to have separate models of racial identity formation for people with a multiracial heritage (Miville et. al., 2005; Poston, 1990; Townsend et. al., 2012). While earlier models were created for biracial people, and specifically biracial people with a Black/White heritage, these models can be extrapolated to people from more than two races (Miville et al., 2005).

A well-cited developmental model for multiracial identity was Poston's (1990) biracial identity model. This five-stage model is developmental/lifespan oriented; however, Poston did not give exact age ranges for each stage. Stage one, personal identity, takes place during a young age (possibly ages 2-6), in which a child is not racially oriented. Instead, the child is more

interested in developing individual traits and preferences that are more oriented toward personality development.

Stage two, choice of group categorization, takes place when the child is a bit older, and feels a pressure to choose one racial identity. Three factors influence this choice: a) status factors, such as the group statuses of parents' racial background; b) social support factors, such as parental and familial style, acceptance, and influence on acceptance of other cultures; and c) personal factors such as phenotype, languages spoken, and knowledge of cultures. Poston (1990) emphasized that choosing a multiracial identity would be unusual for individuals at this stage because the choice would require knowledge of multiple cultures associated with multiple racial groups and a level of integration that is typically beyond the age group's cognitive development. This information implies that this stage occurs around middle childhood, or Piaget's concrete operational stage, ages 7 to 11.

In stage three, enmeshment/denial, the child feels guilty about choosing to identify with one race because it does not align with the child's full racial background and keeps the child from feeling close to both parents. Additionally, the child may experience rejection and discrimination from both racial groups. It is possible that this stage takes place during the preadolescent and early adolescent years when individuals begin their search for identity.

Stage four is the appreciation stage, in which an individual begins accepting and appreciating her or his other racial culture, and may even begin to learn more about it. Despite this, the individual may continue to identify with only one racial identity. In stage five, integration, the individual has fully accepted both of her or his racial groups to form her or his own multiracial identity.

This model is a prime example of a developmental life stages model of multiracial identity. However, while it appears that Poston (1990) intended each stage to happen during certain periods of life, it is also plausible that an individual may begin the whole process at a later period of life and move through the process accordingly. In addition to this model being a clear stage model, it also reflects a common belief in the literature that an integrated identity is the ideal achieved identity for a multiracial person (Miville et al., 2005).

Another chronological developmental model is Cross and Cross's (2008) racial-ethnic-cultural (REC) identity model. While this is not specifically tailored to multiracial people, it does include an opportunity for multicultural identity exploration and decision-making. It has six stages, or sectors, aligning with certain age groups. This model is more complex as it compiles Erik Erikson's ego identity (also known as personal identity) formation, James Marcia's identity status model, and Jean Phinney's ethnic identity development theory, while also accounting for alternate identities (group identities not based on race).

The first sector, infancy and middle childhood, is about infants and young children separating and individuating from caregivers and forming a personal identity rather than a group identity. Additionally, children begin forming schemas in order to understand race, ethnicity and culture. Preadolescence, the second sector, involves older children beginning to form one of three types of identity situations (explained in the next sector). The identity situations the children form are influenced by the ideas exposed to them by their parents.

During the third sector, adolescence, adolescents begin exploring their racial identity and enter a racial moratorium. In this model, moratorium is viewed as a pause in deciding on a racial identity so an individual can explore various facets of his or her REC group(s). This exploration may include exploring one culture (monoculturalism), two different cultures (biculturalism), or

three or more different cultures (multiculturalism). High negativism (internalized oppression and self-hatred) regarding REC adolescents (adolescents of Color) is common because they are so susceptible to social messages and media.

In the fourth sector of early adulthood (ages 18-24), three types of identity situations unfold: low REC salience or alternate identity, moderate and high REC salience, and negative salience. In the low REC salience or alternate identity situation race, ethnicity, and culture have little to no importance in how the individual views and identifies herself. In the moderate and high REC salience situation, REC identity is important and clearly part of self concept/self-description. In the negative salience situation, the individual holds a negative view of her REC group from internalized oppression/racism. During this sector, individuals fall into one of the aforementioned categories.

The fifth sector, epiphanies and identity conversions, takes place around early adulthood.   REC individuals experience a REC-related epiphany where they begin to explore their REC identity again. This is much more likely to happen with people who enter adulthood with an alternate identity situation or negative REC salience identity situation. During this time, low REC salient individuals experience a change in their worldview and integrate REC values and issues into their life.

The sixth and final sector is recycling. Here, individuals have already achieved REC identity and are now incorporating new knowledge and issues into their identity. The hallmark of this sector is that the individual's identity is shifting as the individual continues to grow as a REC being. This may cause the individual to cycle through the whole fifth sector again in order to shift into a new REC identity.

When presenting this model, Cross and Cross (2008) mentioned that there are times when a REC identity conversion process is aborted; however they did not discuss why this might occur. As mentioned previously this model does allow for bi- and multi-cultural REC identity to be established. This can begin during the adolescence sector, the third sector, when the individual is going through racial moratorium and can explore more than one culture (Cross & Cross, 2008). However, this is still different from a specifically multiracial identity model, in that it does not explain how an individual might incorporate multiple cultures. Despite this, the model provides rich information about racial identity development and how it is incorporated or interacts with a more general sense of identity.

Poston (1990) and other multiracial researchers (Cheng & Lee, 2009; Giamo, et. al., 2012) stress the idea that an integrated multiracial identity is the desired status for all multiracial people. Contrary to this view, Root (2003) mentioned that a multiracial identity must be viewed in context of the person and his or her whole environment. Root's ecological framework for understanding racial identity stated that there are four types of identities that an individual could choose from: monoracial identity, bi-/multiracial (with elaboration on the individual's specific racial mix), bi-/multiracial (without elaboration), and symbolic Whiteness. The last identity is the newest of the four and is considered emerging from class factors, such as values and lifestyles that closely align with the majority of White America, and/or a lack of racial culture upbringing (Root, 2003). This identity is akin to Cross and Cross' alternate identity.

Additionally, there are nine invisible factors within the framework model that also influence how a multiracial person chooses his racial identity: geography and generation, gender, sexual orientation, class, family functioning, family socialization, community socialization, traits and aptitudes, and physical appearance (Root, 2003). In some regions (geography) and among

different generations, certain identities are more acceptable than others (Root, 2003). For

instance, older individuals from the South are far more likely to identify monoracially than

younger individuals on the West Coast. Gender affects how racially mixed people are viewed by

their monoracial peers based on whom they choose to date (women are affected more strongly

than men), who they have the choice in dating, and how they are viewed with their opposite-sex

parent once they have grown up (Root, 2003). Because many minority groups are not accepting

of the LGBTQ community, many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer people of mixed

racial heritage find acceptance within the White community, which may cause them to align

more closely with a White identity (Root, 2003). A multiracial person in a higher (middle and

upper) social class may be socialized and viewed in a way that is more reflective of White

American culture and therefore obtain the identity of symbolic White (Root, 2003).

Family functioning refers to how well the family functions as a unit (Root, 2003). This

affects racial identity development because if members of a family are not able to function in a

supportive way, racial identity may never become a salient factor in a child's life. Family

socialization refers to how and with which racial group the child is socialized (Root,

2003). Community socialization refers to the immediate communities the child encounters and

the racial and cultural diversity and openness of mind of that community. A multiracial

individual's personality traits and aptitudes may aid or hinder his or her racial identity

development (Root, 2003). A person who is shy and sensitive to rejection may take longer to

achieve an identity than a more outgoing and thicker-skinned individual. Finally, the physical

appearance of a multiracial person has a large influence on how others perceive and treat this

individual, which in turn affects how the individual wishes to be viewed and identified (Root,

2003). Because of these factors, Root stated that people seeking to aid or understand a

multiracial individual in her or his process of a racial identity formation should keep in mind that

integration is not always the best suited option for the individual. While she was speaking to her

framework model, she also stated this as a general caution for anyone working with multiracial

people. How a person with a mixed racial heritage chooses to identify him or herself, whether it

be as monoracial, integrated multiracial, or symbolic White, is his or her choice.

While these models outline a progression toward a racial identity, they do little in the way

of speaking to the experience of forming an identity or of the emotional aspect of this

process. Root (2003) does begin to identify how the specific factors are joined and weighed to

help create the chosen identity. However, without the lived aspect of this process, counselors,

whether dance/movement therapists or not, will have a difficult time understanding the

difficulties with which a multiracial client might present them. These difficulties may not even

be directly related to racial identity formation, but rather inherent in the multiracial status.

Common experiences of multiracial people. As stated earlier, multiracial people share

several common experiences that are unique to the status of having a mixed race heritage.

These experiences range from concrete every day occurrences related to physical appearance to

subtler social navigating of racial-cultural borders. Some have a negative effect on the

individuals, while others possess both positive and negative aspects to them. All of them bring a

new perspective on how race is defined versus how it could be defined in the United States.

One of the most common experiences multiracial people have is being asked the

question, "What are you?" (Miville et. al., 2005; Kelley & Root, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008b). This

is an example of racial ambiguity, or the inability to distinguish or categorize a multiracial

person into a monoracial category based on the multiracial person's phenotype, or physical traits

(Sue & Sue, 2008b). This experience occurs throughout a multiracial individual's life, and while

it may seem benign, it can pose a dilemma for the multiracial person answering and cause

psychological distress (Sue & Sue, 2008b). The individual answering has to decide what

language to use to accurately label themselves and still be understood by the questioner.

Depending on who is asking, the multiracial individual may also be worrying about whether their

answer will be sufficient for the person asking or if the answer will be invalidated or ignored

(Sue & Sue, 2008b). An example of this concern is the multiracial person answering, "Black and

Japanese," and the asker responding, "No way. You don't look Japanese." In addition to these

concerns, the question can send the message that the multiracial person needs to justify her or his

existence in a world that operates in a rigid monoracial framework (Sue & Sue, 2008b). The

questioning can bring up feelings of insecurity (trying to discern motives of the asker & find an

answer that they like), conflicting loyalties between races, confused identity development,

internal trauma, invalidation, isolation (Sue & Sue, 2008b), hurt, and anger (Miville et. al.,

2005).

     In a phenomenological study, Miville and colleagues (2005) asked ten self-identified

multiracial individuals with various multiracial heritages about their experiences surrounding

how they developed their multiracial identity. One of their findings was the common experience

of being asked, "What are you?" While the experience caused emotional distress to the

participants on a whole, some participants also learned to appreciate their unique physical

features and appearance and embraced their racial ambiguity. Despite this display of resilience

on the part of some of the participants, the emotional distress was akin to that of racism, which

led Miville and colleagues to classify this experience as an act of multiracial racism (racism

toward multiracial people). Multiracial racism has also been dubbed *monoracism* by Johnson

and Nadal (2010). Johnson and Nadal (2010) defined this as "a social system of psychological

inequality where individuals who do not fit monoracial categories may be oppressed on systemic and inter-personal levels because of underlying assumptions and beliefs in singular, discrete racial categories" (p. 125).

An act of institutional monoracism commonly experienced by multiracial people is institutional forms only allowing for one racial choice, thereby forcing multiracial individuals to choose one racial identity group (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Miville et. al., 2005; Sue & Sue, 2008b). By forcing multiracial people to choose one racial identity, institutions are perpetuating the belief that everyone can only belong to one race (Johnson & Nadal, 2010). In addition, forcing multiracial people to choose only one race to belong to denies them the option of being seen in their entirety, as they are reduced to one racial group that may not actually fit their lived experience (Sue & Sue, 2008b). The forced option may also cause difficulties involving split loyalties between races (Sue & Sue, 2008b). Emotionally, the participants in the Miville et. al. (2005) study expressed frustration as well as identity confusion during earlier life stages due to this institutional situation. Another phenomenological study by Kelch-Oliver and Leslie (2006) also found this experience as well as all forced choice decisions and acts of monoracism to be an emotional irritant to their participants. Once again, despite the negative feelings, some participants in the Miville et. al. (2005) study found strategies to deal with forced choice option, such as not answering at all or asking the institutional representative to choose for them.

