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Body Beyond Boundaries: An Auto-Ethnography On My Embodied Culture In My Work as a Dance/Movement Therapy Intern Practicing In Another Culture

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BODY BEYOND BOUNDARIES:
AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY ON MY EMBODIED CULTURE IN MY WORK AS A
DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY INTERN PRACTICING IN ANOTHER CULTURE

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Abstract

This auto-ethnographic study explored how embodied cultural knowledge impacts my work as a dance/movement therapy intern, practicing in a culture different from my own. As the sole participant in the study, I am a 23 year old female, international student at Columbia College Chicago. I am originally from New Delhi, India and moved to the United States to pursue my Master's degree. My dance/movement therapy internship was at a high school in the Northwest region of Chicago, United States. This qualitative study included data collection methods of journaling, art making and creating a movement narrative over a period of eight weeks, between March 2016 and April 2016. The data collected through artwork and journaling were analyzed using intuitive analysis, and the data collected through creating a movement narrative were analyzed using narrative analysis.

The findings revealed the primary theme of acknowledgement and ownership of the researcher's cultural values, along with a kinesthetic experience of the relationship between the values of humility and confidence in the researcher. Other findings included recognizing the emerging vulnerability in the process of questioning the researcher's own beliefs and finally, gaining trust in one's process. The movement narrative revealed the phases of conflict of emotions and belief systems, realizing the researcher's body wisdom/ intuition and finding strength and grounding through the body. These initial findings were integrated to explore how they relate to the researcher's developing embodied cultural identity and cultural competence. Themes emerging from the movement narrative were analyzed with respect to the researcher's experience of acculturation and cultural adaptation.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

I have spent my entire childhood, adolescence and the beginning of my adulthood living in my parent's house, in an urban setting in India. In my culture, it is not common for a child to leave their house at the age of 18, unless they are pursuing their education in a different geographical location. I feel that I was privileged to be able to live with my parents throughout my school and undergraduate studies.

Until the age of four, I lived with my parents in a city called Patna, in the state of Bihar. I then moved to the capital city of India. New Delhi, the capital city, was a different world. The culture of a large, urban and globalized city was very different from the one I has spent my initial years in. I remember this transition being a rather difficult one. It was challenging for me to understand the communication patterns and lifestyle of an urban environment. However, it only took a couple of months to not only adapt but also identity with, and thrive in that environment.

Until the age of twenty-two, I lived with the comfort of having my friends and family being both physically and emotionally available. I would also say that I lived in a somewhat homogenous environment, with most of my interactions taking place with people from a certain socio-economic class, with similar formal education and family styles. However, members of my social group were diverse, based on their place of origin/birth. In India, being from different regions of the country influences the cultural traditions and beliefs of the individual. Different regions of India have varied mythical beliefs and celebrations. Example: the same festival is celebrated in slightly different ways across different states of India. Traditionally, based on the historical significance of the region, people from different states of India eat different types of food, wear different

traditional clothing, follow different customs during weddings etc. Another aspect that brought about diversity in my cultural interactions was religion. I grew up with people following Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Sikhism. Even within each religion, the customs differed on the basis of the state they belonged to. Example: A Hindu in the state of Bihar would celebrate certain festivals that have no significance in the state of Gujarat and vice-versa. However, a big urban city like Delhi, serves to be a mixture of cultures. Example: being from the state of Bihar, I follow customs and traditions that are specific to my region, and also participate in traditions of different regions that are most dominant in New Delhi.

When I made the decision to move to the United States as a graduate student, I was ecstatic and petrified at the same time. While I was excited to meet new people and was open to novel experiences, in what I considered a completely different world, I also feared being away from my comfort zone. I wondered whether or not people from a different culture would understand and accept my values, habits and beliefs.

Upon entering graduate school, I had experiences that made me realize how wrong I had been in thinking that cultures and beliefs of my peers in the United States would be completely different from mine. That is when I realized that it is not the macro-culture per se of my home country that impacts me, as much as the micro-culture of my family's beliefs that in turn affect the way I see the world. In this study, the term macro-culture has been understood as the general perspective, traditions and customs of a large unit of people ("The culture of support services", 2004). Micro-culture on the other hand, is seen as the shared beliefs and perspectives of a smaller unit of people, such as an ethnic group or a family ("The culture of support services", 2004). For example, some beliefs

and lifestyle choices in the United States were very similar to that of my family, but very different from the bigger culture of India or even different regions of the country. At the same time, some incidents made me aware of the nuances of cultural differences that I had been completely unaware of. Most of these incidents that made me aware of cultural conflicts were subtle and experienced nonverbally in my body, rather than glaringly obvious.

In my dance/movement therapy training, I learned about the importance of non-verbal communication. I began to notice how we learn to behave and respond in certain ways through the use of subtle, non-verbal cues. As I continued learning, I studied about ways of observing and understanding movement such as Laban Movement Analysis and realized how my perception of the same movement was different from another. I explored how my cultural background influences the interpretations I make about both, my own and another's movement. Learning about the concepts of body knowledge and body prejudice made me realize how my cultural understandings and beliefs not only influence the way I move, but also color my perceptions of other's movements and nonverbal expression.

There were moments during dance/movement therapy sessions when I experienced a strong feeling in my body that remained for several hours and sometimes even a few days. At times, this experience was directly related to a recognizable cultural conflict and at other times, hours of supervision and introspection were needed to understand the cultural connotations of these experiences. It was these experiences that interested me. They motivated me to further investigate how cultural difference is experienced in my body, and how it may affect my work as a dance/movement therapist.

Being an international dance/movement therapy intern, I was motivated to conduct this research study to deepen my understanding of my body knowledge and body prejudice arising from cultural experiences, and engage in a process of self-reflexivity and discovery. I believe that a significant part of my values, beliefs and perceptions live in my body. The purpose of this study was to explore how embodied cultural knowledge impacts my work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in a culture different from my own. I hoped to understand how my culture lives in my body and the role of embodied experience of culture while interacting with bodies from another culture. Additionally, I hoped to discover my own body knowledge and body prejudice influenced by my idiosyncratic cultural experiences that influence my understanding of another. The study answers the primary research question: "What is the embodied experience of my culture in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in another culture?" and secondary research question: "How does my movement narrative reflect my embodied experience of culture?"

By engaging in this process, I was able to recognize and acknowledge my bodily experiences and was able to navigate some cultural barriers in my work as a dance/movement therapy intern. I was also able to gain a deeper understanding of my embodied cultural identity, and ultimately use my knowledge of embodied culture to make informed decisions as a clinician. Finally, I was also able to deepen my understanding of my embodied experience of acculturation through movement.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The following section briefly discusses research studies and existing literature, as they relate to the topic of the current study. It attempts to provide a brief overview of the understanding of the concept of embodiment and experience. It further highlights the construct of culture, and explains different ways in which culture is embodied. This section attempts to relate the ideas of embodiment, culture and its possible relevance in the field of dance/movement therapy, as indicated in the previous literature. Finally, it concludes with a preliminary understanding of the importance of cultural awareness and competence in the clinical practice of dance/movement therapy and counseling.

Embodiment

The body and the mind have been separated in scientific research both in the work of early Greek philosophers as well as in modern philosophy (Damasio, 1999). The separation of the body and mind was formulated primarily to ensure that the emerging bio-medical sciences were able to do research with the body, while the mind was assigned to the realm of philosophy and theology (Koch, 2006). However, a recent body of research has indicated that the body and mind are part of an integrated system (Damasio, 1999). This reconciliation of the body and mind led to the emergence of embodied theories and a movement towards a more holistic approach in the sciences.

Researchers have viewed embodiment as a holistic concept, recognizing that it can be seen in terms of its presentation and expression in the social world in various practices, events and activities (Gillies et al., 2005). Embodiment theory postulates that our bodily experiences aid the process of meaning making through organic, sensorimotor and emotional interactions with the environment (Koch & Fishchman, 2011).

Strengthening the bodily basis of thought and affect, embodiment approaches claim that cognition, attitudes and emotions are all grounded in the body (Koch, 2006). Embodied theories are thus an area of interest for multiple fields of study including physiology, neurosciences, cognitive linguistics, psychology, sociology and other fields (Koch, 2006).

While researchers have studied the concept of embodiment, there are few who have concretely defined the concept. Embodiment has been explained as a biological and physiological process that is essential for processing subjectivity, emotional responses, language, cognitions and social communication (Macdonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2002). Hervey (2007) explained embodiment as an awareness that results from the sensations emerging from the body, while in movement as well as in stillness. It includes awareness of not only our skeletal/muscular system while the body is in motion, but also the experience of sensations emerging from intuition, emotion, and the complex functioning of the mind that can arise in stillness (Hervey, 2007). Therefore, embodiment is seen both as a means of awareness of the physical body as well as a mechanism that aids the processing of personal and interpersonal experiences.

Experience

The term experience is so vast in its approach, that it becomes difficult to define it without context. Hurlburt and Heavy (2006) have presented a type of experience called pristine inner experiences, where the word inner represents something that is directly encountered and pristine means occurring unaltered in the natural environment. In other words, these pristine inner experiences are those that are directly faced in the naturally occurring environment, without any efforts to alter the process. They also add that these 'pristine inner experiences' happen immediately before consciousness and, therefore,

cognitive processes of judgment and attention have no role in their occurrence (Hurlburt & Heavey, 2006). Pristine inner experiences happen in the moment, and are unique to the individual.

In the field of psychology, experience has been explained as the "present content of consciousness" ("What is experience?", n.d). Vithoulkas and Mauresanu (2014) have explained consciousness as a function of the human mind that uses the five senses as well as the processes of cognitive reasoning, imagination, emotion and memory to make sense of incoming information to store or reject it. If experience is understood as the content of consciousness, then it has also been explained to include the cognitive process of thinking, reasoning and memory. Therefore, the term experience has been understood both in terms of being a pre-conscious process that does not involve cognition, as well as a conscious process that involves awareness and cognitive processes.

For the purpose of this study, experience refers to all that is present in the conscious awareness of an individual at any given moment. It is a sum total of external events as well as inner thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, or any other form of kinesthetic/perceptual awareness an individual has at any given moment in time. (Hurlburt & Heavy, 2006).

Embodiment and Experience

According to Rasmak, Richt and Rudebeck (2014), our bodies are involved in the experience of living. Siegel explained that the mind and our mental life are far beyond synaptic connections (Siegel, 2012). The mind and all the associated mental activities are embodied and relational (Siegel, 2012).

Bengstsson (2012) explained that the empiricist and intellectualist views of experience focus mainly on objectivity and fail to see the object of experience. According to Bengstsson (2012), "all experiences are tied to our own lived body" (p. 20). We not only experience through our bodies, but the body is also seen as the subject of experience (Bengstsson, 2012). Thus, the body has been understood as an integral part of all experience.

For the purpose of this study, an embodied experience refers to an awareness of external events that is perceived through the knowledge of various bodily sensations, our inner skeletal/muscular system, intuition, inner thoughts, feelings as well as kinesthetic/perceptual responsiveness (Hervey, 2007; Hurlburt & Heavy, 2006).

Culture

Culture has been defined in a number of ways by different researchers. The definition of culture is shaped around the focus and lens of the individual. While some choose to focus on the cognitive aspect of culture (University of Minnesota, 2014), others focus on the evolutionary (Matsumoto, 2006) and yet others focus on the integration of culture in the body (Cohen & Leung, 2009). The following section includes a brief overview of these perspectives on culture and an account of how the understanding of culture shifts with the focus of the researcher.

