

Migration: Acculturation Process, Cultural Identity Development, and Art Therapy

Imagery of Adolescent Migrants

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ABSTRACT

Migration: Acculturation Process, Cultural Identity Development, and Art Therapy Imagery of Adolescent Migrants

Yasmine-Maria Lemzoudi

The migration process implies a redefinition of one's cultural identity as well as exposure to acculturative stress linked to the process of acculturation. This research project intends to investigate the art of adolescents that have undergone the process of migration. It has for aim to describe cultural identity, migration, and the acculturation process, and it will also discuss the implication of these issues for art therapy. These issues will be related to the imagery made by adolescent migrants during their adaptation process, which will be illustrated through two case vignettes. These will portray how the migration experience may be expressed through art and clinical exchanges.

The North American context is a welcoming ground for a variety of migrant individuals and groups; the resulting blending of cultures is in perpetual expansion in this particular society which renders research that tackles issues of culture and relocation invaluable. Current art therapy research has discussed the importance of cultural identity, however, discussion of symbolism and imagery related to cultural identity and the migration and post-migration process is scarce. Research underlining how these issues may be worked through the clinical context and how they are expressed in the art, may prove valuable for art therapists who intend to work with these issues or with a migrant population.

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Introduction

In the era of globalization and mass movement of people around the world, more and more individuals resettle in new countries and decide to, or are forced to migrate. Migration involves a time of transition, adaptation and acculturation where one often leaves behind the world they know for the unknown, with hopes for a better future for either themselves or their children. As the migrant goes through a time of deconstruction and reconstruction of their relation to the social and cultural realms and their perception of their position within those realms, the transition can be difficult and may have repercussions on their psychological well being.

This transition time or acculturation process implies the redefinition and construction of a cultural identity, that functions as an anchor to relate to oneself and to the outside world. Migrants experience diverse cultural contexts which can range from alike to disparate to their home culture, and from which their sense of cultural identity emerges. This identity definition becomes necessary in light of the contradictions and differences inherent between their individual expression of culture and the one they perceive in the host group. Defining one's difference from the host society in relation to their cultural identity allows migrants not only to give meaning to their difference but also to give a place to their heritage and thus not vanish into the "melting pot".

Art and art therapy can be useful tools to express oneself without being restricted by a lack of language proficiency. Images can express, describe or reflect inner processes, allowing us to access the emotive reactions and sometimes painful experiences stemming from cultural and migration-related issues. The current art therapy literature that discusses issues of migration, acculturation and ethnic identity is mainly limited to case studies and

does not provide a broad overview of these issues within an art therapy context (Godfrey, 1998; Kajzer, 2003; Sit, 1996). Some studies have looked at intercultural and cultural identity issues in art therapy, though they have not focused on the expression of migration processes in the art (Goldman, 1994; Annoual, 1998). The primary research question that arose from the knowledge gap found in the literature could then be resumed as follows: *what images, themes and symbols predominate in the art of adolescents having undergone a migration process?*

My interest in these issues first arose when I did not find in the literature the answer to the above question. During my second practicum year I worked mainly with migrant children and adolescents, and I became curious to know if there were any common themes images or symbols which expressed their acculturation process and cultural identity development. Since this project was greater than the scope of this paper and was put on the shelf for a rainy day, the research question was thus redefined as follows: *In what ways do images created by adolescent migrants reflect their acculturation process and cultural identity development?* This question will be investigated through case vignettes.

My own migration process and the cultural identity redefinition that ensued drew me to be curious and willing to understand the effects of this experience on others. Migration is one of the most profound and destabilizing events I have experienced and it seems to reflect the experience of other migrants and I have been in contact with. I believe that art therapeutic intervention could greatly facilitate this acculturation process and ease the difficult transition one experiences in adapting from one world to another.

In order to describe the migration process and its expression in art images and art therapy sessions, I will first give a theoretical grounding of the concepts explored in this paper, followed by a discussion of cases that exemplify well the topic researched.