While being forced to choose between racial groups is difficult enough, society also views multiracial people as fractionalized people that are fractions of a race, such as half White, one quarter Black, and one quarter Native American (Sue & Sue, 2008b). This fractionalization pushes multiracial individuals into a marginal space in society, which Sue and Sue (2008b) call Marginal Syndrome. The Marginal Syndrome is the sense that a multiracial person feels that she

or he does not fully belong to either or any of their racial backgrounds. This may be the result of the person facing discrimination from both of their parents' racial groups. Additionally, if the dominant culture is not part of the person's racial mix, the individual may face discrimination from the dominant culture as well.

The amount a person feels marginalized can also be due to their family and community (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Sue & Sue, 2008b). If the community is accepting of the multiracial person and acknowledges the person's whole heritage, the individual is less likely to feel marginalized (Sue & Sue, 2008b). Conversely, if a family and community are not accepting of the person's whole heritage, and more specifically the union between the individual's parents, the person is likely to feel more marginalized and not accepted (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006). Kelch-Oliver and Leslie's (2006) study further captured this experience with their theme of family issues. Within this theme, their participants, nine biracial (Black/White) young adult women, discussed how race influenced their relationships with their mothers, fathers and extended family. With mothers who encouraged exploration of both cultural heritages and their daughter's freedom to choose racial identity, the biracial daughters felt closer to their mothers regardless of race. The participants with mothers who did not promote cultural or racial awareness felt that they had difficulty relating racially to their mothers or discussing racial issues with them. This was especially true of the women with White mothers as they felt their mother did not prepare them for life issues as a person of Color, from major issues such as coping with racism and discrimination to smaller, everyday issues such as fixing one's hair. A little over half the participants had negative relationships with their fathers, all of whom were Black, due to their absence in the women's lives. For some, this resulted in feeling negatively toward their Black heritage and part of themselves, as they associated this with their father.

The majority of the participants had issues with at least part of their extended

family. The common issues were the family's lack of acceptance or resistance to acknowledging

issues of race. For the participants who experienced a lack of familial acceptance, the issue

usually stemmed from the family's lack of acceptance of their parents' union, not the women

themselves. This stigma carried over to the women, leaving the women feeling not accepted or

cut off from those family members, and hurt. The participants also reported feelings of mistrust

toward the racial group to which the unaccepting family belonged. For participants who

experienced accepting relationships with all of their family, they instead experienced family

members not wishing to talk about or acknowledge race issues. This tended to leave the women

feeling invalidated in their experience of race.

From this study, it is clear to see the effect family acceptance has on multiracial

individuals' psychological well-being and choices in identity. While the researchers did not

describe the women's interactions as acts of marginalization, these experiences affected whether

the participants felt that they belonged to both racial groups or not. While marginalization is

generally viewed as a negative experience (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Root, 2003; Sue & Sue,

2008b), individuals choose different ways to resolve this experience. Poston (1990), mentioned

previously, provides a model that moves toward a goal of integration, while Root (2003) gives

four options for resolutions stated in the ecological framework for understanding racial identity

reviewed above. Any of these identity resolutions are valid.

In addition to the resolutions above, there is a possibility for individuals to choose two

labels and assert them depending on the circumstance. Miville et. al. (2005) found that

outwardly, participants showed a monoracial identity alignment to one racial group. For

participants who had White as part of their mix, there was typically an alignment with their, or

one of their, minority group(s). Generally, participants expressed pride and intimacy in and with their identified group. However, while this monoracial identity was present, so too was a multiracial one. Participants felt that while they may openly identify as part of one racial group, they personally considered themselves to be multiracial and used multiracial as a personal label. When deciding their reference group, participants felt a range from alienation to pride, which resulted from both positive and negative experiences. Some gave up on trying to fit into groups that did not accept them. Miville and colleagues deduced from this finding the need for a strong multiracial community for multiracial youth to model and mirror positive behaviors and beliefs.

The study by Miville et. al. (2005) also describes the challenges and methods of people wishing to adopt a multiracial label or at least wishing to be part of two or more cultures. Participants striving to fit into more than one racial group had flexible social group boundaries, as opposed to rigid ones. In other words they had more of a "both/and" rather than an "either/or" (Miville et. al., 2005, p. 512) frame of mind. Additionally, they described their ability to adapt to the various social and cultural norms and changing demands of the situation. Because of this particular trait, the researchers termed this experience as the Chameleon Experience. While participants felt they could be part of more than one group, they also did not feel fully part of either/any. In general, this finding suggests a psychological strength of multiracial people in their adaptability in crossing rigid social boundaries and knowing the importance of doing so. As Miville et. al. stated, "This finding seems to demonstrate how a multiracial identity may enhance psychological functioning by, for example, developing increased cognitive flexibility and openness" (p. 512).

In thinking about all of these experiences within the context of counseling, it is important to note that many of the negative experiences are due to society's rigid monoracial boundaries and ideals that are imposed upon multiracial people (Sue & Sue, 2008b). The current research provides insight into the experiences of multiracial people; however, it does little in the way of providing concrete methods of coping with the negative experiences. Additionally, the current research is lacking an embodied sense of multiracial experiences, which might aid in finding such coping mechanisms. As an emerging dance/movement therapist with a multiracial heritage, I am in a position to bridge this gap in the literature. What is my embodied multiracial experience? How can my experience inform multicultural competency in DMT?

Chapter Three: Methods

Methodology

The exploration of the embodied multiracial experience is a highly personal topic since it relates to me as both a racial being and as an emerging dance/movement therapist. I have never given deep thought to my experience of being mixed and there has been little research on multiracial people and their embodied experience. This study is best suited to an heuristic approach to research because of the direct connection between this topic and myself as the researcher. Moustakas (1990) describes heuristic research as the study of a phenomenon that is closely related to or affects the researcher directly. The researcher should also have a profound interest in the topic being studied. Within this research methodology, the researcher must deeply reflect and completely immerse herself into the research topic (Moustakas, 1990). Through immersion and reflection, the researcher gains a greater understanding of the phenomenon itself and the researcher's relationship to the phenomenon. This heuristic research stands as groundwork to understanding the multiracial population within the context of DMT, as well as myself as a multiracial person.

Participant

While co-researchers may be involved in order to deepen and further validate the research (Moustakas, 1990), I am the sole participant in this study. I am a 24 year old, multiracial female. My biological racial heritage is Black (African American), Chinese, Hawaiian, and White (European). Culturally, I identify as American, Black, Chinese-American, and Hawaiian.

Procedure

Data was collected over the course of 12 weeks during the spring of 2014. I collected

data through the arts based methods of artistic journaling and self-dialogue (self-

interviews). Artistic journaling consisted of written narratives, reflections, free association, art

making, and movement in order to recall and/or process experiences specifically related to being

multiracial. Journaling often included a description of physical sensations that arose during an

experience. With the exception of a few entries, I wrote about an experience immediately after it

occurred or at the end of the day. The few experiences that I did not record within the same day

occurred before the start of data collection. However, they were so prominent and recurring in

my thoughts that I decided to include them in the data. Art making consisted of drawings within

the journal. The drawings were dated, titled, and included a short description of the

experience. I recorded movement data using video recording software on my personal

computer. Each video was saved with the date and title. Additionally, I made a corresponding

note with the video title, date, description of its context, and any other processing notes in the

journal. Processing notes documented specific feelings or thoughts that arose while moving.

Internal dialogues, or semi-structured self-interviews, served as a method to prompt my

awareness and tap into past experiences, as well as challenge myself to directly answer questions

I had about this process and topic (Moustakas, 1990) (see Appendix A for structured

questions). I conducted three different self-interviews during data collection. The first interview

began the data collection process, the second marked the halfway point (six weeks), and the third

closed data collection.

While the collection process was fairly free form to allow for saturation in accordance

with the heuristic design (Moustakas, 1990), I began the process by interviewing myself using a

semi-structured interview (Appendix A). After the initial interview, data collection took place as experiences arose that highlighted my awareness of my multiracial heritage. An overt example of this would be someone asking, "What is your ethnicity/race?" A less obvious example would be a stranger approaching me and addressing me in Spanish. In both of these instances, I was aware of how my multiracial heritage affected how others viewed me and my visceral reaction to being viewed that way. Other instances of awareness included cultural immersion or cultural comments. Cultural immersion was instances in which I learned more about one of my cultures or was completely immersed within the culture. The cultural comments made either around me, to me, or by me, reflected thoughts or opinions on an aspect of one of my racial cultures.   These occurrences took place in every aspect of my environment including: professional, public, private, and social media spaces. Professional spaces included but were not limited to school and internship. Public spaces included but were not limited to the bus stop or grocery store. Private spaces included private residences, such as my home or a friend's home. Social media spaces included Facebook and various articles shared on Facebook. Because these experiences happened everywhere in my life, I carried my journal with me wherever I went and I documented at my earliest convenience. Additionally, movement responses were recorded in my home or in a secluded area of Columbia College Chicago.

Data analysis methods

To analyze my data, I followed Moustakas' organic approach for heuristic research data analysis (1990).   Moustakas outlined eight steps to the analysis process: data organization and synthesis for one co-researcher, timeless immersion into the data, rest interval, review of original data, repeat steps one through four for other co-researchers, aggregate all co-researchers' data, return to raw data and select essential depiction of experience, and finally creative synthesis of

information (Moustakas, 1990, pp.51-52). Since I did not have any co-researchers, I did not

engage in steps five and six. In addition to Moustakas' organic approach for data analysis, I also

used Forinash's manual analysis to analyze the self-interviews. However, I incorporated the

Forinash analysis into creative synthesis.

I began the analysis process with the artistic journal. All of my data was already

chronologically organized. To begin analysis, I made sure that my artistic journal and computer

with the video entries were together before beginning timeless immersion.

Within Moustakas' outline for the analysis process, there is room for the researcher to

choose how she would like to immerse herself in the data. Because I am investigating the

embodiment of an experience, I used movement in addition to descriptive journaling to immerse

myself in the data. I began immersion by re-reading and viewing the entries, and assigning an

overall theme to each entry. After re-reading, viewing, and observing each entry in the artistic

journal, I responded to the entry through improvised movement and descriptive journaling. In

order to capture the improvised movement, I used the same recording software on my personal

computer that was used to capture movement data. Descriptive journaling encompassed writing

that conveyed emotions and salient movement/body sensation themes. After responding to all of

the entries, I entered the rest interval, which lasted one week.

After the rest period, I reviewed all of the original data and the responses for each

entry. For the movement improvisation responses, I recorded the most prominent movements on

a movement assessment coding sheet (MACS) (see Appendix B) to help synthesize the

movement material. As I watched the videos, I recorded all movement data from each of the

recurring themes on the same coding sheet in order to have all representations of that theme in

one place. Each video was coded using a different color for easy referral in case I needed to reference a video.

As themes became more apparent, I created a map of theme ideas and possible sub-themes. Under each of these theme headings, I wrote recurring emotions from the descriptive journaling responses. These emotions were incorporated into the map as a way to clearly organize the emotions with the themes for later synthesis. For example, one theme idea was multiracial pride, which tended to be correlated with the emotions happy, proud, and excited. On the map, "multiracial pride" was written in large letters and the emotions were written smaller underneath it. Salient movement themes correlated with multiracial pride were not written on the map, but rather stayed on the MACS titled "Multiracial Pride" (see Appendix C for refined version of map).