Matsumoto (2006) explained culture to be a survival mechanism developed to adapt, deal or cope with universal biological needs and universal social problems in different contexts. According to Matsumoto (2006), culture can be defined specifically as "a shared system of socially transmitted behavior that describes, defines, and guides people's ways of life, communicated from one generation to another" (p. 220). If culture

is viewed as an adaptive survival mechanism based on universal biological needs and problems, certain solutions to these problems can be similar across groups of individuals and become a part of our evolutionary history (Matsumoto, 2006). In other words, certain aspects of culture can be considered evolutionary and universal. However, there are few mental processes and behaviors that are culture specific, where different groups of people came up with different (group-specific) solutions to the same universal biological needs and problems. Matsumoto (2006) explains language to be one such example.

Another way of looking at culture includes its understanding as the group-specific patterns of behaviors, social interactions, cognitive concepts, and affective or emotional understandings that are learned through socialization and are passed on from one generation to another (University of Minnesota, 2014). These shared understandings and patterns not only identify members of a specific group, but also differentiate them from another cultural group (University of Minnesota, 2014). This definition focuses not only on the transmission of behavior patterns and interactions from one generation to another, but also brings to focus the sense of identity associated with culture.

According to Bennett and Castiglioni (2003), in the West, culture is considered to be a cognitive concept. "Human culture refers to the institutions and artifacts generated by some defined group of people" (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2003, p. 250). They argue that the in Western world, there is a separation of the body mind in the understanding of culture, such that the body is seen only as an executioner of the actions generated in the mind (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2003).

However, recent research has shown that culture influences the body and its postures directly in the following two different ways: a) through explicit and implicit

rules, and b) certain environmental conditions (Matsumoto, 2006). The implicit and explicit rules include cultural display rules and cultural decoding rules (Matsumoto, 2006). Cultural display rules have been explained as rules that determine the socially acceptable ways of managing and displaying emotions (Matsumoto, 2006). These are learned early on during childhood and include aspects such as touch, eye contact, body orientation and others (Maass, 2009). Cultural decoding rules, according to Matsumoto (2006) "help manage the judgment of emotions in others". Thus, our culture not only influences the way we communicate through our bodies, but also how we read/understand the behavior of others through their bodies. Additionally, certain environmental conditions such as arrangement of physical space including the amount of space available, temperature, type of furniture also affect the way we hold our bodies (Maass, 2009).

Culture and Embodiment

Some researchers have defined concrete ways in which culture impacts the body and its movements. According to Cohen and Leung (2009), culture can be embodied through pre-wired embodiment and totem embodiment. Pre-wired embodiment is a way in which certain embodiments pre-dispose an organism to feel a certain way (Cohen & Leung, 2009). Certain actions of our body lead us to specific evolutionary affective & cognitive responses that subsequently cause more complex representations (Cohen & Leung, 2009). Totem embodiment, on the other hand, directly evokes complex representations that are not inherent but are commonly recognized by a specific culture (Cohen & Leung, 2009). This research implies that while some body postures may lead to certain evolutionary/pre-disposed feelings and cognitions, in some other cases body

postures and actions may lead to different feelings and representations in different people due to diverse cultural understandings. Hence, culture lives in the body in more complex ways than a shared pattern of rules and belief systems.

Bennett and Castiglioni (2003) argue that due to diverse cultural understandings, the process of adaptation to another culture becomes one that involves not only knowledge, but also a feeling of the other culture. They explain that this feeling includes not only physical sensations, but also an intuitive awareness of culture, in terms of understanding appropriateness and subtleties of certain behaviors (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2003). This intuitive feeling is what they refer to as the "embodied feeling of culture" (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2003).

Even though there is literature that explains the various ways through which culture can be embodied, there is lack of research on the concept on embodied culture. For the purpose of this study, an operational definition of embodied culture has been formulated. It refers to the awareness of various sensations that reside in the body comprising of both the muscular/skeletal system as well as our implicit body knowledge influenced by idiosyncratic cultural experiences including learned patterns of behaviors, cognitions, affective understanding as well as perceptions (Bengtsson, 2012; Hervey, 2007; University of Minnesota, 2014).

Dance/Movement Therapy and Embodied Culture

Dance/movement therapy is an integrative approach to counseling and psychotherapy that considers the mind and body as inseparable (Levy, 2005). Dance/movement therapy theorists postulate that the body and movement are reflective of inner states, indicating that any changes in the body will lead to a shift in the psyche

and, conversely, that changes in the psyche will be reflected in the body (Levy, 2005). According to Hackney (2002), movement is seen as a form of expression and may be reflective of unconscious processes. Therefore, the understanding that inner emotional states and cognitions are embodied is an assumption that is acknowledged and actively used as medium of change in dance/movement therapy. Embodied experiences are recognized and embraced as a vital part of being human (Caldwell & Johnson, 2012).

Research on mirror neurons supports the concept of embodiment as well as provides a neurobiological explanation for techniques such as mirroring, used in dance/movement therapy (Berrol, 2006). Studies indicate that the same sets of neurons are activated in the brain when observing the movement of another as while being physically engaged in the same movement (Berrol, 2006).

Embodiment and mirroring are also linked to perception of emotion (Winters, 2008). In a 2008 study (Winters), 41 individuals were randomly allocated to observing and embodying groups and were invited to rate 24 body postures in terms of the feelings or emotions associated with each one. Each of the groups was then asked to either embody the presented posture or observe another person embodying the posture (with their faces covered) and rate each of them according to the emotion/feeling associated (Winters, 2008). Results indicated that there were no differences in the response of the participants for all emotions except anger, whereby a significantly higher anger response was shown by the embodying group (Winters, 2008). Therefore, this study supports the finding that the same neurological mechanisms are triggered when an individual embodies the movement/posture of another person as when observing the embodiment of the same movement/action (Winters, 2008). The mirror neuron system has also been

linked to the ability to perceive human intention through their body action as well as the ability to empathize with another based on the movement or gestures displayed (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012).

However, the process of making sense of movement in the field of dance/movement therapy is not always automatic or even accurate. Moore & Yamamoto (2012) explained that this process of making interpretations of movement is mediated by various factors such as familiarity and personal experience with the action, individual differences in perceptual acuity as well as cultural differences between the mover and observer. Cultural differences affect not only the perceptual processes based on personal experience, but culture also dictates how the body is to be used (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). For example, the typical furniture of a culture dictates whether one sits on a chair or on the floor, that in turn influences the way the body is typically held (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). Our movement patterns are influenced unconsciously by our relationships with our primary caregivers during formative years of development, as well as consciously through dance, sports, or other movement related activities in our later development (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016).

To further explain how personal experiences and culture play an important role in making sense of movement, body knowledge and body prejudice are terms that have been used in the movement observation and dance/movement therapy literature (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016; Moore, 2014). Body knowledge has been explained as an individual's moving culture (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016). According to Moore (2014), body knowledge can be explained as an individual/unique vocabulary of movement meaning. Through the processes of

categorization and abstraction, this lexicon is formed based our unique embodied experiences (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). Body knowledge is understood to be a collection of movements, learned through cultural interactions, including both conscious and unconscious patterns (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016). Depending upon on our unique movement experiences, each person categorizes movements in a slightly different manner, making this process highly individualized (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). For example, it is through our body knowledge, that many of us associate the waving of the hand in a specific manner, as a sign of greeting or someone saying hello. In cultures where people are greeted differently, this movement may have a different meaning, or no meaning at all. Thus, each individual's body knowledge is unique, and influences the observation and interpretation of movement (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012).

Body prejudice on the other hand, also emerges over time from our ability to be able to categorize and abstract movement where positive or negative meaning comes to be attached with certain movements, irrespective of the context or details of that movement (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). For example, based on a person's body knowledge, the large use of kinesphere with advancing motions may be associated with the expression of aggression. Body prejudice develops when an individual attaches negative meanings to the expression of aggression, based on unique cultural experiences. Then, the use of a large kinesphere with advancing motions may directly be associated with negative connotations because of the individual's body prejudice. These biased perspectives of body prejudice may emerge out of our body knowledge even without conscious awareness (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016). These

specific associations that are made as individual movers and observers of movement, are dependent upon our own bodily experiences, history and culture, thus making the movement interpretation a highly unique process (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). Therefore, movement patterns are influenced by culture and individuals respond differently to patterns that are similar and lie within our culture, as compared to those lying outside of our own cultural learning (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016).

Importance of Culture in Clinical Practice

In the field of counseling, multi-cultural counseling and therapy has been identified " both as helping role and process that: (i) uses modalities and defines goals consistent with life experiences and cultural values of clients, (ii) recognizes client identities to include individual, group and universal dimensions, (iii) advocates the use of universal and culture-specific strategies and roles in the healing process, and (iv) balances the importance of individualism and collectivism in assessment, diagnosis and treatment and of client and client systems" (Sue & Sue, 2008, p.42). Multicultural counseling as a school of thought recognizes that all approaches to counseling occur within a cultural context, and believes in an integrated approach that helps counselors become more respectful, effective and ethical with clients of different cultural backgrounds (Ivey, D'Andrea & Ivey, 2012).

Sperry (2012) states that cultural competence in the field of multi-cultural counseling can be understood as the ability of the clinician to understand and effectively use cultural knowledge, awareness, sensitivity and skillful actions, in order to proficiently relate to and work with individuals of different cultural backgrounds. According to Sue &

Sue (2008), cultural competency involves skills relating to therapist's awareness of one's own biases and assumptions, understanding the worldview of culturally diverse clients and finally, the competency to develop appropriate interventions and techniques.

The attention to culture (both the therapist's and the client's) in the counseling field is essential because factors such as the family, culture, community and other societal factors may influence an individual's worldview and in turn their perception of challenges and difficulties (Ivey et al, 2012). In fact, psychotherapy and counseling may be ineffective or even detrimental if clinicians are unable to effectively make use of cultural differences or similarities in the therapeutic process (Ivey et al, 2012).

Wang & Kim (2010) conducted a study whereby a video analogue was used to with 113 Asian American college students to study the therapist's multi-cultural competence, Asian American cultural values and how they relate to the counseling process. The study revealed that sessions led by multi-culturally competent therapists were rated significantly higher than those led by therapists who were neutral with respect to multicultural competence (Wang & Kim, 2010). Acculturation of the participants was positively related to the counseling process, whereas the concept of emotional self-control was inversely related to the ratings of the counseling process (Wang & Kim, 2010). The authors discussed the importance of being sensitive to the cultural value of emotional self-control for the Asian American clients, and being empathic towards the resulting discomfort they may be experiencing while discussing emotional content with the practitioner (Wang & Kim, 2010). The above study highlights the importance of recognizing and understanding cultural values within the therapeutic relationship, with an effort to increase empathy and design interventions that meet the cultural needs of the

clients.

Sue & Sue (2008) contend that counseling and psychotherapy has been detrimental and has caused harm to culturally diverse groups in the past because of the lack of understanding of their experiences, rendering their cultural values pathological, not providing culturally appropriate strategies and experiences, and forcing them in various ways to adopt the values of the dominant culture. Therefore, to make the field of mental health counseling more ethnical, beneficial, effective and respectful, the need to consider and utilize cultural factors in the therapeutic relationship is vital.

Specific to dance/movement therapy, body knowledge and prejudice emerge as processes that influence the interpretation of human movement (Moore, 2014). Since body knowledge and prejudice emerge from our unique cultural understandings, they have important implications for dance/movement therapists. Dance/movement therapists constantly relate and move with individuals of another culture, and therefore, at least two cultures are present in the therapeutic movement relationship at all times (S.Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016). The lack of exploration of body knowledge and prejudice in a dance/movement therapist may lead to the creation of biased interventions, based on the dance/movement therapist's movement preference and cultural understandings (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016). To be able to respect, and mindfully expand the movement repertoire of the client, without imposing judgment, the awareness of body knowledge and prejudice is of utmost importance (S. Hurst, personal communication, November, 2016).