Chapter 1 will address the migratory experience and the important terms within this topic will be defined. Specifically, the acculturation process will be discussed, the major theoretical frameworks will be developed, including acculturative stress and psychological acculturation. Issues related to the life of adolescent migrants will also be covered.

In Chapter 2, cultural identity will be discussed. Cultural identity is the area that undergoes the most fundamental changes during acculturation. Several models have been developed to outline the stages of ethnic identity formation and various assessment tools have been devised to identify one's ethnic identity development stage. These will be described in this chapter.

Chapter 3 will underline art therapy literature that discusses migration, the acculturation process and cultural identity development. As identity issues are particularly pressing during adolescence, and since children and adolescents are a particularly vulnerable migrant group, their experience of migration will be exemplified through case illustrations.

Chapter 4 will present the case vignettes of two adolescent migrants and will describe their acculturation process in Canada and cultural identity development. These two adolescents have undergone a migration process and were followed during their art therapeutic intervention.

I will conclude with a discussion on the interplay of acculturation processes, cultural identity development and art therapy practice. Finally, I will briefly discuss clinical issues that may arise while working with this population, as well as future recommendations for the field.

Chapter 1: Migration

Migration and Migrants

The word migration will be used widely throughout this text and what is at the center of its meaning is the idea of movement. Migration is a movement from one country to another, one province to another or one city to another. It involves being uprooted from one place and relocating into a different setting. The person that undergoes this process is thus referred to as a 'migrant'. For the purpose of this paper, the use of the term 'migrant' will encompass the term 'immigrant'. The words 'immigration' and 'immigrant' were not chosen to talk about this process since they exclude the persons that relocate within the same country, as well as those who have come to a new country as refugees. 'Immigrants' will only be used when referring to persons who voluntarily migrated from one country to another and permanently resettled into a different cultural context.

Ward (2001) claims that groups that are subject to acculturation differ according to *mobility*, *voluntariness*, and *permanence*. Sedentary communities such as established ethnic minorities or First Nations people, differ in *mobility* from immigrants or refugees, who have undergone cross-cultural relocation. The *voluntariness* of migration is usually characteristic of immigrants or travelers, and excludes refugees who flee their country as a measure necessary for their safety. The *permanence* of sojourn defines the long term resettlement of immigrants and refugees, which does not apply to travelers or tourists on a journey (Ward, 2001).

Berry, Kim and Boski (1988), affirm that immigrants who voluntarily subject themselves to the acculturation process may experience less difficulty than refugees or

Aboriginal people. In turn, those belonging to an ethnic group who are established and who have permanent social support, are subjected to fewer problems than sojourners. The passage through two or more cultures allows individuals to compare these cultures, to become conscious of their representations and values and consequently, it also provokes them to distance themselves from both. This experience provides migrants with the opportunity to leave the social and cultural realms they were immersed in and to gain awareness of these contexts, from which their renewed sense of cultural identity can emerge (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997). This redefinition of cultural signifiers and the reconstruction process of one's identity may impact the migrant's mental health status and might generate stress that renders acculturation difficult on the psychological level. Art therapy seems to offer a space in which these issues can be dealt with in an unthreatening language that bridges host and minority culture representations and allows contradictory elements to co-exist and be integrated. (Rousseau et al., 2003).

Culture

Before we begin our discussion of the acculturation process, we will need to define what is meant by the use of the term 'culture'. The definition offered by the Merriam-Webster's dictionary is the following: "**cul-ture (...)** **5 a:** the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations; **b:** the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; *also:* the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversion or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time (2003, p. 304).

This definition describes the underlying concept of culture as a linear transmission of knowledge expanding through time, as the values and physical attributes of a group, and as the shared mundane experience of life. A simpler yet encompassing definition proposed by an art therapist will be used as the operational definition of this term: “Culture includes those characteristics of human groups such as language, customs, and rituals which have been learned through socialization and enculturation” (Goldman, 1994, p. 6).