I analyzed the self-interviews using Forinash's adapted form of manual analysis (2012). This form of analysis involves an intensive two-step process of deconstructing and reconstructing the data. In the first step, deconstruction, I read through the interviews and made note of general themes. I read through them a second time, color-coding sections of the interview that applied to certain themes. For sections that could belong to two themes, two different colors were assigned, with the more prominent theme on the outside.

In step two of manual analysis, reconstruction, I mentally grouped the color-coded sections according to interview. For example, all orange sections from interview one were grouped together, all orange sections from interview two were grouped together, and all orange sections from interview three were grouped together. Sections that contained two or more colors were coded by their outer color (the dominant theme), and the inner color was considered a sub-theme. Once the sections were organized, I re-read each theme grouping. I then created a map

of interview themes in the same manner as the theme map from the artistic journal. Throughout reading the grouped sections, I noticed my physical and emotional responses to the themes. Unlike the journal map, I added both of these responses onto the map next to their theme (see Appendix C for refined version of map).

After both maps were constructed and all of the data had a movement or written response, I reviewed the MACS to determine the salient movements from each theme. I used the information from the MACS to creatively synthesize the results into a dance work. During this process, I also referenced video responses to ensure pure and essential movements were represented in the piece (See Appendix D for dance results piece).

Validation Strategies

To ensure themes drawn from analysis were valid, I used two validation strategies. Triangulation was the first validation strategy. I triangulated data from the artistic journal, self-interviews, and video recordings to ensure data between sources were consistent and salient themes were identified throughout the data (Creswell, 2007; Mertens, 2005). A resonance panel was the second validation strategy. The resonance panel consisted of experts in the fields of multiracial issues and DMT. The panel members were present to check and enhance validity of data through a discussion of strengths and weaknesses within the data and analysis process.

For the resonance panel, I invited five people who identify themselves as biracial and are either leaders in the multiracial community, or have extensive knowledge on multiracial issues. Of the five people invited, four accepted the invitation. Due to scheduling complications, I held three resonance panels with two panel members at the first meeting, and one each at the second and third meetings. The first meeting met online through the web conferencing site GoToMeeting and the subsequent two meetings took place over the phone. In

these panels, I presented two diagrams of initial findings, one with recurring experience themes and one with emotions and sensations with the corresponding theme headings (see Appendix C). The diagrams are consolidated and refined versions of theme maps created during data analysis. I asked panel members to contribute insights, address weaknesses, and validate the presented findings. After meeting with all of the panel members, I reviewed my analysis and raw data and added experiences from the data to the themes to reflect the insights given by panel members.

The process of data collection through analysis involved a truly physical and artistic approach. While my journey may be hard to follow due to the constraints of the page, the process began from ubiquitous origins, concepts spread unseen or rarely noted throughout my lived experience, and led to conceptual central themes with a concrete description. I hope as each theme and its subsequent sub-theme(s) unfolds in the next chapter, the reader will awaken her or his kinesthetic empathy while reading and viewing the results. In doing so, you open the opportunity to more fully understand this experience, both conceptually and physically.

Chapter Four: Results

The data from this study revealed three themes that describe my multiracial experience, each with one to three sub-themes. Each theme included specific recurring feelings and had distinct physical reactions or movement qualities associated with them. The description of each theme and sub-theme is intended to address my first research question, "what is my embodied experience as a multiracial person?" I will address my second research question regarding how my experience can inform the field of DMT in Chapter Five. In addition to this written chapter, there is a dance piece that gives a visual depiction of the embodied themes and how these themes come together to form my whole embodied experience as a multiracial person (Appendix D).

Identity

The first of the three overarching themes I found was identity. Identity refers specifically to moments related to my racial identity as a multiracial person. This theme encompasses how I analyzed myself as a racial being and made decisions on how I wanted and currently want to identify as a multiracial person. Through the interviews, I saw how I initially began the process of labeling my racial identity as a teen, as well as how I adjusted my personal label within the data collection period. Labeling refers to how a person chooses to identify (Miville et. al., 2005). This could relate to any aspect of identity, such as race, gender, sexuality, etcetera. The label that I chose for myself goes beyond calling myself multiracial and is a specific blended label that represents my racial mixture. At the beginning of data collection, my initial blended label was Polyeuroblackenesian, a blend of Black, Chinese, Polynesian (Hawaiian), and European. Over the course of data collection, I changed my label from Polyeuroblackenesian to Polyblackenesian, removing the European. This transformation not only took place because of my more concrete definition of race, but also through reflection on interactions that took place

during the data collection process. Within data collection, I pondered whether I was satisfied

with my identity and label, reassessed and reformed my label, and finally asserted my multiracial

identity. This process of redefining my multiracial identity fell into three categories:

Belonging/Not Belonging, In-between, and Appearance. Figure 1 summarizes this

relationship. These three sub-themes interacted with each other to create my current sense of self

as a multiracial person.

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│  Belonging/  │   │  In-between  │   │  Appearance  │
│ Not Belonging│   │              │   │              │
└──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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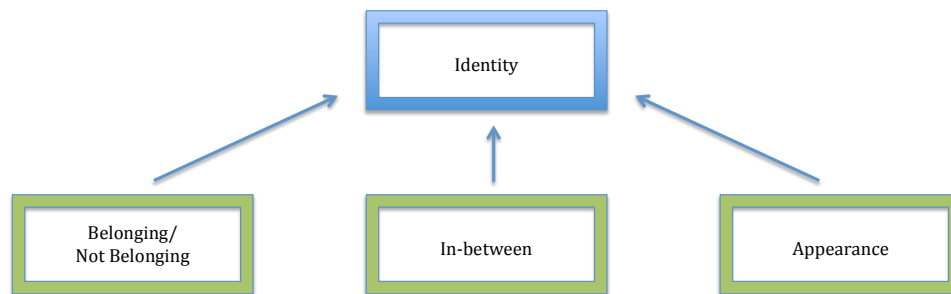
Figure 1: Theme of Identity and sub-themes.

Belonging/not belonging. The first sub-theme is belonging/not belonging. It is

exhibited by instances in which I distinctly felt that I belonged to a racial group(s) or

subsequently felt that did not belong to a racial group(s). When I felt a sense of belonging, I was

usually identifying with aspects of one of my racial groups' culture and community and I felt a

sense of pride and comfort in being part of the group. Additionally, this might have occurred

during cultural acquisition in which I was learning about my cultural heritage and discovering a

connection to how that culture already existed in my life. An example of this was when a guest

lecturer came to a graduate class and described Eastern, specifically Chinese, perspectives of

well-being. I found that not only did I agree with those perspectives, but that the views also

aligned with how I try to live my life. Additionally, the class was asked to follow the lecturer in a tai chi exercise. I was surprised to find how comfortable and at home my body felt in the movement, despite minimal contact with tai chi through occasionally observing my mother dabble in the practice or Chinese elders in a park. The lecturer's visit led me to desire greater immersion into Chinese culture because of the sense of comfort and belonging I felt. Generally, for instances of belonging, I emotionally felt internal and/or external acceptance, happiness, comfort, and safety. These feelings physically manifested in stable, grounded, and comfortable stances and movements. Additionally, I tended to be in the vertical dimension.

In moments when I did not feel that I belonged, I felt that I was being denied acceptance into, excluded from, or questioned as to whether I really belonged to a racial group, usually by its members. The moments of denial and exclusion tended to appear to be based on my behavior and cultural knowledge. These moments usually took place in the form of a statement such as "You're not really Black" or "You don't count as _____." They sometimes took the form of glares or unwelcoming looks. After these incidents, I initially felt sad and hurt, and eventually felt isolated or lonely. During these moments of feeling hurt, movement typically included impulsive phrasing and sinking and retreating in the chest. For sadness, isolation, and loneliness, movement only included sinking and retreating in the chest. The questioning appeared to be based on my behavior, cultural knowledge, and appearance. I experienced this in questions/comments such as, "Is she (referencing me) even Black?", and verbal testing of cultural knowledge, as well as non-verbal looks. When I experienced the questioning, I had similar feelings of sadness and hurt; however, this physically manifested in a slightly different way from the denial and exclusion responses. Movement responses to such questioning typically included deceleration and enclosing as well as sinking and retreating in the chest. In addition to

these external influences, I had internally stimulated feelings of not belonging. These included self-questioning and self-removal. I questioned whether I belonged to a racial group based on feelings of inadequacy in cultural knowledge and generally feeling out of place behaviorally. Self-questioning resulted in similar feelings of isolation and loneliness. Instances of self-removal were situations when I chose not to engage in racial discussions or events in anticipation or fear of being rejected from the racial group. Self-removal usually had the overt feeling of discomfort and feeling out of place and physically manifested as enclosing or binding to the extreme of freezing.

In-between. The second sub-theme of identity is "in-between." The concept of in-between is the sense that I am not fully in one racial group or another. I am suspended between them. Culturally, I understand enough about the racial groups that I am a part of, but I am not as embedded in the culture as someone who is monoracial Black, Chinese, or Hawaiian and lives fully within the culture. However, because of the knowledge I do have, I can shift in and out of different cultures with relative ease. I feel comfortable entering a Chinese bakery and ordering items with their Chinese names, and then going to join in activities at a youth center with primarily Black youth. In addition to this cultural shifting, my physical features are such that I do not fully or obviously look like people of my racial heritages. Based on my appearance, people sometimes correctly guess that I belong to one of my racial groups. Other times, I am mistaken for racial or ethnic groups entirely different from my actual mix, such as Latina or Filipina. In some sense, my ambiguous features allow me to fit into many different racial groups, which I have called face-shifting.

I identified this quality of in-between to have both a positive and negative side. The positives included: being adaptable, having many cultural experiences, and having fewer racial

stigmas attached to me. The negatives included: the testing or questioning of my racial group membership, or exclusion from a racial group. These positives and negatives also touch on being both privileged and oppressed. I am privileged in the sense that I have the luxury to shift from one racial identity to another as needed or desired, and also have few racial stigmas projected onto me. I am oppressed as a woman of Color in the United States and I am sometimes shunned from monoracial communities. Interestingly, I experienced a much stronger movement response than emotional response to this sub-theme of in-between. When embodying this concept, I moved primarily in Mobile state on the horizontal plane. The diagonal scale, counter tension, and tension flow adjustment were also salient movement features. Counter tension was especially prevalent during embodiments of the privileged/oppressed polarity. The initial emotional responses identified were frustration, feeling tired, and possibly confusion. After consulting the resonance panel and returning to the data, I also identified the positive emotion of enjoyment. However, this emotional response was coded as part of the theme multiracial pride (discussed below) as it was in response to feeling pride in being multiracial because of having more options and mobility. Therefore, enjoyment, while related to in-between, was not coded with the feelings related to in-between.

Appearance. Appearance is the third sub-theme of identity. This sub-theme refers to moments when my appearance influenced how I was perceived racially and my feelings about that perception. While appearance could have only been part of the other two sub-themes, these instances focused more on my internal preoccupations surrounding my appearance rather than the direct interaction between my appearance and others. The questions of "Where do I fit in?," "Which of my racial communities do I look like?," and "Is there anyone else who looks like me?" were all concerns that arose predominantly within interview reflection of my adolescent

years. While these questions still arise occasionally, they were mainly limited to my adolescent

search for identity within community and society. These questions typically brought feelings of

isolation and insecurity/self-consciousness. A similar question to the previous ones was: "Do I

dress and/or behave like my racial groups?" This mainly arose in the context of dressing for

internship and interacting with clients on the south side of Chicago. In an effort to be more

relatable to my Black clients, I attempted to dress and channel behaviors and postures I

associated with the Black community. All of these questions regarding fitting in appearance-

wise elicited feelings of isolation and self-consciousness/insecurity about appearance. This

physically manifested in some binding flow and some bilateral narrowing and sinking in the

torso.