According to Caldwell and Johnson (2012), below our conscious awareness, we tend to favor our culture above others cultures. As dance/movement therapists, this sub-

conscious bias about the embodied feeling of one's own culture may lead to issues of reliability and validity in the work as one decodes the movement of another individual, who has a different embodied experience of culture than one's own (Caldwell & Johnson, 2012). Therefore, it is important to look at embodied experiences as being deeply influenced by social, cultural and power differentials (Caldwell & Johnson, 2012).

Conclusion

In conclusion, culture lives in our bodies and is embodied through shared implicit and explicit rules, as well as environmental conditions (Matsumoto, 2006). While some aspects of this embodied culture are evolutionary (pre-wired embodiment), other aspects of embodied culture are idiosyncratic and group-specific (totem embodiment) (Cohen & Leung, 2009). Therefore, different body movements, body postures, gestures etc. may evoke different thought processes, behaviors and emotions for different groups of people.

The importance of multi-cultural counseling and acquiring cultural competence in the field of counseling and psychotherapy has been recognized by various researchers (Ivey et al, 2012; Sue & Sue, 2008). Particularly in the field of dance/movement therapy, cultural competence becomes essential because of the subtle ways in which culture may be embodied. Dance/movement therapists use techniques such as mirroring and embodiment to understand movement meanings and facilitate change in the session (Koch & Fischman, 2011). Thus, it is of utmost importance to understand factors that influence the process of making sense of movement.

Body knowledge and body prejudice, based on unique cultural experiences make the process of movement interpretation subjective and unique to the individual (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). Therefore, the awareness of the clinician's own culture is not only

important for recognizing biases in the process of movement interpretation, but for also understanding one's own bodily responses.

These findings have provided a theoretical rationale for my exploration. The knowledge of embodied experience helps me understand and capture responses that are beyond cognitive processes. Research on the embodiment of culture and its different forms, has deepened my understanding of how cultural conflicts and understandings can live in the body, and possibly even at a pre-conscious and pre-verbal level. It has been insightful in informing me about specific ways of how my body may be the carrier of my culture, and how this information might contribute to the process of becoming a cultural competent counselor. This information provides a strong basis for explaining and making sense of the results of my study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore how embodied cultural knowledge impacts my work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in another culture. The study answered the primary research question: "What is the embodied experience of my culture in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in another culture?" and secondary research question: "How does my movement narrative reflect my embodied experience of culture?"

Methodology

Auto-ethnography can be explained as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). This methodology is based on a combination of elements from autobiography and ethnography; whereby the focus of the research is on the narratives (Guzic, 2013). According to Custer (2014), auto-ethnography makes use of qualitative methods to explore the relationship between the researcher's life experiences and the existing cultural institutions. Auto-ethnography places the researcher in the dual role of being a researcher and participant, therefore encouraging the process of meaning making and exploration of identity (Hoppes, 2014).

Auto-ethnography as a methodology has often been critiqued for not being able to find the balance between art and science, with some being too artful and others being too scientific (Ellis et al., 2011). Auto-ethnography has also been described as being potentially self-indulgent and too emotional (Ellis, 2009; Sparkes, 2000). However, supporters of auto-ethnography argue that auto-ethnography as a methodology promotes

research that is rigorous, theoretical and analytical but also emotional and therapeutic-having a sense of self (personal) in explaining the other (social) (Ellis et al., 2011). According to Wall (2006), auto-ethnography acknowledges and embraces the researcher's self, that is always present in any kind of research, and uses the same to explore the idiosyncratic, highly personal meanings we attach to culture.

As a researcher exploring the influence of embodied cultural knowledge on my clinical work in another culture, I believe that auto-ethnography as a methodology fully supports this exploration. The focus on the subjective experience and emotionality of the researcher compliments my vision of this study that includes highlighting personal understandings and celebrating idiosyncratic experiences. As an approach, auto-ethnography focuses on self-consciousness and reflexivity (Mertens, 2010). Both as a researcher and an emerging clinician, I believe that consciously acknowledging and further exploring aspects of the "self" in relationship to the "other" contributes greatly to the development of an authentic and honest body of work. Therefore, using auto-ethnography as a methodology has enabled me to explore aspects of my culture in relationship to another culture in a value-centered, in-depth manner through my unique life experiences and narrative.

Population

Since auto-ethnography is a self-study, I as the researcher, was the primary participant of the study. I am a 23 year old, Indian female who moved to Chicago, United States Of America in July 2014 to complete a Master of Arts degree in the Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling program at Columbia College Chicago. Ever since my birth, I have lived with my parents in their house. Growing up, I had a stable

environment that did not require me to move between cities from the age of 5-22 years. Coming to the United States to pursue my master's degree was a significant milestone in my life because it was my first experience living outside of my family home and away from my circle of close friends and family. This was also my first opportunity to interact with people from a different culture. During my course of stay in the United States, as well as my clinical work, I was able to become more aware of my own cultural values and how they affected my relationship with other people. This interest in culture led me to study how my embodied culture affects my work while working with people from another culture.

Setting

Data were collected and recorded in solitude at the researcher's residence. The cultural encounters being recorded took place at the researcher's internship site. The internship site was a high school located in the city of Chicago, affiliated with the Chicago Public School system. These cultural encounters happened between the researcher and high school students who were being referred for individual counseling sessions.

My internship site was one that was culturally diverse with adolescents from Asian, African, African-American, Hispanic, White/Caucasian and Middle-eastern descent, to name a few. The high school was diverse in terms of the socio-economic status of the students. In terms of its cultural diversity, the site was very different from my high school that primarily consisted of students who had been born and brought up in India. However, there was diversity in terms of religious beliefs in my high school with students following an array of religions including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism,

Buddhism etc. to name a few. In terms of economic diversity, my high school was similar to my internship site, with students ranging from various socio-economic statuses.

Data Collection Methods

The qualitative data collection methods that were used for this study involved journaling, art-making and movement narrative. Data were collected over a period of eight weeks between March 2016 and April 2016. During this eight-week period, journaling and art-making were used after the researcher recognized certain specific cultural encounters. For the purpose of this study, a cultural encounter is explained as any incident that invokes a recognition, or conflict of culture, including learned patterns of behavior, cognitions, affect or perceptions and leads to a strong sense of psychophysical sensations in my bodily self that persists beyond the moment. The movement narrative was created once every two weeks, in response to the broader theme of the researcher's journey of embodied experience of culture since she had moved to Chicago in 2014 and started her Master's program.

The process of art making and journaling assisted the researcher in understanding the embodied experience of culture while working as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture, by exploring specific cultural encounters at her internship site. The movement narrative was created to deepen this experience by using the modality of movement in response to the evolving understanding of the researcher's embodied experience of culture.

Journaling. A short journaling experience followed every specific cultural encounter recognized consciously by the researcher. For me, these tended to be incidents such as American-Asian clients discussing their struggles about having different

expectations of culture from their parents, clients exploring their own values of independence, embodied experiences of empathizing with culturally diverse clients in their process of acculturation etc. This journaling experience included sensations, images, feelings, thoughts, metaphors or any other form of writing. This information was recorded by hand in a journal.

Art making. Art making was done once a week, in response to a specific cultural encounter/experience. Since any interaction could be considered a cultural encounter, those interactions that stayed in the body/mind of the researcher beyond the present moment and were often discussed during supervision were chosen. Art-making was done the same week when the cultural encounter took place. During weeks when no such interactions/encounters persisted beyond the moment, there was no data collection. Art-making was done using paint, markers and other art supplies. Typically, these sessions lasted between 45-60 minutes and each art-making session was followed by journaling about the sensations, images, feelings and thoughts that emerged during the art making process as well as while reflecting back on the completed art work.

Movement narrative. A movement narrative refers to a movement phrase that was developed and recorded once every two weeks in response to the evolving understanding of my embodied cultural experience of being a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture. This movement phrase was a chronological and developmentally rooted story, reflecting my personal journey with respect to cultural understanding. Movement was created a total of 4 times at the end of every two weeks. The process started with breathing and cognitively reflecting on the journey of my embodied cultural knowledge of being a dance/movement therapy intern in another

culture. This was followed by about 30 minutes of improvisational movement that included movement phrases representing different periods of the journey. Finally, the salient movement phrases were recognized and recorded for that particular week. Each of the movement narratives ranged between 5-7 minutes.

Data Analysis Methods

Two data analysis methods were used including intuitive analysis for the journaling and art-work, as well as narrative analysis for the movement narrative. Preliminary analysis was done simultaneously with the data collection and a final analysis was completed after the data collection period.

A research consultant was utilized to assist with the process of data analysis. After collecting data through journaling and art-making, emerging themes were noted by the researcher. A similar process was used for the movement narrative. After the preliminary themes were noted, the researcher met with the research consultant twice during the analysis period to discuss the emerging themes and deepen them. These meetings were held in the research consultant's office. The research consultant was shown the existing journals, art-work and movement narrative and assisted the researcher with the process of deepening the existing themes as well as relating them to the researcher's life experiences. During these meetings, themes were deepened and explored through verbal discussion as well as movement exploration. After the verbal discussion, the researcher used movement exploration to further deepen the emerging themes. The research consultant moved with the researcher during movement explorations and offered her reflections. Each session ended with a reflection on the initial discussion and movement exploration, connecting them to the researcher's experiences.

25

Intuitive analysis. As a data analysis method, intuitive inquiry considers the researcher as an instrument of knowing (Curry & Wells, 2006). Anderson (2000) explains that the term intuition for the purpose of an intuitive inquiry includes insights emerging from thoughts and ideas as well as processes such as visions, a felt sense, kinesthetic impressions, creative expressions seen in the form of art, song, dance, writing etc. Focusing on the process of introspection, reflection, documentation and emerging themes, intuitive inquiry considers different lenses of perception including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, proprioceptive and contextual (Curry & Wells, 2006). Intuitive inquiry invites participants to "speak from their unique and personal perspectives born out of their own experience" (Anderson, 2000). Interpretations are thus made on the basis of emerging themes that are seen in the researcher's understanding of the topic/experience rather than being embedded in the data itself (Curry & Wells, 2006). Intuitive inquiry also encourages the participants to use their visceral knowledge in the process of meaning making (Anderson, 2000). Intuitive analysis is an approach that focuses on idiosyncratic interpretations of data and therefore may be best suited for studying transformative experiences (Anderson, 2000).

Narrative Analysis. Narrative analysis focuses on the analysis of text in a storied form (Riessman,1993). A narrative may be explained as "accounts of personal experiences, experiences of others, or fictional accounts such as stories, myths, folktales and fairytales" (Smith, 2000, p.328). It makes use of a chronologically rooted story where perceptions of the past influence the present and vice-versa (Mertens, 2010). The focus of narrative analysis is not on verification or falsification of accounts; instead narrative analysis focuses on interpreting the meaning of experiences (Smith, 2000). This study

focuses of a specific type of narrative analysis that focuses on emerging themes, whereby the emphasis is on the content or "what" is being told (Reissman, 1993).

Analysis of the journaling experience and art-work. Intuitive analysis was used to analyze the journaling experience as well as the artwork. For the data collected through the journaling experience, the most salient themes and metaphors were recorded electronically for each journal entry during the data collection phase itself. Over time, common themes across successive journaling experiences were recognized using different lenses of perception and were related to the researcher's experience.

For analyzing data collected through the art-making process, after data was collected in the form of art making in response to a specific cultural encounter and sensations, images, thoughts, feelings were noted by the researcher; the most salient themes were highlighted and recorded electronically from each piece of art during the data collection phase itself. During the data analysis phase, common themes across the successive pieces of art were analyzed and related to the researcher's experience.