According to Keats (1997) culture consists of the literature, media, values, belief systems, norms for social and family relations, products available for consumption, natural environments, hierarchical system of access to professional occupations, defined gender roles, etc. Culture can also be thought of as the accumulated knowledge of a particular society passed down from one generation to the next and changed by evolution in the sciences, technology and the arts, as well as by contact with other cultures (Keats, 1997). What can be concluded about culture is that it pervades all aspects of life and is not static.

According to Thomas and Schwarzbaum (2006) culture is one of the most significant formative elements in identity, and they affirm that therapeutic practices that do not consider the cultural dimension of the client can be counter-therapeutic. Migration is equivalent to a rupture from one’s culture, one’s conception of whom one is and what it means to live. Since the concept of the self is closely tied to one’s role in society, a change of culture implies a redefinition of one’s role, one’s relation and identification with society and with oneself. Culture not only determines our perception of ourselves and others, it also shapes who we are and how we organize our lives (Thomas &

Schwarzbaum). The cultural dimension has thus a great impact on the psychic wellbeing of migrants and an exploration of its meaning within therapeutic interventions is of utter importance.

Acculturation Process

In the early years of the 20th century, anthropologists coined the term *acculturation* in reference to the cultural changes that surface through the contact between groups of different cultural origins. It was first defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (as cited in Castro, 2003) in 1936 as follows: “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena, which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p. 8). Acculturation is deemed an important concept in describing the adaptation process of migrants and ethnic minorities (Birman & Trickett, 2001). For the purpose of this study, ‘ethnic’ or ‘minority group’ is defined as “those who conceive of themselves as alike by virtue of common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others” (McGoldrick, 1982, as cited in Dokter, 1998). The term ‘acculturation’ is not to be confused with ‘enculturation’, which refers to ethnic socialization practices and to the cultural transmission naturally imparted by the members of one’s family and ethnic community to a developing child (Bernal & Knight, 1993).

The Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) (as cited in Castro, 2003) proposed an expanded version of the acculturation concept in 1954 and provided the following definition:

Acculturation may be defined as cultural change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission: it may be derived from noncultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the process of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors. (p. 8)

What is interesting in both these definitions is that acculturation is not only conceived of as an individual process of adaptation to a new cultural context. The cultural systems that come into contact through migrant individuals and those of the host society are also thought to have a mutual impact. This implies that the host society is also changed by this contact and undergoes its own acculturation process. This process is well illustrated by the integration of a great variety of foreign foods and restaurants into the diet and dining choices of North Americans.

Acculturation Frameworks

The main models of acculturation devised and used as conceptual frameworks are the linear models and the two-dimensional or multicultural models. Linear models

conceive the acculturation process as one of loss of identification with the ethnic group of reference and of absorption into the dominant culture. Bi-dimensional models contrast with this view and consider the aim of acculturation to be the development of a positive relationship with the mainstream culture and the culture of origin (Castro, 2003).

Early theoretical frameworks of acculturation argued that assimilation into the dominant culture was inevitable, desirable, and occurred sequentially: first, language and behavioral acculturation took place; second, assimilation into the society's structure followed characterized by social and economic integration; third, identification with the dominant culture ensued, and finally, this process culminated in the rupture of identification with the culture of origin (Gordon, 1964, as cited in Birman & Trickett, 2001).

These early views have been challenged by Berry (1993) who has established a widely used framework of acculturation that includes an individual's relationship to both the culture of origin and the host culture. It is based on a person's maintenance of cultural identity and their relationship with the dominant group (Hocoy, 2002). This framework of acculturation attitudes and strategies is divided into the following four patterns: *assimilation, separation, marginalization* and *integration*. *Assimilation* involves relinquishing one's cultural heritage and distinctiveness and embracing the dominant culture. *Separation* implies the contrary: maintaining one's cultural identity and rejecting the dominant culture. *Marginalization* refers to a lack of identification with either the dominant culture or the culture of origin. Finally, *integration* emerges when the individual retains one's cultural identity and moves towards greater involvement within the dominant culture (Berry, 1993; Hocoy, 2002). This model is more inclusive of

cultural differences than linear models and lays the ground for an inclusion of migrants' upholding of cultural origins into current research.