In addition to contemplating my racial place based on appearance, I also had a societal-

based concern regarding appearance. In general, I do not fit female beauty standards in

American culture, which is White, lithe frame, and typically blonde with blue or light

eyes. Again, this preoccupation arose during reflections on adolescence when I had a greater

desire to conform and be considered beautiful. While this thought did not arise anywhere else in

the data set, it did cause me to realize how deeply embedded the thought was, not only in myself,

but in family, and how I have carried it with me throughout the years. I had low self-esteem

regarding my physical appearance, which physically manifested with binding flow and some

bilateral narrowing and sinking in the torso.

The last concern I had regarding my appearance was that my actions combined with my

appearance would make me appear to be a race traitor and I would be denied membership to a

racial group. A race traitor is a derogatory name for someone who is perceived as having

betrayed his or her race by purposefully not conforming to all of its social rules and joining a

different race culturally against his or her own culture (Race traitor, November 25, 2014). An example of my concern from the data occurred when socializing with a White male friend in a restaurant with predominantly Black patrons. For a few seconds, I felt the Black patrons thought I was a race traitor because from the outside I, a Black woman, appeared to be going on a date with a White man. The thought was brief, but intense and strong. I felt anxiety flare up and physically had high intensity binding flow.

Insensitivities

Many of the difficulties in understanding and deciding on my multiracial identity dealt with my interactions with others and how I thought others perceived me. While those interactions were oriented toward how I shaped my racial identity, I experienced a series of interactions unrelated to my conception of my identity that affected me negatively. I have categorized these interactions as insensitivities. Insensitivities were instances in which a person made a comment or expressed body language, whether intentionally or unintentionally, that caused me to feel negatively about the interaction. These could have been microaggressions or overt aggressions about multiracial people. Microaggressions are short, subtle, everyday exchanges that slight, demean, or insult minority or disadvantaged groups, such as people of Color, members of the LGBTQ community, and women (Sue & Sue, 2008b, pp. 106-107). These can be conveyed verbally, non-verbally, visually, or behaviorally and can be conscious or unconscious. An example from the data set is someone calling me exotic. While such a statement may be meant as a compliment, the word choice implies an otherness and foreign-ness of my appearance that holds an objectifying quality. As a resonance panel member framed it, the perhaps unintentional message is that I look attractive for a non-White woman or for not fitting into what is typically considered the American beauty standard. An example of a non-verbal and

behavioral microaggression, specifically a monoracial microaggression, from the data set can actually be taken from the Belonging/Not Belonging sub-theme. A group of people questioned my racial/cultural affiliation by quickly staring me up and down, seemingly sizing me up before deciding to even respond to my cultural greeting. The eye movement happened in seconds, but it was clear enough for me to sense that I was not immediately welcome to the group. This combined with their hesitancy to engage with me on a cultural level and the demeaning way in which they then did eventually engage with me left me feeling hurt and lonely. An overt aggression is a clear act or statement of racism, or in this case monoracism.

There are four sub-themes that these insensitivities fall under, depicted in Figure 2: "What are you?," Exoticism, Racism, and External Labeling. Additionally, I experienced two common expressive responses to these interactions, Compliance and Advocacy/Education, which I will describe after the sub-themes.
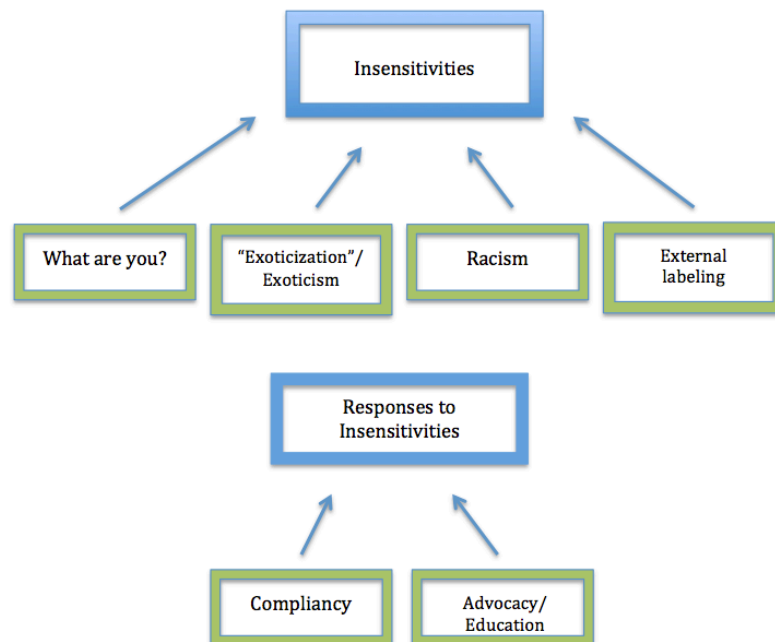
Figure 2: Theme of Insensitivities and sub-themes

"What are you?" The most common of the four sub-themes I experienced was the "What are you?" question. This manifested not only as the question itself and other variations of it, but also as a guessing game and/or assumptions about my racial background/ heritage. The other variations of the question "What are you?" included: "What is your ethnicity/nationality/race?" and "What is your racial heritage/mix?" The guessing game occurred when an individual either asked a question that guessed my racial background, such as "Are you Asian?" or responded to my answer to the "What are you?" question with something that implied they were silently guessing my mix. Some examples include: "Oh, I thought you were Asian because of your eyes" or "That would explain the eyes." Lastly, assumptions occurred when someone assumed I was of a specific race and explicitly stated what they thought, such as, "You're Filipina," or began speaking to me in a different language assuming that I understood that language. With all of these, I felt a range of negative emotions depending on the context. When a stranger asked, "What are you?" or played the question form of the guessing game, I usually felt irritation or annoyance and occasionally exasperation. When a peer, friend, or someone I expected to be more culturally sensitive performed any of these acts, I felt disappointment, hurt/offended, anger, and in some instances, disdain. In some cases, I also felt indignant to the questions or statements, which spoke to an underlying feeling of unfairness. The unfairness came from the expectation for me to disclose something personal about myself with no expectation of reciprocation and for the gratification of the asker. With all of these emotional responses, the recurring physical reactions were sinking in the chest and binding flow. For the guessing game, I also had the additional movement response of sequential body part phrasing, as if I was being pieced apart.

Exoticism. The next sub-theme of insensitivities is exoticism. This is the act of viewing or labeling me as exotic. In the interviews, I recalled having been described as exotic. This was perceived as an insensitivity because while the descriptor was meant in a non-harmful way, and possibly even intended as a compliment, I did not receive the comment positively. In all instances in which this took place, I felt objectified, uncomfortable, and awkward. Two physical responses were a neutralizing of flow and a twisting and retreating in the torso. The first physical response is related to the feeling of compliance, which will be explained in the expressed responses section below. The twisting in the torso is indicative of my general physical reaction to discomfort.

Racism. The third sub-theme of insensitivities is racism, and was experienced in a societal context. I never experienced direct acts of racism or racial prejudice toward me within the data collection period. Nevertheless, both the artistic journal and self-interviews reflected the effects of my feelings towards racism on a societal level. One example of this is Hollywood's casting of White actors in roles that were originally meant for people of Color, known as Whitewashing (Stop Whitewashing, n.d.). Another example from the data set is an interaction with a young Black client who desired to be White, or at least light skinned. The client perceived White people to be more attractive and good because of societal messages. While neither of these were acts directed at me, they are societal norms and I felt the effects of them as a person of Color in the United States. For instance, in the second example, I became aware of my own unconscious internalized racism and I remembered my childhood desire to be White. Other examples of societal racism I experienced were stereotypes about racial groups I belong to or about mixed race people and reading derogatory statements about people of Color online. Depending on the context, I felt sadness, anger, helplessness, frustration, and as

previously mentioned, internalized-racism. Physically, I consistently experienced bound flow when experiencing societal racism.

External labeling. The fourth sub-theme of insensitivities is external labeling, which is the act of someone giving a racial label with limited or no input from the person being labeled. This occurred once in the data set, when I was filling out a demographic information form for a government administered program. The intake coordinator worded the question about race in a way where I felt I had to identify with a single race. As I struggled with the question, the coordinator did not give me any other options for race identification. While I was the one to give myself the label, it was at the expense of my discomfort of having to identify in a way that did not feel true to myself. Because of the limitations of the demographic questionnaire, I felt limited in my ability to identify as I wanted. I initially felt disoriented and shocked (mainly that the question still existed in that form), and later frustrated and angry. Physically, the disorientation and shock combined into the sensation of weightlessness, as though I was floating. The frustration and anger manifested in binding flow, particularly in my upper body, and impactful movement phrasing. While this experience only occurred once in the data set and is not the clearest example of external labeling, I realized the importance of this interaction after a resonance panel member mentioned this as a common experience of multiracial people. Therefore it is included as a finding.

Expressed responses. Within these interactions categorized as insensitivities, I had two external responses. The more typical response was compliance, in which I answered the question or responded without thinking. In the moment of answering, I physically experienced neutral binding flow, which felt as though I was emotionally numbing myself. After the interaction was complete, I felt disappointment in and anger toward myself for not questioning or

calling attention to the person's motives for asking. This emotional response became more frequent as data collection advanced and I began to notice this pattern. While it became apparent to me that the response was habitual from years of answering questions related to being multiracial, it was difficult to be patient and understanding toward myself for continuing to respond in this way and not stand up for myself.

The second external response was advocacy and education. I advocated for myself or other multiracial people or monoracial people of Color, by educating someone about being multiracial or a person of Color in the United States. These instances mostly took place through dialogues in which race was discussed in an open, non-hostile way. These discussions left me feeling proud, empowered, and in some cases, hopeful. After the initial beginning of the dialogue, in which I would bind flow, I began freeing my flow and felt physically stable.

Multiracial Pride

Feeling proud and empowered to advocate for multiracial people implies a sense of pride in being multiracial. As reflected in the interviews, I have always had an underlying sense of pride in being multiracial. This expressed itself primarily in the self-interviews with five thoughts and beliefs. The first thought was that being multiracial represents unity between people. I stated in the final interview, "The beauty of being multiracial is what I think a mixed child can represent - two or more cultures coming together, putting aside negative differences long enough to learn and understand the differences as not necessarily a bad thing, but something to be accepted as part of a person; a different aspect of the human experience. I think multiracial people can represent that understanding or connection on a human level, and that's beautiful." My existence is a clear representation that people of different races can live together and love each other, which is something that makes me proud to be multiracial.

The second idea was that my mixed racial heritage expands people's minds. In an interview I stated, "I also like shocking people with my mix. I kind of like the look of surprise or awe when I say I'm Polyeuroblackenesian." While I did not state the reasoning behind this statement, a later interaction in the artistic journal illuminated a reason. In the interaction, I was educating a child on the fact that not all Americans born in the United States are White. By expanding her knowledge base of a subject in which she had little real world experience and understanding, I felt proud to be opening her eyes to new possibilities and experiences. In sharing my mix with people, I am allowing them to see that interracial relationships are possible.

The third point of pride was that multiracial culture is one of acceptance and openness. Throughout my interviews, there is a thread of questioning whether multiracial people have or should have their own culture. While it is not as clearly defined as some sub-cultures, I determined that there was a set of interactional norms that led to an atmosphere of acceptance of all people and openness to different cultures within the multiracial community.

The fourth idea is that I have options and I defy hard labels. While my "in-between-ness" can be tiring, it can also be fulfilling. As a resonance panel member stated, "I have a greater range in movement and behaviorally," which demonstrates how I felt with the statement "I have options." I have the ability, knowledge, and understanding of different ways of acting in the world, and can choose which actions can lead me to what I want. Additionally, not having a clear label by other's standards or being easily categorized provides me the freedom to escape other's expectations of me, whether racial or otherwise.