Analysis of movement narrative. The movement narrative was analyzed using a specific type of narrative analysis that focuses on the developing themes. It focuses on the content of the data and finding common elements across data sets (Riessman, 1993). After data was collected at several instances in the form of movement narrative, thematic narrative analysis was used to recognize common themes across various movement narratives as well as the development of changes in the form/structure of movement. These developing themes were then explored further and related to the researcher's personal experience.

Integrating the findings. Themes emerging from various data collection methods

including journaling, art-making as well as movement narrative were collected. The themes emerging from the intuitive and narrative analysis were then integrated, and differences and similarities were noted with an emphasis on how the movement narrative helped deepen the researcher's experience of embodied culture in her work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in another culture. This process of integration happened naturally during verbal discussions with the research consultant. The practice of verbal discussions with the research consultant, followed by movement exploration provided insight into the interconnectedness of the themes emerging from different data collection methods.

Validation Strategies

The validation strategies used for this study included the use of a rich, thick description and external audits (Creswell, 2003). Using a rick thick description as a validation strategy allows the writer to incorporate in depth information about a case or a theme, inclusive of descriptions of activities, movement, verbs, quotes, meanings as well as the interconnectedness of themes (Creswell, 2003). Since the researcher is the primary participant in this study, detailed descriptions of the study and the personal process of the researcher were utilized within the text. A detailed introduction of the researcher's background, along with a descriptive explanation of the emerging themes and their relevance in the researcher's psychosocial context was included in this study. This in-depth information was provided to enable the readers to make a fully understood, informed decision about the results of the study as well as the relevance of transferability (Creswell, 2003).

External audits were used by the researcher to assess both the process, as well as

product of the research (Creswell, 2003). The role of the external auditor in this process has been explained as one that examines "whether or not the findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data" (Creswell, 2003, p.252). For the purpose of this study, this external auditor was a research consultant who is a dance/movement therapist. The research consultant had no direct connection to the study, as recommended by Creswell (2003). The research consultant worked with the researcher 2 times during the ongoing process of data collection and analysis. The role of the research consultant was to assist the researcher throughout the process of data analysis by deepening the existing themes and more importantly, ensure that the emerging themes and results of the study were related to the data collected for the purpose of this study. This process included an in-depth exploration of the emerging themes with the research consultant, and a constant attempt to relate them directly to the data, to ensure the validity of the study.

Conclusion

This auto-ethnographic study involved data collection over a period of 8 weeks using qualitative methods such as journaling, art-making and creating a movement narrative. Data were analyzed using intuitive analysis and narrative analysis. To ensure the validity of findings, validation strategies such as using a thick, rich description and external audits were used. These strategies were used to help the reader make an informed decision about the transferability of the study and ensure that the results of the study emerged from the data itself rather than any other experiences of the researcher. A research consultant was utilized to assist with the process of data analysis as well as in the role of an external audit for this study.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore how embodied cultural knowledge impacts my work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in a culture different from my own. Data were collected through journaling, art-work and creating a movement narrative. Data collected through journaling and art-work were analyzed using intuitive analysis, whereas data collected through the creation of a movement narrative were analyzed using narrative analysis. A research consultant was conferred for the process of data analysis as well as a form of validation. This section highlights the most important themes that emerged during the process of data analysis and how they relate to the researcher's experiences.

Themes from Intuitive Analysis of Journaling and Artwork

The intuitive analysis of journaling and artwork data resulted in several distinct themes. The theme of ownership of personal values arose immediately through the process of embodiment, while discussing the data with my research consultant. The themes of vulnerability and gaining trust in my own process arose after considerable time spent on exploring the data and reflecting on my personal experiences.

Ownership of values: Confidence and humility. During the discussion of a specific cultural encounter and intuitive analysis of the art-work with the research consultant, one of the most immediate themes that emerged related to the ownership of my own values. The art-work that we were discussing was made in response to a conflict my client was facing with her parents, regarding inter-generational differences of cultural values in her family. She was struggling with whether she was being disrespectful by not agreeing with her parent's opinion, or confident by expressing her own opinion. She also

wondered how the situation would be different if she was in her home country. While listening to her narrative, I wondered whether being assertive and always expressing one's opinion is the sign of confidence. I wondered about the importance of listening to one's elders, acceptance of one's limitations and how that fit into the culture I was now a part of. I wondered what confidence and perhaps, humility meant to me in my culture and my clinical work in another culture.

The journal in response to the cultural encounter included words such as: "humility, respect, assertiveness and confidence". The image created in response to the encounter included a pyramid with the use of soft colors and merging boundaries. While explaining the image and my response to the research consultant, what emerged was my own felt conflict of values, particularly the values of confidence and humility.

A sense of conflict between the values of humility and confidence emerged in my body in response to my art-work. Growing up, I have always been told to be humble. Humility, as I have learned it, means never under-estimating the knowledge or wisdom of others irrespective of their level of education or socio-economic status; and at the same time accepting one's own limitations as a part of growth. Therefore, I was taught never to speak too much about my own strengths and at the same time, learn to recognize the strength/knowledge in the other. For me, the sign of success is true humility. Accordingly to what I had learned growing up, a truly successful person was somebody who was humble, willing to accept ones own limitations while embracing the knowledge and experience of the other.

After moving to the United States, I was exposed to the value of confidence and particularly the idea of owning your strengths. While it seemed logical and even desirable

as an idea or concept, I felt uncomfortable when speaking about my strengths and emphasizing on those in front of others. I always felt a sense of discomfort in my body. This discomfort was accompanied by feelings of guilt. I felt guilty when emphasizing on my strengths because I had learned it to be a form of arrogance. In various situations, what I perceived as being humble was misunderstood for naivety or even lack of confidence. Therefore, I started to understand the value of humility and confidence as being the opposite of each other.

In my body, the values of humility and confidence felt very different from each other. My embodied experience of confidence involved a lengthened (almost stiff) spine, with a tightly held/binding chest. I also noticed that because there was so much bound flow in my chest, that I was not able to take deep breaths. It felt very stiff and rigid. My embodied experience of humility involved a slightly sinking chest with my spine curving up a little and my gaze being a slightly lower than usual.

With the help of my research consultant, I was able to discover a body based self-care technique that involved the smooth flow between the embodied experience of confidence and humility. Using my breath, I was able to discover a posture that represented the meeting point of confidence and humility in my body, and was able to understand them as inter-dependent concepts rather than unilateral opposites. The posture that represented this state involved lengthening of the spine but softening of the chest. I was able to understand a way to inhale confidence from the world and exhale humility back into the world. In many ways, this movement represented inhaling knowledge and strength from the world (indicating confidence) and exhaling vulnerability, fluidity and aliveness (indicating humility) out into the world. What was most important to me was

the aspect of vulnerability that came with my embodied experience of humility. I came to understand that I could achieve confidence by being humble. The vulnerability in the acceptance of my own limitations would bring me to the experience of confidence (as I understand it). I came to understand the value of humility as playing an important role in reaching the state of inner confidence and strength.

  Re-visiting the cultural encounter with an embodied understanding of my values. I realized after exploring the data further, that while the client was talking about voicing her own opinions and how that relates to confidence, I was wondering how I was struggling with similar questions in my personal life. I was also questioning what confidence meant to me, and how it was challenged in a culture different from my own. The challenge was that when I tried to understand confidence in this new culture, I was invited to emphasize my strengths. However, instead of feeling uplifted, this process made me feel guilty because I equated it to being arrogant. Ultimately, I was able to find an embodied understanding of the relationship between confidence and humility, and what those values meant to me. With the embodied understanding of my cultural values of confidence and humility, I would probably engage my client in a conversation about what confidence meant to her, and how she understood it. Maybe a similar process of embodiment and exploration through movement, could have clarified the process for her, as it did for me. I may have encouraged her to acknowledge the aspects of her cultural values that she wanted to accept or reject, and possibly explored them through movement. It is probable that this embodied understanding may have clarified her beliefs and approach.

In my future clinical work as a dance/movement therapist, I can use this personal exploration of the embodied understanding of values to encourage clients to understand how their own cultural values may be embodied in different ways, and that acknowledging those may help clarify their understanding of themselves and others around them. Additionally, this embodied understanding can also be used for personal growth as a clinician in the field of dance/movement therapy as a self-care technique.

Vulnerability. Another theme that emerged during data analysis was that of my emerging vulnerability in this process. The journaling and art-work were done in response to my cultural experience with a client who was struggling with the transition into early adulthood. My client was talking about how she wanted to become independent as soon as she could, and start living in a separate house so that she had the freedom to make her own decisions. We were problem solving around issues that were coming in the way of her independence and discussing what it felt like for her to be "free". As we spoke about her desire to separate, and her notions of freedom, I felt conflicted. A rush of heat was flowing through my body during the discussion. I felt protective of my client, but also frustrated. Long after the discussion, there was an experience of what felt like a knot in my stomach and I continued to feel irritated, restless, and confused. I wondered where these sensations and feelings came from, and decided to journal and make artwork about the experience.

Some of the words expressed in the journal entry included "collective versus individualistic", "Is our life just our own?", "interdependence versus dependence" and "family". The image drawn in response to the cultural encounter was that of a tree with

its roots digging deep into the ground, and its branches reaching out in an interlocked way, along with fruits of different colors hanging on those branches.

Coming from a collectivistic culture, my worldview about adulthood and independence was rather different from those of my clients. Working with adolescents who were moving on to becoming young adults, I often felt conflicted while facilitating discussions about their roles as eighteen-year old young adults. I grew up in a society where the concept of adulthood is looked at very differently. While financial independence is definitely important, looking after and supporting family members as an adult is also given equal weightage. Therefore, very often children do not move out of their parents' homes even as they proceed in their professional lives. This is not because they are not capable of living independently, but because it is seen as their responsibility to take care of their parents and support them, just like their parents did when they were younger. Many people still live in joint families where multiple generations of the household share their residence, or move out (close to their parents) only when they want to start their own family. But this concept of interdependence also means that parents and children participate fully in each other's decisions. Especially during adolescence, it is very common for parents to be important and sometimes, primary decision makers for their children in my culture. A child's success (academic, social, vocational) is seen as the family's success and the child's failure is seen as the family's failure.

When my clients spoke to me about how they struggled with their families "interfering" in their decisions and expressed the need to be independent by moving out of their homes at the age of 18, I felt both confused and embarrassed. I felt confused because on one hand this idea of independence seemed empowering and on the other

hand it felt self-centered. I was also embarrassed as I felt that because I had lived my life differently, I was somehow less valued. I questioned myself repeatedly and very often had to explain to others why I lived with my parents during my under-graduation education program or why I did not plan to move out even after I would start my professional work in India. I faced some judgment about the same and was internally conflicted.

Upon discussing this conflict with my research consultant during the analysis stage, I felt extremely vulnerable. My chest was retreating and sinking, while I experienced a rush of heat flowing through my body. I wondered why this vulnerability emerged. I think it was because I had these almost conflicting ideas about the role of a young adult in my mind. Being in my early twenties, I am struggling to find my independence and what that means to me. The acceptance of this conflicted state of mind was what made me feel vulnerable. Additionally, the experience of being negatively judged and the feeling of not being understood made it even more difficult for me to talk about the same. Therefore, while discussing this conflict, I felt scared, open and vulnerable. As a result of this discussion, I found acceptance of the conflict existing within me as I struggled to become what I call an inter-dependent adult.