Research on acculturation has predominantly focused on the process of adaptation to the Western industrialized context, overlooking in great part the Latin American, African and Asian settings (Castro, 2003). The perpetuation of this line of investigation where ethnic minorities are the objects of research, conceptualized as the 'other', implies a power dynamic where the assimilationist's perspective is reaffirmed. Castro argues that despite its mutual influence between cultures, the acculturation process has a greater impact and is more evident amongst ethnic minorities and migrants than among the host or dominant culture. She attributes this difference to the nature of contact and to structural inequalities, leading to a higher tendency towards assimilation than cultural exchange. It might be argued that in a society with an assimilation agenda such as the American 'melting pot', this might be the case. Indeed, for a society to integrate cultural diversity, it needs to truly embrace difference and incorporate it into its self-definition.

Psychological Acculturation

The concept of acculturation usually refers to the cultural changes emerging from continuous intercultural contact between disparate groups. Psychological acculturation is conceptualized as the changes that take place in the behaviors, values and attitudes of individuals exposed to such an exchange (Castro, 2003). The state that is the outcome of psychological acculturation is defined as adaptation, though this term also refers to the process of acculturation itself (Berry et al., 1988). As a process, adaptation implies that changes occur within the system in order for the parts to fit and function together in an

improved manner. As a state, it refers to the result of this change where parts have achieved a better common functioning (Berry et al.).

Hocoy (2002) claims that the negotiation of cross-cultural contact characteristic of acculturation involves psychological processes such as: overall mental health, self-esteem, personal identity and attitudes towards oneself, towards the dominant group and one's own cultural group. Berry et al. (1988), refer to psychological acculturation as a process that transforms psychological characteristics, the surrounding context, or the amount of contact necessary with other aspects of the system to achieve a better fit. Ward (2001) states that when inter cultural adaptation successfully occurs, psychological adjustment to cross-cultural transition is denoted by feelings of wellbeing and satisfaction in affective responses. This adjustment is correlated to variables such as perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies, and socio-cultural adaptation (Ward).

Acculturative Stress

Berry et al. (1988), defined stress as a “state of the organism, brought about by the experience of *stressors*, and which requires some reduction (for normal functioning to occur), through a process of *coping* until some satisfactory *adaptation* to the new situation is achieved” (p. 74). In acculturative stress, the stressors are identified as stemming from the process of acculturation itself. Ward (2001) identified the factors influential in stress and in coping mechanisms such as: life changes, cognitive appraisal of stress, coping styles, personality, and social support. The latter was found to be negatively correlated with the onset of psychiatric symptomatology in permanent

migrants. In contrast, loneliness has been correlated with global mood disturbance, decrease in life satisfaction, and diminished coping abilities (Ward).

There is a certain set of stress behaviors that are associated to acculturative stress and that occur during the adaptation process (Berry et al., 1988). These involve: lower mental health functioning including confusion, anxiety, and depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, elevated levels of psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion. Ward (2001) affirms that refugees who have involuntarily migrated and resettled, will display higher levels of acculturative stress, psychological dysfunction and distress than immigrants or ethnic groups who voluntarily pursued intercultural contact.

Acculturative stress is often synonymous to a reduced health status and could imply psychological, physical and social changes systematically related to distinct features of the acculturation process experienced by the migrant (Berry et al., 1988). Coping strategies utilized to counteract this stress can be distinguished between primary and secondary strategies (Ward, 2001). Primary strategies involve direct action aimed at changing detrimental and stress provoking features of the environment to suit the self, and secondary strategies are more cognitive in nature and imply changing one's perception and appraisal of stress to adapt to the environment. Secondary coping strategies involving cognitive reframing may lower the levels of perceived stress and in turn diminish symptoms of depression (Ward, 2001). These strategies remind us of the importance of the Locus of control in the regulation of affect and of the presence of protective factors as well as the potential for resilience.