Closely related to escaping defined labels is the fifth idea regarding multiracial pride - giving myself a blended label, Polyblackenesian. As a counterpoint to the insensitivity of

external labels, being able to label my mix is empowering and shows my pride in being who I am racially. Part of this is also the ability to change how I define myself as my identity shifts. Throughout the data collection process, I was transitioning from one label to another. At the end of data collection I had reached a new blended label (versus stating the races separately) that felt satisfying and true to my experience as a racial being. As mentioned in the identity theme, I removed the European from my Polyeuroblackenesian label. I did this because I felt that my label should culturally reflect my racial identity, as well as my biological heritage. My life experience and physical appearance do not reflect any clear signs of German or English (the European in my mix). Additionally, rather than simply say multiracial or break my mix down into the individual races, I chose to keep a blended label because I felt that my life reflected the mix of the cultures rather than the pure cultures all together. The blended label itself specifies the cultures to which I identify.

Overall, these thoughts and actions inspired the same feelings and movement responses. I had feelings of pride, empowerment, and happiness. These emotions translated into the salient movement themes of freeing flow, carving mode of shape change, spreading in the chest, movement in the vertical plane, wall postures, and use of far reach space and high levels.

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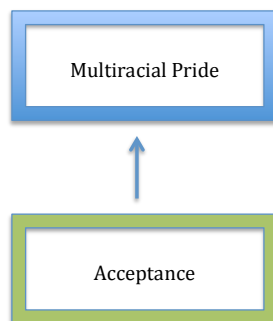
Figure 3: Theme of Multiracial Pride and sub-theme

Acceptance. Under the greater theme of multiracial pride is the subtheme of acceptance. This was experienced in three ways: self-acceptance, microcosmic acceptance, and societal acceptance. In the experience of self-acceptance, I came to a different level of accepting myself as a multiracial person. I forgave myself for gaps in my cultural knowledge in regards to my cultures. I accepted that part of my experience of being multiracial is that I do not know as much as I could know or would like to know about my cultures, but I still have a claim to them as they all influence who I am. Microcosmic and societal acceptance were both experienced in the data as a desire for them to be more prevalent. While I generally feel accepted as a multiracial person in my close sphere of day-to-day relationships or microcosm (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), reflections on past situations noted in my self-interviews revealed that microcosmic acceptance did not always feel present. Many of these experiences led to past feelings of self-questioning and confusion surrounding my multiracial identity and some were categorized under insensitivities. The desire for societal acceptance extends to acceptance for multiracial people. The United States is far more accepting of multiracial people than it has been in the past, however, data from both the interviews and journal showed a strong desire for greater acceptance of multiracial people. There is a need for more representation in the media, more accurate means of collecting racial demographic information on official forms, and the end of hate crimes against interracial couples.

My pride in being multiracial underlies these forms of acceptance. Although these three experiences are based on the desire for acceptance, the underlying sentiment is that I am proud to be multiracial. I would like others to understand that there is no harm in being multiracial and accept me as I am. With the general feeling of desire, the physical manifestation of acceptance in all three experiences included freeing flow and play between stability and mobility.

While reading these results is useful on a conceptual level, a key element of this thesis is the embodiment of my multiracial experience. The dance version of these results can be found in Appendix D. The piece provides a visual overview of the embodiment of themes. Additionally, the text in the dance piece can found in Appendix E. Both the written and movement results will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion

In answer to my first research question regarding my embodied multiracial experience, I found three major themes of Identity, Insensitivities, and Multiracial Pride. While my emotions and physical responses within these themes were mine alone, the themes themselves and their sub-themes were validated by the resonance panel. This implies that the themes are common experiences shared by other multiracial people. These themes are also supported by current and previous research in psychology and counseling. In particular, the themes of insensitivities and identity have substantial ties to current literature. The insensitivities' sub-theme of "What are you?" is also recognized as referring to racial ambiguity as stated within the Chapter Two literature review on multiracial issues (Bradshaw, 1992; Sue & Sue, 2008b). While I labeled it as an insensitivity, others in the field referred to this experience as one of multiracial racism, or monoracism (Miville, et. al., 2005; Johnson & Nadal, 2010), and specifically a multiracial microaggression (Johnson & Nadal, 2010). Arguably, all of the insensitivities stated within this study could be called racist and monoracist acts, with most taking the form of microaggressions ("What are you?," exoticism, external labeling, and some acts from within racism). Interestingly, the sub-theme of exoticism has been identified as a prominent part of racial ambiguity (Bradshaw, 1992) and the way multiracial women have experienced standards of beauty within the United States (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Torkelson, Helms, Wilson, & Ashby, 2014). While there is research tying exoticism to women, the resonance panel also identified this experience as happening to men as well; however, men may not refer to it specifically as exoticism.

Within the theme of identity, all of its sub-themes were related in literature. The sub-theme of in-between is essentially the same as Miville and colleagues' (2005) Chameleon

Experience. Both center on the ability to shift from culture to culture based on a personal sense of wider cultural borders and physical racial ambiguity. Both also hold the experience of not feeling wholly part of one or each of the racial groups, while also feeling somewhat part of all of them. These similarities combined with the resonance panel's recognition of the sub-theme of in-between as the Chameleon Experience give further credence to this being a key multiracial occurrence.

Belonging/not belonging, particularly the not belonging aspect, had emotional similarities to emotions noted in Kelch-Oliver and Leslie's (2006) theme of not fitting in, and similar experiences to Torkelson and colleagues' (2014) work. Despite having different categories of experiences that constituted the theme or sub-theme, the feelings associated with the general theme were similarly negative. All involved feelings of emotional hurt and isolation. Torkelson et. al. (2014) found similar experiences also aligning with the not belonging aspects that elicited the same emotional content with their themes of authenticity and being/feeling unseen. The belonging aspect of the belonging/not belonging sub-theme also had similarities in the literature. Miville et. al.'s (2005) study involved feelings of pride within specific racial groups. This differs from the current study's results in that participants of the Miville et. al. study were identifying with one of their racial groups when expressing these feelings, while I was identifying moments of belonging in all of my racial groups.

The sub-theme of appearance has an interesting connection to past and current research. While appearance, particularly phenotype, is important for all multiracial people in determining their racial identity (Bradshaw, 1992; Miville et. al., 2005; Root, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008b), studies with only multiracial women as participants found that appearance was a specific theme unto itself (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Torkelson et. al., 2014). Across the studies, the

present one included, all had similar themes of concerns about fitting into various racial groups, beauty standards, as well as how looks affected which group women could belong to. This suggests that this topic is of specific importance for multiracial women in their identity development. This could be due to society's emphasis on beauty and appearance as a source of value for women.

The present study's theme of multiracial pride was not overtly connected to any specific research. However, research does identify moments of resilience related to multiracial pride (Miville et. al., 2005; Root, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008b), assessments measuring multiracial pride and level of integration in a multiracial identity (Cheng & Lee, 2009), and desires for microcosmic and societal acceptance (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Miville et. al., 2005; Sue & Sue, 2008b). Additionally, the general multiracial movement (Douglass, 2003; Root, 2003) and the desire for some to have a multiracial culture or more societal support (Giamo et. al., 2012; Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Miville et. al., 2005; Sue & Sue, 2008b) suggest this theme is part of the multiracial experience.

While the themes found in this study answered my first research question and were validated, my second research question was not directly answered by the findings in my analysis. Despite this negative finding, further description and inquiry into specific themes lend themselves to answering how my experience can inform multicultural competency in DMT. Additionally, some of the inferences drawn from the themes, alongside current research, have the potential to inform general multicultural competency in counseling as well. I will begin this portion of the discussion by first addressing points of interest for multicultural competency in DMT and then in the greater field of counseling. I will also address insights from the resonance

panel that were not found in the data set, and limitations to this study. Finally, I will close with future directions in research.

In-between movement. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that in embodying the theme of in-between I found a stronger movement response than emotional response. This embodiment was mobile and fairly continuous, which led to a lack of stability. The instability gave me the sense that I needed grounding which I would not find by trying to stay with one of my racial groups. Because of the other sub-theme belonging/not belonging, I did not feel that I could stay within one group for long and that I existed in-between these three racial groups. I could enter when I wanted and exit when I was no longer wanted or no longer felt comfortable. The inspiration for this sense of in-between stemmed from reading an article by a biracial writer about her experience. I also quoted her in the dance piece (see Appendix E).

> When you're a mixed-race person in a monoracial world, you learn that it's
>
> hard, if not impossible to fit in as you are, so you learn to take on the identities
>
> around you. You also learn that the lines of race and culture aren't solid.
>
> They blur. They shift, depending on the context, and when they shift, you
>
> need to shift too. Interestingly, these lines are hard and fast for everyone else
>
> - so monoracial people tend to stay in their boxes while you hop in and out.
>
> (Chan, 2014)

This resonated with me. I realized that while I could vaguely explain the idea of shifting that Chan described, I rarely thought about it as part of my experience unless others mentioned it. Because this experience permeates everyday life, it is difficult to see and identify when living it. Before I could fully understand this idea of shifting or in-between and how it expresses itself

in my life, I needed another person to identify this aspect of being multiracial. I was then able to embody the concept for myself.

In addition to embodying in-between, I also reflected on my racial identity diffusion growing up. I realized that I rarely used race (not even multiracial) as one of my core identifiers, and that I first culturally identified as American (as witnessed in the dance), since I am 100 percent American. However, even with my nationality as my cultural identifier, I never named it as one of my core identifiers. This is reminiscent of the fourth sector or early adulthood of Cross and Cross' racial-ethnic-cultural (REC) identity model (2008). As previously mentioned, three identity situations unfold in this sector: low REC salience or alternate identity, moderate and high REC salience, and negative salience. The low REC salience or alternate identity situation is the one that applied to my experience prior to the completion of this study. In this situation, racial identity has little to no importance in how a person identifies. While Cross and Cross made no conjectures as to why a low REC situation might occur or who it was more likely to occur with (monocultural or multicultural individuals), I argue that my reason for falling into this situational category was my difficulty in finding stability within my racial groups. My inability to find a "racial reference group" (Miville et al., 2011, p. 511) to turn to, resulted in feeling that I did not have a stable racial identity. In turn, I chose alternate identities to define and, essentially, stabilize me. This finding suggests that multiracial clients who are actively struggling with their racial identity might need to stabilize in a different aspect of their identity until they have more clarity around their racial identity.

After embodying in-between, I used Laban's defense scale (also known as the dimensional scale) to physically ground and stabilize. I found moving in the vertical dimension particularly comforting as the movement did not involve moving away from a central

point. Additionally, the vertical dimension relates to Jungian's sensing self, and involves grounding (S. Hurst, personal communication, September 12, 2013). By moving in the vertical, I was not only stabilizing, but coming back to a self that did not need to shift or change to fit in. Using the defense scale could be of particular use to clients feeling overwhelmed with navigating two or more cultures.