In my opinion, being an inter-dependent adult was particularly related to the nature of relationship with the family upon reaching early adulthood. As previously mentioned, there was a difference in the way I saw adulthood based on my collectivist cultural values and the way adulthood was seen in the new culture. In India, particularly in my family, even after an individual becomes an adult, parents and other family members are important decision makers in their lives and contribute greatly to their lives

in every aspect, and vice-versa. However, in my experience with the new culture, adulthood was seen as being in a position of autonomy and complete independence, with the choice of the degree of closeness to the parents and other family members. An interdependent adult, in my opinion, is thus a position whereby one is able to maintain close ties with one's family, participate in their decisions, and at the same time, be able to maintain autonomy in certain areas of one's life. It was this idea of adulthood that included a balance between autonomy and linkage that I strived towards. My struggle was to find and ultimately become an inter-dependent adult.

Re-visiting the cultural encounter with the acceptance of internal conflict and the emerging vulnerability. Re-visiting the cultural encounter whereby my client spoke of the concept of independence and of being "free", with an understanding and acceptance of my inner conflict and vulnerability, I would have probably used the same intervention of helping her explore her road to freedom and independence. However, the recognition of this sense of conflict about the roles of adulthood would probably have helped me feel more settled during the creative exploration with my client. Knowing that a bias or conflict exists in my body-mind would have probably helped me understand my internal response during the clinical intervention. It may have led to a possibly different and deeper understanding of my client's concerns as well helped me identify the source of my own experience of frustration and protectiveness towards my client.

Trust in my own process. Another theme that emerged during the process of data analysis was that of the emerging trust in my own process. The art work was made in response to an experience with my client where we explored feelings of being different and of not being understood by her peers. As my client discussed her experiences, I felt

my chest softening in response to her. In that moment, I felt open and understood. Her story resonated with aspects of my story. As I left the session, I somehow felt lighter, and even more empowered, like there had been a moment of insight. However, at that time, I was unable to understand and communicate to my client, what and why I was feeling.

Some of the words that emerged while reflecting on the art work included words such as "support, trust, empathy versus curiosity." The art-work itself included a triangular island with some people, separated from the others by a stormy sea.

Throughout my journey of living in the United States, there have been multiple points of time where I have questioned myself. I have found myself sometimes observing, other times questioning and many times embracing my own cultural values. But this has not been a linear or easy process. I have moved back and forth in my personal and professional decisions. I have repeatedly questioned and tested my beliefs when they have clashed against the popular or accepted ones, and also struggled to make professional decisions in my work with my clients. Self-doubt and inner-struggle were a big part of my journey.

While reflecting on my journal and art work with my research consultant, I realized that the struggle was more about self-discovery and faith than about anything else. I found that I was trying to understand the culture, the clients and my internship site without understanding and believing in my own self. An important aspect of self-discovery was gaining faith in my own beliefs and understanding the source of the same.

During the process of intuitive analysis, the following words were expressed: "coming to faith, what do I want and how do I know this is it?, how do I exit the storm?,

to heart to happier". I remember writing these down and keeping my heart on my hand and taking a deep breath.

Throughout this journey, I have faced internal upheaval. The only way to overcome this upheaval was through finding trust in my being, because it was only through the acceptance of my personal beliefs, understandings and ideas that I would be able to find answers to my questions pertaining to my identity. With this trust in myself, I went through a process of acceptance and rejection and decided what my own beliefs as an individual were. I came to at least an emerging understanding of how I defined confidence, humility, inter-dependence and what was my way of understanding conflict and confrontation. I had to pay close attention to my body to notice what its safe space was, where it found comfort and where it was willing to explore further. Finally, during the analysis phase I wrote to myself:

"Have faith in me"

-Lots of love

Your body, your heart, your soul

Revisiting the cultural encounter with trust in my own process. Upon further exploration of the experience with my research consultant, I realized that while I was affirming my client's uniqueness and beliefs through her period of "not being understood", I was also affirming my own process. I was identifying with my client. The felt sense of lightness and softness in my own body was likely a result of feeling empowered by making an attempt to empower my client. As I told my client to have faith in her beliefs, my body reminded me of a similar struggle I was facing. I also wonder whether in this circumstance, self-disclosure as a clinical intervention both in terms of

revealing my personal process to the client, and possibly leading her into a process of self-discovery and trust similar to mine could have been used.

Summary of Intuitive Analysis

The primary themes that emerged as a result of the analysis of data that were generated through art work and journaling included ownership of values, vulnerability, and trust in my own process. Through experiencing and exploring these cultural encounters cognitively as well as in an embodied manner, I was able to search deeper into my understanding of my own cultural beliefs. I was able to identify values that were salient to me, and understand more about my identity as a clinician.

Themes from Narrative Analysis of Movement

The movement narrative was representative of my journey of embodied cultural knowledge while practicing as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture. Data collected through the creation of movement narrative was analyzed using narrative analysis. The movement narrative consisted of various phases that were representative of my journey since I moved to Chicago in 2014. The main turning points that emerged in the narrative were those of (a) facing the conflict, (b) finding the wisdom of my body, and (c) finding my ground through the power pose.

Phase one: Facing the conflict. The beginning of the movement narrative included movements that were intentional and directing in Effort space. I used movements directing in Effort space with increasing pressure in terms of Effort weight, and binding in Effort flow. My hands were the most active body part, helping me reach my goals and also to come back to myself. The words "marking my territory" came to mind when observing the movement piece. When I moved to Chicago, I knew what I

wanted. I was focused and motivated, ready to run towards my goal. While there was intent in my movements, there was also a sense of restriction.

However, soon these confident but restricted movements started to fade away. Across my movement narratives, a specific set of movement characteristics were observed. These movements were indirecting in Effort space, accelerating in Effort time, with no attention to Effort weight, sometimes even looking forced. The intention was lost and upon reflection, I realized that I felt like I was stuck in a storm.

I was lost during this stage. It was like I found myself in the middle of a storm of emotions, ideas and beliefs, with no anchor. This was a period of investigating my own personal beliefs. I was questioning my own cultural beliefs, weighing them against the "other" culture and trying to understand how I was supposed to behave. I felt confused, lonely and disheartened. This was representative of the period of acceptance of what is mine, and rejection of what is not. I was confused about what I should be and at the same time trying to discover who I really was. I felt lonely in this process, as there did not seem to be anyone who could really understand what I was going through, and disheartened because I could not see an end to this turmoil. I was battling to discover my own values while adapting to what seemed like an entirely new culture. This was a period of exploration, discovery and extreme exhaustion.

Phase two: Finding the wisdom in my body. During phase one, my movement characteristics shifted in a very specific way. It was also noticed that to overcome the storm and re-gain control during phase two, I used my hands in a number of different ways. This phase was about finding my intuition and wisdom stored in my body, particularly my hands.

I was able to discover the aliveness and wisdom in my hands. As my research consultant and I spoke about the successive movement narratives that were created, my research consultant pointed out the extensive use of my hands in all these narratives. My hands were the most expressive part of my body. While the rest of my body was mostly stable during the narratives, my hands (especially fingers) were always mobile. In relationship to my life and journey, I feel that my hands represent the explorer and the go- getter in me, while the rest of my body is the stabilizer or holder.

In my journey, there have been various moments when I have held myself back because I was unsure, or in self-doubt. For example: many a times during my sessions, my clients displayed movements that according to my cultural bias were aggressive. My hands wanted to hold them, contain them; but my chest retreated with caution and fear. My hands represent the fearless wisdom in me.

Through the process of data analysis and exploration, I was able to understand the importance of listening and paying close attention to my hands while moving. My hands had always spoken to me, but I suppose I was not listening. Even during the data collection, there were times when I felt like I was forcing myself to collect data and during those times, my hands were limp with no vitality whatsoever. This power in my hands could be used as a source of wisdom and intuition in my clinical work.

Phase three: Finding my ground through the power pose. The last phase was about finding my ground and overcoming the storm. It came with the acceptance of my own beliefs and faith in my own process. It involved taking a deep breath and listening to my body. I was able to find my breath and continue the intentional exploration and used directness in Effort space, but with a carving mode of shape change. My approach to

Effort time had also shifted. Now I was more decelerating in Effort time, really taking the time to understand and show curiosity towards what was new. I was more compassionate towards myself – finding and giving love to my heart and body; while focusing on my own strengths and beliefs. Thus, a combination of directness in Effort space with carving mode of shape change, deceleration in Effort time, using my breath to invite freeing Effort flow in my body and increasing pressure in Effort weight represented stability and power in my body.

The Changing Movement Characteristics Across the Three Phases

My movement characteristics in all the three phases had been different from each other. During the first phase of "Facing the conflict", my movement characteristics started with being directing in Effort space, binding in Effort flow, accelerating in Effort time and increasing pressure in Effort weight. I also used spoking movements in terms of the mode of shape change. As I began to feel lost in a new culture and feelings of loneliness and confusion settled in, my movement shifted in a very specific manner. My movement shifted from directing to indirecting use of Effort space, had little Effort weight or Effort time and remained binding in Effort flow. My thoughts were scattered as I was trying to find my own self and I kept feelings of being disheartened and confusion inside myself. I was slowly using my intentionality and my body felt like it was being thrown in different directions. The middle phase was one of transformation. I started to find my strengths and regain a sense of control. I started to use my breath to bring some amount of freeing Effort flow and aliveness in my body. Through these movement shifts, I found the life and power in my hands. Finally, during the third phase of my narrative, "Finding my ground through the power pose", I was able to use my intentionality

(directing in Effort space) along with more of a carving mode of shape change. I started to battle my loneliness and approached others around me. I found my use of Effort weight with some increasing pressure and slowed down my exploration with the use of decelerating Effort time.

This combination of decelerating in Effort time, directing in Effort space while using a carving mode of shape change, use of increasing pressure in Effort weight and freeing my Effort flow through breath, represented a state of stability along with curiosity. Through analysis of my movement characteristics, I was able to find an embodied understanding of strength, stability, power, faith, wisdom and intuition. Based on my body knowledge and prejudice, identifying my body-based strengths led to a process of identification and discovery of my embodied identity as a clinician. My assumption is, that in my future work as a dance/movement therapist, using these movement combinations will probably facilitate stability in the therapeutic relationship and will aid the process of in-the moment decision-making.

Summary of Findings From My Movement Narrative

Through the analysis of the movement narrative, I was able to discover movement characteristics and body postures that contributed to the discovery of my embodied cultural identity as a dance/movement therapist. These postures and movement characteristics involved the embodiment of stability, power, grounding, wisdom and intuition in my body. In my clinical work a dance/movement therapist, I hope to use these findings to inform myself of techniques that could be used to stabilize myself in the therapeutic relationship with my clients and also facilitate intuitive decision-making when faced with confusion or self-doubt.

Additionally, the changes in movement characteristics across the three stages explain my process of acculturation experienced in the body. The nature of change of my movement characteristics represent how in the process of acculturation, I was able to keep some of my own culture's movement elements and add some elements possibly learned in the new culture.

Integration of Findings

The main themes that emerged from the art-work were (a) the ownership of my personal values, (b) the emergence of vulnerability in the process of questioning and accepting/rejecting my own personal/cultural values, and (c) the importance of gaining trust in my own belief system and process. The main themes that emerged through creating a movement narrative were (a) phase one: facing the conflict, (b) phase two: finding the wisdom in my body, and (c) phase three: finding my ground through the power pose (see Table 1).

Table 1

Relationship of Movement Themes to Art and Journaling Themes

Movement Themes	Art & Journaling Themes
Phase One: Facing the conflict	Vulnerability
Phase Two: Finding the wisdom in my body	Ownership Of Values, Vulnerability
Phase Three: Finding my ground through the Power Pose	Vulnerability, Ownership of Values, Gaining faith/trust in my own process

The salient finding of my movement narrative was the discovery of a Power Pose- a set of movement characteristics that represented an integrated state of strength, power, stability, faith, wisdom and intuition in both my body and mind. These movement characteristics were discovered through the process of questioning my own values that finally led to ownership of my own values, accompanied by the self-doubt and vulnerability that emerged in the process, finally leading to an experience of my embodied self that was trusting and powerful.