Adolescent Migrants

Ward (2001) claims that those who have involuntarily migrated and relocated will display higher levels of acculturative stress, psychological dysfunction and distress than immigrants or ethnic groups who voluntarily pursued intercultural contact. Refugees, children, and adolescents are often subjected to an involuntary migration, which increases their exposure to acculturative stress and might entail a reduced health status and psychological dysfunction (Berry et al., 1988). The factors that affect this transition period are: language ability, network of support, age at time of relocation, personality and level of self-esteem (Sit, 1996). Sit claims that migrant youth often face issues of isolation, loss, low self-esteem, feelings of frustration and helplessness, family separation, conflicts in self identity and culture shock.

Moro (as cited in Legendre, 2000) states that the transcultural risk in migrant youth is linked to the passage from one universe to another, where these youngsters are exposed through a "brutal acculturation" to an environment they do not understand. To expose them in such a way is to abandon them in a hostile environment, with the possibility of engendering a trauma or "cultural death". This cultural death means that one does not belong to his culture of origin, nor to the one of the host country, leading either to greater creativity or putting him at risk of joining a delinquent group in order to contain his distress (Legendre, 2000).

Dokter (1998) considers young adults as having the greatest potential for adapting to a new culture though also as being most susceptible to cutting off their heritage and thus distancing themselves from parents and rejecting their values. This distance may not be repaired and might render them more vulnerable to disconnection in later phases in life when a need for cultural identification and support usually increases. Dokter also claims

that there can be a temporary reversal in hierarchy within families since children adapt more rapidly than their parents, which can lead to generational conflict in families with adolescents that are already struggling with multiple transitions. Migration engenders a strong need to reclaim one's cultural roots because of a loss in support systems.

Chapter 2: Cultural Identity

Adolescence and Identity

Adolescence is a time of transformation where potential roles and identities are explored. Adolescents strive to achieve independence while still remaining attached to their family, often creating tensions and the redefinition of status and roles within the family unit. Their identity is developed through the incorporation of characteristics of the groups they belong to, such as ethnicity, religion, nationality and gender, as well as personal characteristics (Rousseau et al., 2005). Identity includes the values, principles and roles one has adopted, and its development involves the selection of a profession, the reevaluation of religious and moral beliefs and the exploration of political ideologies (Harter, as cited in Stroufe, Cooper, and DeHart, 1996).

Forming an identity requires an integration of past experiences, current personal changes and societal expectations for one's future into one's self-concept (Stroufe et al., 1996). According to Erikson (as cited in Kroger, 1996), developing an identity is the fifth stage in a series of eight stages one goes through within the life cycle. He conceptualizes these stages as critical periods of development that involve a conflict one must resolve before moving on to the next stage. Each stage presents two poles: one representing a positive resolution of the conflict, and the other, a more negative developmental move. The stage that adolescents go through is described by Erikson (as cited in Kroger) as *identity versus role confusion*. The challenges faced at this stage involve synthesizing and transcending childhood identifications, realizing aptitudes in social roles, and achieving

recognition from the social sphere, which in turn contributes to one's sense of self.

Marcia (as cited in Stroufe et al., 1996) views identity as a structure constituted by the beliefs, abilities, and past experiences that are related to the self. A well developed structure implies having a good understanding of oneself, and a weakly developed structure entails poor self-knowledge. Marcia developed four categories that correspond to different states of identity development, which are based on exploration of identity roles and commitment to a particular identity (Stroufe et al; Kroger, 1996). The four identity orientations are: *identity achievement*, *moratorium*, *foreclosure*, and *identity diffusion*. *Identity achievement* involves a commitment to a particular identity after a period of exploration. *Moratorium* corresponds to a phase of active exploration of different identity options without a commitment to any of them. *Foreclosure* takes place when an individual makes a commitment to a specific set of roles and values, with no prior exploration period. *Identity diffusion* implies a lack of active exploration accompanied by a lack of commitment to an identity (Stroufe et al; Kroger).