       Belonging movement. In addition to using the defense scale, finding moments in which a client feels that they belong to their racial communities might be a source of grounding for them. I felt most stable in moments where I felt like I belonged to a racial group. My embodiment of belonging was primarily in the vertical dimension and in stable poses. In finding myself rooted and comfortable within a community, I was able to gain a better understanding of and feel more secure in my multiracial identity. More specifically, I was able to understand ways in which I was part of my racial groups, while also knowing that I was also part of the other groups. This self-knowledge led to my decision to keep a blended label and strengthened my confidence in that label. A possible exploration in DMT could consider stability and belonging. This exploration could involve the client relating parts of the defense scale or other movements the client finds stable and grounding to moments or aspects when the client feels a sense of belonging within the cultures of their racial groups. Additionally, playing with the concept of stability-mobility in terms of racial identity and race play has the potential to help a client integrate the feeling of living in-between and a multiracial identity. Finding a core or stabilizing idea, such as "Whichever sphere I am in, I belong even if I am not exactly the same," or a core identity, such as multiracial, can serve as the anchor that allows the client to move and play in different racial groups. Designating different spaces within the room to represent the client's different racial groups could be a good way to facilitate the exploration. In creating the

dance work, "Polyblackenesian," I originally made the different racial/cultural spaces as a way for me to embody in-between. The spaces then became a way to contemplate my relationship with each group on a physical level. By giving each group a space within the room, I was able to move to and from each group. This allowed me to think about how I engaged and approached the groups, as well as what belonging felt like within each group. The main movements for belonging were similar, but I discovered subtle differences depending on how I interacted with each group.

　　　　Cultural acquisition. A key experience of belonging that arose was cultural acquisition. Although only one instance of it involved movement, I found myself gravitating toward movement from each culture that was comfortable when creating the results dance piece. These movements can be viewed in the section of the dance when I am moving between the three different racial spaces (the section I call "In-Between"). While I initially searched for movements that seemed representative of the culture, I soon found my body rejecting pieces that were unfamiliar and slipping into movements that were more familiar with my experience of each culture. Through this movement search, I found myself re-creating the experience of cultural acquisition. I used it as a way to gauge what my experience of each culture was and what aspects of the movement, and thereby culture, I did and did not identify with. While I was able to distinguish aspects of me that did not align with the movement qualities, I did not feel negatively toward the experience, but rather a sense of acceptance and contentment. I felt as though I was understanding how each cultural group influenced and lived in me.

　　　　This post data collection experience brought my awareness to the role of dance as a cultural exploration of identity. Lomax and Paulay (2008) analyzed dance and movement styles from various cultures around the world and looked at how their cultural dances related to their

lifestyles. They essentially found that dance was a container for culture, including work styles, social and gender norms, and how people lived based on the climate of their location. Additionally, Chang (2009) identifies a movement cultural exploration model, created by Joi Gresham in 1995 and adapted by Chang for dance/movement therapists, which involves an individual imagining and re-creating symbolic movements of her/his ancestors. The movement could be a traditional dance, a movement memory of how an elder moved, or an imagined embodiment from a photograph. The exercise is meant to help the individual recognize how movement patterns from the cultural and familial history influence the individual's current thoughts and movement patterns. As a person who has participated in this exercise, I noted some considerations to enhance the experience. When applying this model, more emphasis on what cultural norms and values are passed on through the dances might help both clients and students make connections between their culture and how they live their lives. Dance/movement therapy students and clients could be prompted to think about what norms and values are manifested within the dance and which of these norms and values they believe or enact on a daily basis. They might also be asked what movements feel natural to them, if any. These considerations could lead to a richer experience for the participants.

An important part of the multiracial identity development is cultural exploration (Poston, 1990), especially if the individual wishes to have an integrated multiracial identity. Even if a multiracial person decides to identify with a monoracial label, it may take cultural exploration to determine that this is truly what they want. Considering my experience, the findings from Lomax and Paulay (2008), and the Chang model (2009), it is possible for a multiracial person to explore their mixed race heritage through cultural dances or movement scores to aid in racial identity development.

Related, but perhaps a step after initial cultural exploration, embodying values of the different cultures in a different way than presented by cultural dances may aid in identity integration or discernment. In sessions with Asian American clients struggling with acculturation, Pallaro (1997) led the group in embodying and integrating opposing aspects of their two cultures, Asian and American. The group was split into two smaller groups, with one group embodying Asian cultural values and one embodying American cultural values. Group members from each opposing group came together and presented their embodiment of the value and then were asked to repeat it until the two movers could find similarities and integrate their movements into a dance. Although this was for a group of a specific racial-cultural group, this exploration could still apply for multiracial clients. An exploration of this nature would allow the client to try on the cultural values from their body-felt perspective and integrate various values from their different cultures together. This could be another way for a client seeking an integrated multiracial identity to work toward that identity goal.

Expressed responses. Another insight I gained from my embodiment was my pattern of responding to insensitivities. As mentioned in Chapter Four, I found it particularly difficult to break my pattern of compliant responding, despite being aware of its roots and wishing to respond differently. I also became aware of how positively I felt when I responded with advocacy or education to microaggressions (insensitivities). While I did not explore this possibility during this study, I am curious as to how the DMT intervention of trying on and exploring different postures could be used to break the pattern of compliant responding. The intervention could involve exploring postures that evoke power and/or a sense of empowerment in the client. These postures could be rooted in experiences of power and empowerment or created within the session. To further my experience with my personal empowering posture (my

advocate posture), I wonder if it is possible to adopt my advocating posture and body sensations when sensing that I am about to respond to an insensitivity with compliance. Could this work for others who have experienced this situation, not just in relation to being multiracial, but also in the face of other microaggressions, such as comments about gender or sexuality? In addition to these questions and potential lines of research, is the acknowledgment that change and repatterning take time. Despite knowing this, I could not help but feel angry and frustrated with myself for continually responding in a way I did not like, especially once I realized how these insensitivities affected me. It is important to emphasize self-acceptance for where the client is at within his or her personal process. It might be useful to introduce interventions emphasizing self-compassion and understanding as the client works to repattern and re-wire their behavior.

In addition to the above lines of questions and insights, the importance of my expressed response of advocacy and education to multicultural competency both in the field of DMT and counseling cannot be overstated. Within my discussions of race, I was always apprehensive about opening the dialogue. However, after discovering my voice would be heard and that I could express my experience or experiences of other people of Color without being stopped, I felt able to relax and comfortable enough to openly discuss race without becoming defensive or accusatory. I felt appreciative of having the space to discuss this taboo topic with White and monoracial peers of Color. While therapists are taught to invite discussions of race and race relations if they see a need for it, this in itself is not enough. It is important to reassure a client that the therapy time and space is a safe environment for them to express themselves without fear of interruption. Jenkins-Hayden (2015) also specifically highlighted this as an important point of multicultural competency among counselors. Although I have no specific phrases that I can offer from my data that counselors can use, an expression such as "I want to hear about your

experience, and I'm not going to interrupt you, unless I need clarification so I can stay with you" might suffice. Additionally, I am not typically a direct person, but I found these conversations felt the most fruitful when the topic was directly addressed.

Related to creating a safe space to discuss race, understanding my racial identity and viewing myself as a racial being, especially within certain spaces, provided me the opportunity to be a more culturally competent therapist. Prior to this study, I had a surface understanding of myself as a multiracial person. Even though I was raised in a mixed race family, we never talked about race or what it meant to be an interracial minority family. Growing up in a racially diverse area where interracial families were a norm, race rarely mattered to me as a child. I did not see myself as a racial being. In moving out of the diverse space of the Bay Area, California, I began to see how I stood out racially, but still had little concept of what that meant both to myself and others. In moving to Chicago, a city with sharp racial separation and stagnation, I found race to have significantly more weight than anywhere else I had lived. Additionally, I discovered the complexity of being multiracial in an environment with typically monoracial spaces, and more specifically being a multiracial therapist working with clients who are used to monoracial people.

In my interaction with the young client who wished to be White, the client specifically wished to be "White" like me. From this interaction, I realized the significance of myself as a racial being within the therapeutic relationship just the same as my client is. In my training on multicultural competency, much of my learning was focused around the client and the client as a racial being. While I was encouraged to know my race and acknowledge its visibility (a far greater task for me to begin with), emphasis on the client's racial experience without my response was given.

While viewing myself as a racial being, and particularly a multiracial being, I gained a better understanding of my color privilege within the Black community and was reminded of how others perceive me. It also illuminated my own internal racism surrounding my Black heritage and how that could affect my interactions with clients. More specifically, I understood how even *I* subconsciously internalized media's perception of Black people and how my unchecked feelings of negativity toward the Black community affected my interactions with clients. In the particular situation with my client, I wanted to elevate the Black community and show my pride in being Black by stating achievements and positive aspects of the community. However, the first three examples of the community that came to mind were negative stereotypes or aspects of the community that I highly disliked. This resulted in a delay as I struggled to find the positive aspects of the community that I felt pride in. Prior to this experience, I did not realize how easy it was for these prejudices to surface in my consciousness, especially because of my strong affection for the Black community. With my current understanding of my own internalized racial prejudices, as well as myself as a multiracial being, I would have responded to this client's statement in a different way than I responded in that moment. In processing the experience with the resonance panel, one member, a therapist, highlighted how I could use my ambiguous features to serve the client by providing them with a corrective experience and create an appropriate learning moment. While this discovery may be specific to multiracial therapists or therapists with ambiguous racial features, I believe a better understanding of how one is racially viewed by clients, as well as constantly reassessing one's racial and cultural prejudices is necessary to multicultural competency. This is an ongoing process and especially important for counselors and therapists from the dominant culture to

embrace in order to be multiculturally competent counselors (Chang, 2009; Hanna, 1990; Mayor, 2012; Sue & Sue, 2008a).

Another general note for multicultural competency when working with the multiracial population is the topic of identity development. I would like to briefly return to the sub-theme of in-between and specifically to the idea of having an alternate identity unrelated to race. My conjecture that I needed to stabilize in an alternate identity along with the negative emotions found with in-between may cast the light that the overall experience of in-between is negative and that finding an alternate identity is indicative of racial identity development issues. While the experience may seem negative, I was not unhappy about my decision to culturally identify as American and did not deem it to be an issue. In reflecting on it now, I still do not deem the decision problematic for the context, especially since I was not searching for a more specific racial identity aside from multiracial. At the time, I knew I was multiracial and wanted to assert that, but did not necessarily have the language or knowledge to support the feeling. This alternate identity of nationality was easier to explain to others and maintain focus, while I kept my own personal label of multiracial. Additionally, my desire to assert this feeling was not enough of a concern in my life to feel the need to change the situation. Likewise, my emotions associated with this sub-theme were far more blunted than the enjoyment I felt relating to the mobility that was coded in multiracial pride. Therefore, it should not be assumed that a multiracial individual that identifies with a non-racial core identifier is struggling with racial identity issues or that this other identity is negative in the long run for them. It is also important to keep in mind that a multiracial person might choose a monoracial identity and this also does not signify racial identity struggles (Root, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008b). Their choice of label should not be questioned, as that is invalidating (Sue & Sue, 2008b). Additionally, as with many

identities, racial identity is fluid and open to change during the course of a multiracial person's life (Root, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008b). If a client addresses ambivalence regarding their racial identity, then the therapist should explore the topic with their client with an open mind and no assumptions on how the client should resolve the identity struggle (integrated multiracial, monoracial, symbolic White, etc.).

Resonance panel

The resonance panel also emphasized the fluidity of race and racial identity for multiracial people. They noted that racial identity is likely to change over time, and within the context of place and space. Additionally, they stated that different multiracial issues become more or less prominent with the change in racial identity and over time and context. With these fluctuations in prominence, feelings toward certain topics may change. One such example was the "What are you?" question.

What are you? While the resonance panel validated my categorization of the "What are you?" question and its permutations as insensitivities, they also prompted me to consider times I did not feel any form of animosity toward being asked the question. I identified two situations in which I felt open to the question and answered willingly, or even with pride: in clinical settings and in multiracial gatherings. These reflections took place outside the scope of data collection and therefore were not included within the results. Within the clinical setting, I feel comfortable sharing my racial background with clients when asked because I know they are searching for ways that I will be able to relate to them. Additionally, because they are disclosing so much about themselves within the therapeutic relationship, I do not mind disclosing my racial mix with them, especially if I sense that it will strengthen the relationship. It is also important to me to answer questions related to race, especially as I am striving to become a more culturally

competent therapist. While my first concern in answering is whether it is a benefit to the client and the therapeutic relationship, these moments can also be used to educate others about multiracial people.