The movement characteristics of my power pose were inclusive of all movement elements associated with the embodied experience of humility and confidence, vulnerability and the having trust in my own process. The embodied experience of humility and confidence consisted of softening of my chest and the element of breath; the embodied experience of vulnerability included a somewhat retreating and sinking chest; and the embodied experience of trust in my own process consisted of the same softening through the use of breath. Therefore, my power pose consisted of my original movement characteristics of directness in Effort space and use of increasing pressure in Effort weight, but combined with the softness of the carving mode of shape change and the accessing my freeing Effort flow through breath. In a way, my movement narrative represented a culmination of the embodied experience of themes emerging from the intuitive analysis. I was able to feel powerful with humility, stable with vulnerability and was able to find my strengths and sources of wisdom and intuition in my body.

Conclusion

My embodied experience of being a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture, involved gaining a deeper understanding of my own values, beliefs and culture. The experience of facing conflicts of belief systems in my clinical work, which I referred to as a cultural conflict, forced me to search deeper into my personal process. In my body, I was able to explore movement polarities and at the same time, embody these conflicted values. Through the movement narrative, I was able to explore the process of acculturation as experienced by my body.

I realize that my process was not so much a fight with the external world or a new culture, but more an internal upheaval that forced me to understand myself better. Along with gaining a better understanding of my own cultural beliefs, and how they have been influenced by my upbringing, I was also able to question them. Through this process, I was able to better understand my own cultural beliefs and biases. Embodied experiences of cultural beliefs and values represented the process of discovering, gaining deeper insight, questioning and understanding my own micro-culture, and accepting/rejecting or even sometimes compromising on some belief systems. In a way, these cultural conflicts helped me with the formation of my own cultural identity in an embodied manner. I was also able to relate the increased self and body awareness as a step towards the development of cultural competence in the field of dance/movement therapy and counseling. Finally, I was able to deepen my experience of acculturation through the movement narrative.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how embodied cultural knowledge impacts my work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in a different culture. The primary question that was answered through this study was: "What is the embodied experience of my culture in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in another culture?" and the secondary question answered was: "How does my movement narrative reflect my embodied experience of culture?" Data collected through art- work and journaling were analyzed using intuitive analysis and data collected through creation of a movement narrative were analyzed using narrative analysis.

The main themes emerging from the analysis of data collected through art-work and journaling were (a) the ownership of my personal values, (b) the emergence of vulnerability in the process of questioning and accepting/rejecting my own personal/cultural values, and (c) the importance of gaining faith and trust in my own process. Data analyzed using narrative analysis was divided into 3 themes/phases: (a) facing the conflict, (b) finding the wisdom in my body, and (c) finding my ground through the power pose.

Through the integration of the preliminary themes emerging through art-work, journaling and movement narrative, the following areas of growth and exploration emerged: (a) my embodied cultural identity as a clinician, (b) moving towards cultural competence, and (c) the process of acculturation experienced through movement. The following section discusses these topics in detail along with their applications to my clinical work in the field of dance/movement therapy as well as implications and possible areas of research in the field of dance/movement therapy.

Embodied Cultural Identity

Through the analysis of themes, it was discovered that during my clinical internship there were various interactions with clients that involved the experience of a conflict of cultural beliefs, and stayed in my body/mind beyond that moment (what I refer to as cultural conflicts). These experiences helped me question my own belief systems and led to the identification and ownership of my personal and cultural values, not only cognitively but also in an embodied manner. I believe that through the means of journaling, making art-work and creating a movement narrative, I was able to collect data and explore issues that contributed towards my embodied cultural identity. The following section explains how the findings contributed to the development of my embodied cultural identity and the implications of this process in my clinical work.

The embodied experience of my culture in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture involved the embodiment and ownership of my own cultural values, experiencing and accepting vulnerability in the body and mind in the process of questioning and accepting/rejecting my own personal/cultural values and finally, learning to trust my own process, body and beliefs. It also included identifying body knowledge and prejudices and discovering how my own culture is expressed in my body.

Ownership of values: Confidence and humility. The values of humility and confidence seemed particularly unsettling in my body and mind. The way confidence was embodied and understood by my clients, in my culturally based experience, seemed unnatural and even uncomfortable to me. The posture that represented confidence for a lot of my clients included a straight back, with a medium to large kinesphere, making

direct eye contact with a rising chest. Both while embodying and observing this posture, I felt aggressive or even arrogant. My body felt like it was fighting. In Cohen and Leung's (2009) words, this was an example of totem embodiment that occurs when a specific set of movement characteristics, or a specific way of holding the body, was recognized as having a meaning specific to a culture. For my clients, this posture represented confidence; but because of my own idiosyncratic cultural experiences, I perceived the same posture to be aggressive or arrogant.

Another explanation for this experience can be explained through Matsumoto's (2006) description of how environmental conditions may affect our body postures and the meanings we attach to them. Being from India, a country with a large population, I may have also been used to occupying lesser space, and therefore making use of a smaller kinesphere. Therefore, observing someone using a medium or large kinesphere might have felt uncomfortable. Additionally, the way the concept of confidence is understood and even conveyed in my micro-culture is very different from the way it was expressed by my clients. Hence, my own set of cultural decoding rules, which help us judge or manage the emotions of others (Matsumoto, 2006), might have led me to misinterpret confidence as aggression.

Interestingly, not only did the posture bother me, but also the value of confidence, as understood by the society. My micro-culture values humility as a principle, that for me is more important than confidence. This implicit understanding of the cultural value of humility and confidence can be traced back to my micro-culture. The understanding that one who speaks too much about their strengths is arrogant or that one should be less vocal about one's capabilities, represents a cultural norm that was probably learned early

on through subtle cues. These implicit rules affect the way we embody subtle aspects of culture (Matsumoto, 2006).

In terms of the body and dance/movement therapy literature, these implicit cultural norms, environmental conditions and specific cultural understandings, lead to the development of body knowledge and body prejudice (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012). It was my own body prejudice that led to this experience, whereby a neutral set of movement characteristics was perceived as meaning something specific.

I was able to find an embodied resolution to this conflict between confidence and humility. Through movement exploration and embodiment exercises, I was able to come to a resolution of what seemed like almost opposite concepts (humility and confidence) in my own body and was able to integrate them in a meaningful way.

Acceptance of vulnerability in my body and mind. My embodied experience of culture in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture also involved acceptance of the vulnerability in the body and mind. This vulnerability emerged as I questioned my own cultural beliefs and knowledge when faced with new cultural ideas. I not only questioned and tested my own belief system, but also defended them when cultural beliefs that were very different from mine were popular. This was a process of internal battle and took a lot of courage and vulnerability. Specifically, I struggled with the idea of adulthood.

Since I myself am an emerging adult, I struggled not only to understand what set of cultural beliefs were mine, but also questioned where I was in this process of adulthood. According to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, adolescence is considered to be a period of transition from childhood to adulthood during which the

central challenges are identity development and role confusion (as cited in Baron, 2001, p.336). In other words, he explained that the stage of adolescence was marked by struggle with the formation of identity and one's roles of adulthood as they shift and emerge over time. However, due to demographic shifts, more recent studies have considered identity development to be the main focus of a stage called "Emerging adulthood", ranging between the ages of 18-25 years (Arnett, 2000). According to Arnett (2000), there are three main areas of identity exploration in early adulthood: (a) love, (b) work and (c) worldviews. Arnett (2000) considers that the exposure to higher level college education and meeting others with different worldviews, leads to the questioning of one's own worldview, and the possible formation of a new emerging worldview in the individual. In my experience as a 23-year-old emerging adult, I was exposed to different cultural worldviews during the course of my Master's program. This experience probably led to a process of questioning my own ideas, beliefs and worldview, when faced with contrasting ones.

One such particular idea was that of an inter-dependent adult, whereby I questioned my beliefs about adulthood in terms of separation from family and the role one plays in their family upon reaching adulthood. When faced with conflicting ideas of adulthood, I was able to examine my beliefs about the same, and define my own role as an inter- dependent adult. This process included vulnerability because I was questioning the worldview I had grown up with, and challenging the notions I had always believed in. However, this process resulted in the formation of a set of beliefs or worldview that ultimately contributed to my identity development.

I came to understand that this struggle with the idea of adulthood was also related to my experience of acculturation, and specifically to the stage of crisis in the process of cultural adjustment (Lyngaard, 1955). This stage represents the struggle of cross-cultural adaptation, as individuals begin to cope with the cultural ideas on a day-to-day basis (Black & Mendenhall, 1991). In my experience, specifically related to the concept of adulthood, I was struggling to understand the meaning of adulthood in the United States and at the same time, I was also revisiting and questioning the concept of adulthood in my own culture. I was trying to understand the norms of adulthood in both cultures. When faced with a cultural perspective that was different from mine, I faced a psychological crisis and feelings of loneliness and vulnerability emerged.

Gaining trust in my own body and process. Finally, my embodied experience of culture in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture involved gaining trust and faith in my own process. My embodied experience of culture has involved internal struggle and questioning. It has involved self-doubt and hours of thinking about what I believe in, and why I believe in the same. Ultimately, my whole process has been about greater self-discovery and knowledge and understanding my own strengths. Self-awareness and embracing what I already have, has been the single, most important learning in this process. My movement narrative helped me identify my body-based strengths as a clinician that contributed to this process.

Contributions of Findings Towards my Embodied Cultural Identity

Through these experiences, I was able to identify and understand my own cultural values, beliefs and also explore them in my body through the process of embodiment. All of these experiences and explorations were triggered due to a noticed shift in the

body-mind after encountering cultural conflicts. Moreover, these cultural constructs/values (humility, confidence, vulnerability and others) were explored in terms of their meanings in the context of my own culture. These findings provided deeper insight into what my own cultural beliefs and values are, as well as how I experience them in my own body. Therefore, this exploration contributed to the development of my racial/cultural identity in an embodied manner.

Gyllensten, Skar, Miller & Gard (2010) state that the body and identity are inseparable concepts. They identify embodied identity as a core concept in the process of body awareness, and view it both as a tool to understanding our own bodily responses, needs, and a source of self-confidence and strength; as well as playing an important role in relational terms such as understanding our needs in relation to others (Gyllensten et al, 2010). In my exploration of embodied cultural experience through art-work, journaling and creating a movement narrative, I was able to discover my own cultural values in an embodied manner. The values of confidence, humility, the felt vulnerability and the identification of body-based strengths through the movement narrative, were experienced in terms of their expression in my body; thus contributing to the development of my emerging embodied cultural identity.

Moreover, these findings also relate to the idea of the development of my cultural/racial identity as a counselor. According to Ivey, D'Andrea & Ivey (2012), various cultural/racial identity theories have been developed for different cultural groups and includes cultural factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, to name a few. They propose that each one of us have a different level of awareness of our racial/cultural identity and as clinicians in the mental health field, we should be aware of our own level

of awareness as well as our client's level of awareness (Ivey at al., 2012). Ivey at al. (2012) identify the following basic issues or themes that emerge across various models of racial/cultural identity development: (a) naive awareness of oneself as a cultural being, (b) encounter with reality of cultural/racial issues that leads to greater awareness of cultural/racial identity variables affecting one's life, (c) naming of these issues that leads to increased pride in one's own cultural pride, (d) heightened personal reflection of these issues, and finally (e) internalization of a more differentiated and integrated cultural/racial identity.

Through the process of this thesis study, I feel that I was able to experience all of these issues or themes. During the course of my Master's program, I was exposed to lectures and discussions about culture and how it lives in our body. The interest in studying about the embodiment of culture as it relates to my clinical experience correlates to the first issue that highlights having a basic awareness about oneself as a cultural being. The cultural encounters I experienced during my clinical experience led to a greater awareness of how cultural issues and variables affect my therapeutic relationship with my clients, correlating to the second issue that ultimately leads to greater awareness of cultural variables affecting one's life. Further exploration through the process of data collection and analysis, clarified these cultural concepts and led to the ownership and acceptance in my own cultural values, correlating to the third issue that describes an increased sense of pride in one's own culture. I was able to deepen my understanding of my own values in an embodied manner, correlating to the fourth issue of heightened personal reflection. Finally, the recognition and acceptance of my cultural and personal values in my body and mind, led to a distinct sense of my identity as a cultural/racial

being in the counseling relationship and this world, as I am continuing to form a differentiated and integrated racial/cultural identity in my professional world.

Moving Towards Cultural Competence

The process of beginning to form my embodied cultural identity both as a clinician and as a young adult, has possibly contributed towards the development of my cultural competence as a clinician. According to Sue & Sue (2008), cultural competence in multi-cultural counseling involves three levels of skills/competence: (a) therapist's awareness of one's own assumptions, values and biases, (b) understanding the worldview of clients who are culturally different, and (d) developing appropriate interventions.

I was able to begin to differentiate and integrate my racial/cultural identity in an embodied manner. This experience involved a heightened sense of self and body awareness. Through this study, I was able to question some of my own assumptions and biases about cultural values and how they are embodied. Thus, this exploration enabled me to begin to develop an understanding of Sue & Sue's (2008) first level of cultural competence, which involves awareness of one's own assumptions, values and biases.

The Process of Acculturation

"Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (Berry, 2005, p. 698). The phenomenon of acculturation has been understood as one that involves the process of intercultural adaptation, including both psychological and sociocultural factors (Zhou, Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). My movement narrative represented a chronologically rooted story of my embodied experience as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in a culture different

from my own. It represented various phases of how this process was experienced in my body. My changing movement characteristics across the three movement phases (Phase One: Facing the conflict, Phase Two: Finding the wisdom in my body and Phase Three: Finding my ground through the power pose) were symbolic of my process of questioning my own beliefs, accepting and rejecting my cultural values, and adopting some elements of the new culture. Alongside my embodied identity as a clinician, these changing movement characteristics also represented the process of intercultural adaptation in my body, a process that consisted of holding on to my cultural beliefs in my body, being in conflict and losing them, and finally integrating them with new cultural beliefs that led to the discovery of my strengths.

The movement characteristics in the beginning of my movement narrative were very different than those experienced during the last phase of my movement narrative. My movement characteristics in the last phase consisted of elements from the very beginning of my experience along with some new elements, probably learned, accepted and integrated through my time spent in the new culture. For instance, in the very beginning of my movement narrative my movements were binding in Effort flow, directing in Effort space, increasing pressure in terms of Effort weight and accelerating in Effort time; along with the use of spoking mode of shape change. During the next two phases, I experienced inner turmoil and questioned my own cultural beliefs in the face of new ones. This turmoil not only consisted of a clashing of belief systems, but also a felt sense of loneliness and confusion. In this process of questioning my beliefs, I felt disheartened and disillusioned. Finally, I was able to find a way to accept some of my old values and adapted to some new ones learned in this culture. My movement towards the

end consisted of movement characteristics from the beginning phase (increasing pressure in terms of Effort weight, directing in Effort space) but also had some new characteristics that I had discovered (freeing in Effort flow and decelerating in Effort time, the use of breath and carving mode of shape change) as a result of interaction with a new culture.

The use of breath and freeing Effort flow, especially in my chest represented my embodied resolution of confidence and humility. While the cultural values of confidence and humility started out as being polar opposites in my opinion, through the use of breath and flow in my chest I was able to integrate these concepts in my body. This resolution consisted of elements of my understanding of humility along with a new understanding of the value of confidence, as understood in the United States in my experience.

The shift from spoking to carving mode of shape change probably represented a shift in approach towards the new culture. In the beginning, I was very analytical and was approaching the cultural shift in a very sharp manner. I focused on separating my own beliefs from the new cultural beliefs, and emphasized the differences. The introduction of the carving mode of shape change brought about the dynamic of exploration and curiosity for me in my approach to the new culture. Through this, I was able to accept, reject and most importantly adapt in the new culture in a relational manner. Using carving mode of shape change also helped me battle feelings of loneliness. Since I approached the culture in a more relational manner, I was also able to connect to other people and use them as resources during times when I felt disheartened.

During the Master's program and through movement explorations, I discovered that deceleration in Effort time provided a state of curiosity and exploration for me. The value of exploratory learning was introduced to me during the course of this program.

Before coming into for Master's program, I was used to a different kind of approach to learning and even therapy, one that was very directing in Effort space and accelerating in Effort time. While I needed the directness in my creative process, I decided to slow down my process to bring in the exploration. This deceleration was also felt during the experience of vulnerability. Ultimately, the movement that represented a culmination of old and new elements was integrated and used as a source of strength and stability.

My movement narrative represented a story that included holding on to my movement characteristics, to moving into a state of questioning and losing them, and finally integrating them with new movement characteristics as a source of strength and stability. I believe that even though I did not acknowledge it verbally, my body experienced the process of acculturation. This experience was highlighted by the nature of change in my movement characteristics as I adapted to the new cultural environment.

Lysgaard (1955) conducted an interview about cultural experiences with 200 Norwegians who had returned to Norway after a staying in the United States of America for an average of a year. Based on this study, a four-stage model, called the U shaped theory of cross-cultural adjustment was proposed (Lysgaard, 1955). It highlighted the following stages: (a) honeymoon stage, whereby there is interest and fascination with the new culture, and the process of adjustment is considered easy and comfortable, (b) stage of crisis or culture shock, whereby one struggles with the new culture and feelings of disillusionment, frustration and loneliness settle in, (c) adjustment stage, whereby there is a gradual process of adaptation into the new culture as norms and behaviors of the new culture are understood, and (d) mastery stage, whereby the individual feels more

integrated into the society and is able to function in a more effective and adaptive manner (Lysgaard, 1955; Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

On a very basic level, my body experienced these stages through the movement narrative. The very beginning of my movement narrative represented the stage when I had just moved to the United States. My movements were binding in Effort flow, directing in Effort space, increasing pressure in terms of Effort weight and accelerating in Effort time, along with spoking mode of shape change. I had intent in my actions and felt confident about being in the new culture. I was focused and motivated and approached the new culture as something to be analyzed. My movements during this stage represented confidence, and a "ready to go" attitude as I was excited and was prepared to take in all that the culture had to offer. These movements represented the honeymoon stage where adjustment in the new culture seemed easy and comfortable (Lysgaard, 1955).

As time passed, and I faced turmoil or a storm of emotions and a conflict of belief systems, my body started to respond in a very specific way. I lost my intentionality, paid no attention to Effort weight and my hands were limp and moved as if they were being forced. I lost all interest and felt lonely, as I began to question my own cultural values and beliefs in the presence of new ones. I felt lost. My movements during this phase represented the crisis stage (Lysgaard, 1955), whereby I faced struggles and felt frustrated, exhausted and alone in the process of trying to understand both my own cultural beliefs as well as the beliefs that were presented by the new culture.

The last phase of my movement narrative represented the phases of adjustment and mastery (Lysgaard, 1955), whereby I gained a better understanding of my own

cultural beliefs and was also able to understand the new cultural norms and values. I was also able to form a cultural understanding based on the knowledge of both new and old cultural values and beliefs. I discovered my body-based strengths. Cognitively, it was during this stage that I began to question concepts of adulthood, humility and confidence, and what they meant to me. In my experience of the adjustment stage, I not only understood the norms of the other culture but also explored cultural values of my own culture. I understood adulthood as a concepts and what it meant in my culture as well as in the new culture. Similarly, I explored what the values of confidence and humility meant in my own culture and in the new culture. The movement characteristics during the end of my movement narrative included some elements of my movement in the very beginning of the master's program that may be associated with my own culture, and also new elements that were possibly introduced during my stay in the United States.

Berry's model of acculturation explains four outcomes of the acculturation process: (a) assimilation, during which the individuals shed their own cultural heritage and begin to identify with the majority/dominant culture, (b) separation, in which the individuals hold on to their original cultures and do not hold any value of the majority/dominant culture, (c) marginalization, in which the individual shows little to no interest in maintaining ties with either their own culture or the majority/dominant culture, and (d) integration, in which the individual incorporates the values of both minority culture and the majority culture (Berry, 2005).

Through the process of inter-cultural adaptation, I was able to experience the acculturation outcome of integration (Berry, 2005). The last phase of my movement narrative consisted of a combination of movement characteristics from the very

beginning of my narrative and some new characteristics that were introduced in the new culture. Therefore, in a small way, my body experienced integration- where I started to value both the embodied elements of my own culture and some new elements that were introduced by the dominant/majority culture. Cognitively, during this stage, I was able to find my beliefs that represented a combination of understandings from both cultures. I was able to maintain my own cultural heritage (Berry, 2005) as well as adopt elements of the new culture in my body.

Application of Findings

Since the completion of the study, I have returned to New Delhi, India and am working as a dance/movement therapist. I have been able to reflect on how the findings of this research study have informed my professional identity and current work as a dance/movement therapist within my own culture. Through the analysis of themes emerging in the process of journaling, art-making and creating a movement narrative, I was able to reach a greater level of self-awareness and utilize my findings as a source of grounding, stability and knowledge to further my work as a dance/movement therapist.

Applications to Clinical Work

 The following section discusses ways in which the findings of this study could be applied to my clinical work as a dance/movement therapist. The findings of this study have been used to design techniques that could be used to foster body-mind stability and facilitate intuitive decision making during my clinical sessions as a dance/movement therapist.

Designing a body-based self-care technique, grounded in the kinesthetic understanding of the relationship between humility and confidence. The embodied

experience of confidence and humility led me to design a kinesthetic technique through which I am now able to experience confidence through humility. Through this embodied technique, I am able to experience confidence in the way I see it, and use it for self-care in moments of self-doubt or confusion, both in my personal and clinical work.

In moments when I am challenged, I access this embodied technique to feel more present and confident. For example, during my clinical internship, being a novice therapist who also happened to look young, I was often challenged by my clients and other staff members. I was questioned both on my theoretical knowledge as well as my relative inexperience. Before discovering this embodied technique, I would often feel offended and almost become defensive in my arguments. However, accessing this embodied technique helped me feel more stable. With a better sense of my humility and confidence, I was able to both accept the limitations of being a novice therapist, as well as present my strengths with a sense of grounding.

Trusting the sensitivity of my hands as a source of wisdom and intuition in my clinical work. Through analysis of the journaling experience, art-work and movement narrative, I was able to find sources of wisdom and intuition in my body. My hands, I discovered, represented the intuitive go-getter in me.

Very recently, I was working with a two year old child in India, who found it difficult to connect with people and was seldom able to make eye contact. After about fifteen minutes of mirroring the child's movement, I doubted that he was even aware of my presence in the room. As we both sat on the floor beside each other, I wondered how to connect with him. I noticed my fingers tapping the wooden floor. Following the lead of my hands, I started to tap the floor loudly and placed my hands in the line of sight of the

child. After 2-3 minutes, I noticed the child touching my fingers and listening to the sounds they were creating. When I stopped, the child took my hand again and prompted me to continue. This was my first moment of connection with him. We spent the next ten minutes, playing this game and connecting with each other.