In the second situation, I am comfortable answering the question because I know or perceive that the person asking is multiracial or is coming from a place of understanding in regards to the multiracial experience. I assume that multiracial person's curiosity stems from wanting to learn if we have the same mix or at least a common race within our mixes. In both of these situations, I perceive sharing as a way of connecting with the person who is asking the question. Because of this association, panel members suggested that I begin to frame people outside of the two aforementioned situations as searching for connection or understanding in the same way I perceived clients and other mixed race people to be doing. Interestingly, one panel member made the comment that my feeling toward this question might also be age specific and that over time, it would be less of an issue. In the meantime, this re-framing of the question could be used as a coping skill.

Body awareness. In addition to the feedback regarding reframing the "What are you?" question, one panelist, who was unrelated to the field of DMT or somatics, sometimes recounted personal experiences with an embodied description. The panelist described physical sensations and emotions for specific situations, such as having a hot face and feeling embarrassed during a particular instance of monoracism. Additionally, when further probed about these experiences and feelings, the panelist uncovered other emotions and the perceived meaning of the encounters. While this panel member has had opportunities to speak about these experiences, the embodied descriptions raise questions around the use of embodied self-awareness and embodiment working with multiracial clients on specific multiracial issues. I found the process

of embodying my experience useful in order to understand how certain experiences actually affected me, and to identify patterns of responding that I wished to change.

Plyvänäinen (2008) created a group for transcultural women in Tokyo, and described the group's context as one of trans-culturality. To hold the culture-shifting group, Plyvänäinen grounded into the experience of her body since she could know her body's experience through self-attunement and awareness. With her embodied self-awareness, she could track her body experience even if other elements of the group were changing before she realized it. In some ways, she was the stability for the group's mobility. The body's felt experience as a form of grounding was not how I used embodied self-awareness. However, because of the context of trans-culturality, this idea could be another way for multiracial people to ground as they culturally shift. From Plyvänäinen and my experience, I am curious about what further research into this topic would yield.

Other implications. While I did not discuss what it is like being around other multiracial people with the resonance panel members, I noticed how I felt after each meeting. As mentioned previously, I grew up surrounded by other interracial families and had several biracial friends and classmates. It was my time away from my hometown when the difficulties of being multiracial came to the forefront of my attention. Without the buffer of others like me, I found myself feeling far more isolated. While I did not get the chance to spend time with other multiracial people in person during data collection, speaking to the resonance panel not only validated my experience, but also reduced my feeling of isolation. Additionally, because of the age range within the panel, hearing how the multiracial experience changes over a lifetime was informative on a personal level, such as with the "What are you?" question. My reduced isolation and received life wisdom from these meetings are in line with research showing that

there are positive effects to being around other multiracial people and having multiracial role models (Giamo et. al., 2012; Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Miville et. al., 2005). This suggests that having counseling or support groups for multiracial people might be better than individual therapy or an important supplement to individual therapy for clients experiencing difficulties coping with monoracism and racial identity development. Furthermore, having a DMT counseling/support group could be of particular use because of DMT's emphasis on promoting belonging within a group and the feeling of being seen (Schmais, 1985). These are central concerns for multiracial people, particularly amongst adolescents and young adults (Kelch-Oliver & Leslie, 2006; Torkelson et. al., 2014). As mentioned in the literature review, Plyvänäinen (2008) found that DMT groups can provide a safe environment to explore universal human themes such as alienation, individual and group identity, ethnic projections, Otherness, and cultural idealization, all of which may very well come up in a group of mixed race people of different racial/cultural backgrounds.

Lastly, a panel member who works in adoption mentioned the similarities between the experiences I presented and those of transcultural/transracial adoptees. While this thesis is not related to the topic of adoption, it may be a point of reference for future DMT research or work with multiracial and transcultural/transracial adoptees. Perhaps a phenomenological study with this population could shed more light on the similarities and differences in experiences between this population and non-adopted multiracial people.

Limitations

Within this study, the primary limitation was that it had only one participant and was therefore not generalizable. For example, my believing that being multiracial represents unity between people, the first point of the theme multiracial pride, could be very specific to my

situation in that my parents were married, wanted me, and raised me in a diverse place. For instance, children who were given up for adoption because of their racial background, were the product of rape or unwanted pregnancy, or grew up in a place with little diversity or little acceptance of interracial relationships may not hold this sense of pride I do. Despite this limitation, this study can serve as a base for future research regarding this population.

Another limitation occurred within the resonance panel. I was unable to have a discussion with all of the panel members present. While each conversation was rewarding, I believe the discussion would have been richer had all four been present because of the interaction between the panelists. It could have provided more insight to different aspects of my experience and help me understand the nuances within my experience or the general multiracial experience.

Conclusion

This study was always intended as an initial bridge between psychology and counseling research and DMT regarding multiracial people. While this study's findings relate solely to my life, my experience of being multiracial aligns with current research and literature. Therefore, my themes and movement findings may be helpful to dance/movement therapists working with multiracial clients experiencing issues particular to the multiracial population. Possible themes that therapists should be aware of when working with multiracial clients are: racial identity development, which consists of belonging within groups, cultural shifting, and the effects of appearance; microaggressions, such as dealing with people's response to their racial ambiguity and racism; and finding or fostering pride, and seeking acceptance within self, community, and society. Important movement themes include mobility and stability within identity development,

and body awareness in dealing with monoracism and racism. However, more research must be done before any generalizations can be made.

From my analysis and discussion, many questions regarding future directions in research arose. First, there is a great deal to explore with a larger population number in examining my experience with the sub-theme of in-between and belonging. How can the Laban concept of stability/mobility be used to cope with feeling in-between racial groups and find belonging? Can use of Space aid a client in understanding their patterns of interaction with their cultural groups and how they move/shift to and from each group? Could exploring how stable postures within a cultural group help ground a client seeking stability between cultural groups? Could correlating certain postures to instances when a client feels a sense of belonging to a group provide stability for the client? This is clearly an abundant line of questioning, and might be an appropriate starting off point for more research with this population.

This study would not have been possible without my knowledge of embodied self-awareness and embodiment. As stated in the literature review of Chapter Two, embodying one's own personal and subjective experience in order to enhance psychotherapeutic goals and processes has proven to be cross culturally effective (Pallaro, 1997). Given this evidence, the use of embodied self-awareness and embodiment with multiracial clients should be a rich area of study. Some new questions have arisen: Can embodied self-awareness be used as a tool to find stability within living in-between and culturally shifting? Can teaching multiracial clients to track their embodied responses in relation to instances of monoracism and racism help them learn new coping skills?

Related to the last line of questioning, can embodying values from the client's various cultures aid in determining which values are important to the client and should be included

within the client's racial identity? Additionally, can DMT in general be useful for multiracial individuals struggling with establishing a racial identity especially through cultural dances or movement scores? Specifically, can learning about the client's various cultures through cultural dances and creating a dance that integrates aspects of these cultural dances help the client integrate their multiracial identity?

Finally, because the importance of the group is a key theme both within DMT and the multiracial experience, a DMT group might be helpful for multiracial adolescents and young adults as they face the realities of racism and monoracism in the United States. One group idea for this population could focus on inclusion, acceptance, being seen and validated, empowerment in the face of mono/racism, and exploring identity. Another group specifically for multiracial female adolescents and young adults could have the added focus of dealing with appearance and standards of beauty. DMT is an excellent modality to explore body image and how it relates to self-esteem, particularly with girls and women. Having a group like this may help girls and young women struggling with the intersection of society's beauty standards and their multiracial status.

From these questions, it is clear that much more research in DMT is needed with this population. In working with multiracial people, there is also an opportunity to expand knowledge about working with other clients who are dealing with multiple cultures, such as immigrants or transracial/transcultural adoptees, especially if bi/multiculturalism is a goal for the population. Conversely, research with these populations may also inform work with multiracial people. However, research regarding the cross-over is required.

Further research in DMT with the multiracial population has the potential to increase multicultural competency not only within the creative arts therapies, but also the wider field of

counseling. Just as multiracial people can bridge the racial divides within this country, DMT can work effectively with diverse racial and cultural groups. Because of the direct confrontation of or harmony between races within multiracial people, working with this population may teach us more about race relations in the United States and how to settle differences between racial groups.

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Appendix A

Structured Questions for Self-Interview 1

1) Is this topic [the multiracial experience] important to you? Why?

2) In general, how do you process experiences?

3) What are your most common experiences related to being multiracial?

4) What were some defining moments in your racial awakening? Or standout moments in your racial awakening? Or standout moments related to your multiracial self?

5) What were your body-felt responses to these moments, aside from the last one?

6) When did you first identify as multiracial?

7) Has that identity changed or is it in flux now?

8) What are the best and hardest parts about being multiracial?

9) So how do you feel about being multiracial overall?

10) How do you feel when asked about racial heritage? Do you have a kinesthetic reaction?

11) Final thoughts?

Structured Questions for Self-Interview 2

1) How has data collection so far affected how you think about your experiences – your racial moments?

2) Has that happened with all of your experiences?

3) Does your body feel differently from before?

4) Is there anything scary about this process so far?

5) Ok. Have there been any surprises?

6) Would you say this was distinct and/or exciting moment?

7) How do you feel towards other multiracial people right now?

8) Since you're surrounded by monoracial people, how are you feeling towards them?

9) How do you interact with or feel with transcultural people?

10) Is there anything you hope for with the next round of collection?

Structured Questions for Self-Interview 3

1) Were there any pinnacle or standout moments since the last interview?

2) Where are you in your multiracial identity development? How is it or isn't it your part of core identity? Is your multiracial identity different from the last interview?

3) Going back to the first interview, you mentioned high school and not looking like anybody and wanting to, does this still happen to you now?

4) In the last interview, you mentioned living "in-between." What does that mean to you and do you still feel that way? If so, can you explain that?

5) Going back to identity development and acceptance, can you map out that identity process so far?

6) Have you spent more time with or around other multiracial people lately? If so, how has that been? Have you noticed a culture within being multiracial or within the multiracial community?

7) What's your stance on a multiracial culture? Should there be a specific racial-cultural category of multiracial? You've explained this earlier, but how are your cultures coming together especially in this context?

8) What feelings have been prominent during this process? Specifically related to being multiracial.

9) What difficulties have you faced or noticed as a multiracial person during this process and in general?

10) What were the highlights or benefits of being multiracial that you have experienced or noticed?

Movement Analysis Coding Sheet (MACS)

Coding Sheet
Prepared by Catherine Miller

Date:_____   Location:_____
Client Name:_____   Session #:_____

BODY

A = active parts, X = held parts; I = Initiates & p = Passive/not actively used.
Tics next to letter indicate number of times action was seen.
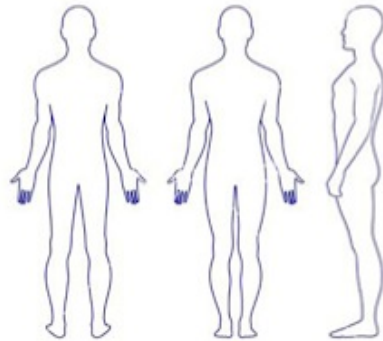
Notes:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

General Posture

Flaccid   Rigid

Concave   Convex   Aligned

Shoulder girdle   *Pelvis*

Notes:_____
_____
_____
_____

Body Attitudes – circle active

Pin   Wall   Ball

Screw   Tetrahedral

Notes:_____
_____
_____
_____

Body Part Phrasing – tics for times saw/name body parts used or note most prevalent.