Often, while facilitating dance/movement therapy sessions, I tend to feel "stuck" and do not know how to take the session forward. In these moments, paying attention to the specific movements of my hands, and following them has helped me deepen the session. In my work as a dance/movement therapist, this information can be useful in the process of intuitive decision-making. This awareness will help me pay more attention to my hands and listen to them in times when my body-mind is facing a conflict. My hands can provide a direction during conflict.

Learning to access spatial intent and increasing pressure to foster body-mind stability in the therapeutic relationship. Through the analysis of data, I discovered that accessing spatial intent and increasing pressure in terms of Effort weight helped me feel powerful and more in control. Movements that involve a combination of these characteristics also made me feel grounded and stable. In my work as a dance/movement therapy intern, there were various moments when over attunement with the clients led me to feel lost. There were moments when my movement characteristics completely mirrored those of my clients, and I felt that I was unable to come out and intervene in any capacity. While sometimes this kind of attunement can be informative, at other times this may be mis-leading. I would also come out of the session feeling very unstable. In moments like these, I would use spatial intent and increasing pressure to foster body-mind stability in the relationship. This may be useful not only for me, but may also help in modeling the

same for my client.

For example, while recently working with a five-year old child, I was able to gain stability using special intent and increasing pressure in terms of Effort weight. The child entered the session wanting to run. We ran together in circles, across the room, over and over again. I knew that while mirroring the client, I was feeling both physically tired and lost. I used my knowledge and started to modulate the movement. We ran from one specific corner to another using increasing pressure in terms of Effort weight. Slowly, I started to feel more in the moment, and was able to both physically meet the child as well as feel more grounded. After running in this specific manner for a while, the child sat down and expressed that he had a really confusing day. We spoke about his day for a while and deepened his experience in the session. Accessing these movement characteristics not only helped me gain body-mind stability, but possibly also helped my client make sense of his movements.

Applications to My Professional Identity as a Dance/Movement Therapist

The findings of the study contributed to the development of my cultural identity as a counselor in the mental health field. The process of understanding more about myself in the cultural context contributed to cultural competence in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapist. Ivey at al. (2012) explain the implications of White cultural/racial identity development in clinical work. Even though this model was generated for a White European Americans, these implications may apply to trainees from other cultural backgrounds as well (Ivey et al., 2012). In my experience, this model was applicable to my process and contributed to my growth as a clinician because of its emphasis of the increasing level of knowledge about the therapist's own internalized

cultural beliefs, ideas and expectations in the process of providing therapeutic services.

Their model explains 4 stages: (a) pre-exposure, (b) exposure, (c) defensiveness in the practitioner, and finally (d) integration (Ivey et al., 2012). The final stage of integration has important implications in the clinical field. It involves the counselor gaining greater awareness and respect for cultural differences, which also contributes to the knowledge of how these cultural factors may affect the treatment plan and intervention strategies of culturally diverse clients (Ivey et al., 2012). In my clinical work, the increased awareness of my own cultural background may contribute towards a sensitive understanding of the client's level of awareness about the same. This awareness may further guide me in planning appropriate intervention strategies based on the client's worldview.

The awareness about one's own cultural background and how it might be embodied may also be important for cultural competence. In explaining the levels of cultural competency in the field of dance/movement therapy and counseling, Boas (2006) describes the transcultural competence model. According to Boas (2006), therapists can only gain multi-cultural competency by gaining greater awareness about their own cultural beliefs and contexts. Additionally, she explains that practitioners who have done in-depth work on their personal tensions and dynamics in their own "inner cultural encounters"; are more prepared to encounter the clients' culture (Boas, 2006, p.117). Therefore, this process of increased awareness about my own cultural beliefs, values and biases may make me more prepared in relationship with clients from diverse cultures and even diverse worldviews.

When working with the non-verbal movements, embodied cultural competence

becomes of utmost importance. Caldwell & Johnson (2012) describe that it is important to understand how the body represents a sense of identity and argues that our social status is also reflected through our body in various ways. The very position of being a dance/movement therapist comes with a level of authority (Calwell & Johnson, 2012). These assumptions of authority may be a part of our cultural identity. Therefore, it is important for dance/movement therapists to examine how these identities are internalized and how this may affect how we see people as movers, to break away from systems of power (Calwell & Johnson, 2012).

Implication and Possibilities for Future Research

Even though this study was conducted for the purpose of personal exploration, I believe that it has relevance in the community of dance/movement therapy. The understanding of culture as an embodied concept has not been considered in detail in the current dance/movement therapy literature.

During the study, the process of supervision played a crucial role in helping me understand my own cultural beliefs and values, as well as having more empathy for my client's cultural perspectives. Supervision, facilitated both by my clinical supervisor and my research consultant, led to greater self-awareness as well as empathy for other's perspectives. In clinical practice, supervision as a process can be an important tool to increase awareness about one's own culture as it relates to the therapist's clinical work and possibly further develop cultural competence. Boas (2006) highlights the importance of deepening cultural knowledge and competency as a part of training, supervision and the formation of a professional identity in the field of dance/movement therapy. While the importance of the supervision process has been recognized, a possible area of

exploration in research in the field of dance/movement therapy may the role played by supervision as a medium for creating culturally competent therapists. Specifically, future research can explore the question: What are the specific techniques and methods that can be used in the supervisor-supervisee relationship to further develop cultural competency?

Another implication for the field of dance/movement therapy that emerged through this study may be the importance of considering the embodied experience of therapist's own culture, as well as acculturation for therapists working across the globe. The understanding of embodied culture may be useful for increasing self-awareness and cultural competency in dance/movement therapists, who work with similar or diverse cultural groups. Studying the process of acculturation from a body-felt, sensory and kinesthetic perspective rather than a cognitive perspective may provide deeper insight into the experience and how it could be used in clinical work. Research on embodied experience of acculturation may provide insightful information on the concept of embodied culture. This information may be useful for the field of dance/movement therapy by possibly contributing towards greater cultural perspective and competence in the field. Future research in this area can focus on the following questions: How is the process of acculturation experienced specifically in the body? How does knowledge of embodied culture relate to cultural competence?

A final implication of this study for dance/movement therapists may be exploring what movement qualities mean, keeping in perspective one's embodied cultural knowledge, body knowledge and prejudice; and how they may be different or similar for clients belonging to different cultures. Research possibilities relating to the process of interpretation of movement includes an understanding of the relationship between

movement analysis and culture. Detailed and descriptive accounts of how different cultures support or refute movement assessment and analysis using Laban Movement Analysis & Kestenberg Movement Profile, or any other systems for movement observation, may be extremely useful in the field of dance/movement therapy.

Conclusion

This auto-ethnography focused on my own embodied experience of culture as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture. Even though this study was an exploration of my personal experience in a different culture, the implications of these findings are not limited to my work only in a foreign culture.

In working with bodies, dance/movement therapists may often make assumptions about movement meanings that may be largely unconscious and reflective of their own implicit culture (Caldwell & Johnson, 2012). As dance/movement therapists naturally acquire a position of authority in the therapeutic relationship, these assumptions may be dangerous for clients who embody social differences in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc. (Caldwell & Johnson, 2012). Therefore, dance/movement therapists have a responsibility to further explore and question their internalized ideas and cultural beliefs in the process of movement assessment and analysis. For dance/movement therapy to be an effective as well as ethical mode of therapy for different sections of people and across varied geographical/cultural locations, cultural exploration and competence in the practitioner is of utmost importance.

Through the process of data collection and analysis, I discovered and analyzed my own cultural beliefs in an embodied manner. The findings of this study enabled the process of development of my embodied cultural identity in the field of dance/movement

therapy and deepened my knowledge about how I could further develop my embodied

cultural identity into cultural competence and multi-cultural counseling. The study also

deepened my insight about my own embodied process of acculturation. This increased

cultural self-awareness may guide me in my work when working with people with

different cultures, including genders, sexual orientation, socio-economic class. Since

India is a country of diverse traditions, beliefs, religions and values, I hope that the sense

of deeper understanding of my embodied cultural identity will enable me to practice

dance/movement therapy and counseling in a culturally competent manner.

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Appendix A

Definition of key terms

Embodiment: According to Lenore Hervey (2007), embodiment can be explained as awareness that results from the sensations emerging from the body, while in movement as well as in stillness. It includes awareness of not only our skeletal/muscular system while the body is in motion, but also the experience of sensations emerging from intuition, emotion, and the complex functioning of the mind that can arise in stillness.

Experience: For the purpose of this study, the term experience refers to all that is present in the conscious awareness of an individual at any given moment. It is a sum total of external events as well as inner thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, or any other form of kinesthetic/perceptual awareness an individual has at any given moment in time. (Derived from Hurlburt & Heavy, 2006).

Embodied Experience: An embodied experience refers to an awareness of external events that is perceived through the knowledge of various bodily sensations, our inner skeletal/muscular system, intuition, inner thoughts, feelings as well as kinesthetic/perceptual responsiveness (Hervey, 2007; Hurlburt & Heavy, 2006).

Culture: "Culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a cultural group while also distinguishing those of another group" (University of Minnesota, 2014).

Embodied culture: For the purpose of this study, an operational definition of embodied culture has been formulated. It refers to the awareness of various sensations that reside in the body comprising of both the muscular/skeletal system as well as our

implicit body knowledge influenced by idiosyncratic cultural experiences including learned patterns of behaviors, cognitions, affective understanding as well as perceptions (Bengtsson, 2012; Hervey, 2007; University of Minnesota, 2014).

Cultural Encounter: For the purpose of this study, a cultural encounter can be explained as any incident that invokes a recognition/conflict of culture including learned patterns of behavior, cognitions, affect or perceptions and leads to a strong sense of psycho-physical sensations in my bodily self that persists beyond the moment. Since any subjective experience can be interpreted as a cultural encounter, only those incidents/experiences that continue to reside in my body-mind-spirit beyond the specific moment will be considered for this study.

Body Knowledge: According to Moore (2014), body knowledge can be explained as an individual/unique vocabulary of movement meaning. Through the processes of categorization and abstraction, this lexicon is formed based our unique embodied experiences (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012).

Body Prejudice: Body prejudice emerges over time from our ability to be able to categorize and abstract movement, where positive or negative meaning comes to be attached with certain movements, irrespective of the context or details of that movement (Moore & Yamamoto, 2012).

Appendix B

Invitation to Research Consultant

Body beyond boundaries- An exploration of how embodied cultural experience impacts my work as a dance/movement therapy intern practicing in another culture.

Akanksha Mishra

Greetings,

My name is Akanksha Mishra and I am a graduate student in the dance/movement therapy and counseling program at Columbia College Chicago. I am currently working on my Master's thesis that explores my experience of embodied culture in my clinical work as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture. I am writing to both request and invite you to guide me through the process of analyzing my data and making meaning of it.

My research study is an auto-ethnography that explores my embodied experience of culture as I continue to work as a dance/movement therapy intern in another culture. As an international dance/movement therapy student, I believe that knowledge of my embodied cultural experience in relationship to those of my clients may be very helpful in my journey of becoming a dance/movement therapist. Using narrative analysis and intuitive inquiry, I hope to analyze my data collected through art-making, journaling and creating a movement narrative.

I hope that you can guide me through the analysis and meaning making process by setting up 60 minute long meetings, 2-5 times over a period of approximately 10

weeks (between March, 2016 and June, 2016). I will be happy to negotiate the
compensation required for the same.

Please contact me in case of any further questions or information about my thesis.
I appreciate your time and all the meaningful work you do.

With appreciation,

Akanksha Mishra

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