Simultaneous

Successive

Sequential

Notes:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Breath

Depth
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Held   Deep

Regularity
1   2   3   4   5
Irregular   Regular

Connectivities – cross out missing/circle used

Core-Distal   Head-Tail   Upper-Lower

Body-Half   Cross-Lateral

Notes:_____
_____
_____

1

EFFORT

Elements and Qualities – tic marks or arrows denoting preference

Flow

Freeing   Binding

Time

Decelerating   Accelerating

Space

Indirecting   Directing

Weight

Decreasing Pressure   Increasing Pressure

Notes:_____

_____

_____

States – circle all present

Mobile (f/t)   Stable (w/s)

Dream (f/w)   Awake (t/s)

Remote (f/s)   Rhythm (w/t)

Drives – circle all present, check or note action drives

Passion
(Mobile/Rhythm/Dream)

Vision
(Remote/Mobile/Awake)

Spell
(Stable/Dream/Remote)

Action (Stable/Rhythm/Awake)	
Float	Punch
Glide	Slash
Dab	Wring
Flick	Press

Notes:_____

_____

_____

Phrasing – circle most prominent

Even	Increasing-Decreasing	Resilient
Increasing	Decreasing-Increasing	Elastic
Impactful	Accented	Buoyant
Decreasing	Vibratory	Weighty
Impulsive		

2

SPACE

Kinesphere –Tics marks or notes

REACH SPACE

Near-reach
Mid-reach
Far- reach

LEVELS

Low
Mid
High

Approach to Kinesphere - Note most prevalent.

Central   Peripheral   Transverse

Notes: _____

_____

Dimensions – Tic marks or notes. Note disaffinities.

Vertical	Horizontal	Sagittal
Up w/ Lightness	Crossing w/ Directness	Forward w/ Deceleration
Down w/Strength	Opening w/ Indirectness	Backward w/ Acceleration

Notes: _____

_____

Planes – Circle most prevalent & notes

Door	
Table	
Wheel	

Diagonal scale – Indicate most prevalent movement on the cube.

Notes:_____

_____

3
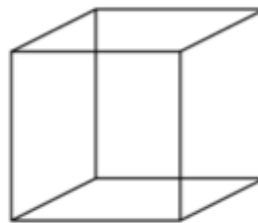
Coding Sheet

SHAPE

Modes of Shape Change – Tic marks or notes

Shape flow	
Shape flow support	
Directional- Spoke	
Directional- Arc	
Carving	

Notes:_____

_____

_____

Shaping Affinities/Qualities – Circle most prevalent dimension, & tic marks, notes, or number on scale of 1 (not seen) – 10 (most time spent there). Note disaffinities.

Vertical	Horizontal	Sagittal
Rising	Closing	Retreating
Sinking	Spreading	Advancing

Notes:_____

_____

_____

_____

4

System I (KMP)

Tension Flow Rhythms - Tic marks or number scale, and/or notes

Oral	Sucking
	Snapping
	Biting
Anal	Twisting
	Hold/Release
Urethral	Run/Drift
	Start/Stop
Inner Genital	Swaying
	Surging/Birthing
Outer Genital	Jumping
	Ram/Spurt

Notes: _____

_____

_____

Coding Sheet

Tension Flow Attributes

Protective Flow – Indicate where on the spectrum the client falls.

| |
Freeing   Neutral   Binding
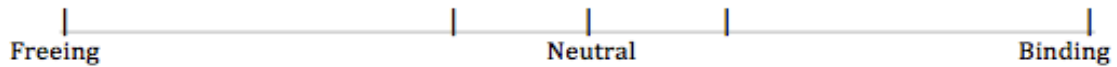
Notes:_____

_____

_____

Tic marks or number scale, and/or notes

Horizontal	
Tension Flow	Even
Vertical	
Low Intensity	High Intensity
Sagittal	
Graduality	Abrupt

Notes: _____

_____

_____

Pre-Efforts - Tic marks or number scale, and/or notes

Horizontal	
Flexibility	Channeling
Vertical	
Gentleness	Vehemence/Straining
Sagittal	
Hesitation	Suddenness

Notes: _____

_____

_____

System 2 (KMP)

Bipolar Shape Flow - Tic marks or number scale, and/or notes

Horizontal	
Widening	Narrowing
Vertical	
Lengthening	Shortening
Sagittal	
Bulging	Hollowing

Notes: _____

_____

_____

_____

Unipolar Shape Flow - Tic marks and/or notes, & indicate which direction if applicable

Horizontal	
Widening	Narrowing
Vertical	
Lengthening: Down Up	Shortening: Down Up
Sagittal	
Bulging: Anterior Posterior	Hollowing: Anterior Posterior

Notes: _____

_____

_____

Shaping in Directions- Tic marks or number scale, and/or notes

Horizontal	
Sideways	Across
Vertical	
Up	Down
Sagittal	
Forward	Backward

Notes: _____

_____

_____

Shaping in Planes Tic marks or number scale, and/or notes

Horizontal	
Spread	Enclose
Vertical	
Ascending	Descending
Sagittal	
Advancing	Retreating

Notes: _____

_____

_____

7

Appendix C

Themes Analysis Maps for Resonance Panel

Experiences Page One:

Identity

Belonging/ Not Belonging ? **In-between** **Appearance**

-Positive (belonging): Identifying with aspects of the culture & community; pride in being part of group.
   -Learning about cultural heritage & finding how it already existed in my life.

-Negative (not belonging): Denial/exclusion based on behavior, and cultural knowledge; questioning based possibly on cultural knowledge, behavior, & appearance; self-questioning based on lack of cultural knowledge and not fully feeling part of the community; self-removal.

-Culture shifter- Not fully in one culture or another.

-Face shifter- Don't fully look like any one particular group of people. Often mistaken for belonging to a group I don't.

-Positive: Adaptable (able to shift identities as needed), lots of cultural experiences, fewer racial stigmas attached,

-Negative: "testing" and questioning my affiliation to racial group membership.

-Privilege/Oppression

- Where do I fit in? What community do I look like that I culturally belong to? Is there anyone else who looks like me?

-Physical looks: Beauty standards- I don't necessarily fit them in the U.S. as a person of color, but I can look exotic.

-Dress: Do I dress/behave and look like my ethnic group(s)?

-Concerns (Internal): My actions combined w/ my appearance will make me a "race traitor" & therefore I will be denied affiliation and rejected.

Identity

Belonging/ Not Belonging ? **In-between And/Both** **Appearance**

-Belonging:
   -Stable, comfortable
   -Grounded
   -Vertical dimension

-Not belonging:
   -Denial/Exclusion→ Impulsive phrasing, retreating, sinking
   -Questioning→ Deceleration, enclosing, retreating, sinking
   -Self-exclusion→

-Belonging:
   -Acceptance
   -Happiness
   -Comfort/safety

- Excluded or denied:
   -Lonely/isolated
   -Sad/hurt
-Self-removal
   -Discomfort.

-Mobile state
-Horizontal plane
-Diagonal scale
-Tension Flow Adjustment

-Confused?
-Frustration
-Tired
-

-Some binding flow & some bilateral narrowing and sinking (low self-esteem + self-conscious moments)

-High intensity binding flow ("race traitor")

-Isolated
-Insecure/self-conscious
-Lower self-esteem in societal context
-Anxious

Experiences Page Two:

Insensitivities

What are you?

-Guessing game—
"Are you _____?"
"Your eyes make
you look Asian."

-Assumption—
"You're Latina."
Or being spoken
to in Spanish.

**"Exoticization"/
Exoticism**

-"You look exotic."

Racism

-Experienced in a
societal context
or through clients

Multiracial Pride

-Represents unity between
people

-Expanding/blowing
people minds

-Multiracial culture is one
of acceptance and
openness

-I have options and I defy
hard labels

-Giving myself a blended
label.

Acceptance

-Self acceptance- the
transformation that took
place.

-Desire for acceptance as a
multiracial person in my
microcosm.

-Desire for societal
acceptance of multiracial
people.

Insensitivities

What are you?

-Sinking in chest
-Binding flow
-Sequential body
part phrasing
(GG)

-Irritation
-Disappointment*
-Disdain
-Hurt
-Offended*
-Indignation*
-Annoyance*
-Anger*
-Exasperation*
-Unfairness*

**"Exoticization"/
Exoticism**

-

-Feeling
objectified and
put on display
-Discomfort
-Awkwardness

Racism

-Bound flow
-

-Sadness
-Anger
-Helplessness
-Frustration
-Internalized-
racism/self-hate?

**Responses to
Insensitivities**

Compliancy

-Shock/surprise in
the initial moment
-Disappointment in
self
-Anger at self

-Neutral flow
on binding
side

**Advocacy/
Educator**

-Proud
-Empowered

-Free flow
-Stable

Multiracial Pride

-Freeing flow
-Wall/Door plane
-Far reach space + high
level
-Carving
-Spreading in chest

-Proud
-Happy

Acceptance

-Freeing flow
-Stability/mobility

-Desire for self-acceptance
and acceptance from
microcosm + society.

Appendix D

("Polyblackenesian" DVD of performance)

If DVD is unavailable, performance can be online found at: https://youtu.be/uFTIS4Jw5d8

Full Text from "Polyblackenesian"

Beginning

Voice overs:
"Are you Black and Filipina?"

"So, what is your ethnicity?"

"¿Habla español?"

"Is she Black?"

"So, what are you?"

Speculation: What is she? Her eyes look Asian. But her skin… she could be Latina. Oh, and her hair… it could be Black, but it could something else. And what about her butt? That very well could be a Black butt.
Eyes, skin, hair, body... (repeat 3x)
Jumble of the above four words.

"So, what are you?"

CM: Polyblackenesian. Black. Chinese. Hawaiian. Polyblackenesian.

In-between Voice over
"When you're a mixed-race person in a monoracial world, you learn that it's hard, if not impossible to fit in as you are, so you learn to take on the identities around you. You also learn that the lines of race and culture aren't solid. They blur. They shift, depending on the context, and when they shift, you need to shift too. Interestingly, these lines are hard and fast for everyone else - so monoracial people tend to stay in their boxes while you hop in and out."
(Chan, 2014, paragraph 4)

Privilege Monologue

When I am recognized as Black, I have color privilege and some might say good hair. I have facial features that give me the opportunity to walk through social spaces unnoticed as a Black body and therefore personally dodge stigmas and negative stereotypes attributed to Black skin.

As an American citizen, who has an Asian-looking mother with a full American accent, I deal with no immigration issues or stereotypes about my driving. But when my hard-working, perfectionistic drive was discovered in high school and my math ability proved good enough to tutor peers, both were attributed to my Chinese heritage.

Honestly, people don't know a lot about Hawaiians, except for perhaps the Aloha spirit. My Hawaiian genes have provided me with an even more racially ambiguous look, further propelling me into the land of In-Between.

But for all of my privilege and ability to culturally shift, I am still a mixed race woman of Color in the United States.

Racism
Voice overs

Adult: "Black people are so loud and disruptive. Better keep an eye on them."

Adult: "People of Color can't play White characters. It's wrong. But it's not a big deal for White actors to play originally non-White characters."

Adult: "Asians can't drive. They sure can do a nice mani-pedi though."

Adult: "The Cheerios commercial with the interracial couple is disgusting. Who would want children who looked like that?"

Adult: "Why can't more minorities be like Asians? Those people are model minorities."

Adult: "You don't really count as Black."

Adult: "Purity is better."

Adult: "Hawaiians have no ambition."

Adult: "Black people are criminals."

Adult: "Hawaiians are lazy."

Adult: "Asians are uptight and don't know how to have fun. "

Child's voice: "I wish I was White."

End Monologue

I still have hope though. My existence is proof that love and understanding can transcend race.

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