Nathan (as cited in Rousseau et al., 2005) distinguishes two extreme identity development processes that can lead to serious personal or group problems; on the one hand, a lack of identity and sense of belonging, and on the other, a focus on a single identity that defines the adolescent as being radically different from the others. Both cases denote a sense of marginality and a lack of identity exploration.

According to Stroufe et al. (1996), there are distinct challenges members of ethnic minority groups have to deal with in their identity development process. They are confronted with two sets of cultural values, those of their ethnic group and family, and those of the host society, which can often be in conflict. They are faced with the task of

choosing which aspects and values of these sometimes very different groups are going to be incorporated into their self-concept and personal identity. Strongly identifying with the values of the host society may result in ostracism from one's own cultural community, however deeply identifying with one's community could also limit one's opportunity for success in the dominant culture (Stroufe et al.).

Cultural Identity Defined

According to Keats (1997), cultural identity is defined as “that component of the concept of the self which is concerned with one's sense of embeddedness in one's family past, present and future and one's place in the wider cultural milieu” (p. 87). In this definition she points out that cultural identity has three principal dimensions, one related to time, a second related to a person's family narrative, and a third related to the cultural context. Keats also claims that cultural identity is affective, which can be understood as triggering an emotional response and being made up of emotional material and connections. Cultural identity is perceptual, since it implies differentiating between the similarities and differences of the cultural worlds one has a connection to; and it is also cognitive, as it affects one's self-concept.

We could thus infer that variables which influence the identity development of a person are connected to perceptions of the inside and outside world one person resides in, and the relationship between the two. Indeed, in the case of migrants, the cultural world of the family usually contrasts with the cultural world of the society. This places children and adolescents, who usually adapt more easily to the cultural values and social codes of the new society than their parents, in a difficult position: they often internalize a dual

value system and need to make sense of the differences and incongruence between these two systems as well as to find a way to function coherently within the codes of these inner and outer worlds. They are caught in a conflict between their ethnic heritage and identity and their pluralistic cultural experience. These children and adolescents will most likely develop a hybrid sense of cultural identity, or identities, retaining some elements from their home culture and others from the host society.

Bernal and Knight (1993) refer to cultural identity as a psychological construct with a number of self-ideas related to membership to one's ethnic group. Cultural identity is also conceptualized as multidimensional, in that it has various components according to which variation in these self-ideas occurs. Cultural identity is the area that undergoes the most fundamental changes during acculturation. Racial, ethnic, and cultural identity, are terms usually used interchangeably in the literature. In order to differentiate between these closely related concepts and attributes often confused with cultural identity a list of definitions provided by Thomas (as cited in Keats, 1997) follows:

Ethnic self-identity- the label a person prefers;

Ascribed ethnic identity- the label others give to a person;

Cultural identity- the degree to which a person is familiar with and prefers a particular lifestyle;

Racial identity- based on physical appearance (e.g., skin colour);

Nationality- based on country of birth or citizenship; and

Descent- based on ethnicity of parents. (p. 5)

Ethnic self-identity and cultural identity are the only attributes of culture that are chosen by the person. The other labels are either attributed by others or are linked to an ethnic,

political or physical trait. Most of these attributes affect each other and are interrelated.

The concept that will be referred to and explored throughout this paper is cultural identity.

Cultural Identity Development

According to Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre (1997), identity is effortlessly constructed through the internalization of culture. It is not an attached set of characteristics of a person but rather an interactive system of assimilation and differentiation, where the definition of the self intermingles with the definition of the group. The authors view the formation of identity as a process of conciliation between the 'sameness' of the person (which includes both psychological traits and the coherence of a value system), and the integration of new experiences, representations and values.

Dosamentes-Beaudry (1997) conceptualizes the acquisition of a cultural identity as the internalization of particular kinds of preverbal experiences that allow the acquirement of specific bodily concepts in early childhood development. The creation of these bodily concepts is the foundation for the creation of the self and represents the somatic internalization of the culture's worldview (Dosamentes-Beaudry, 1997). In the same vein, Legendre (2000) affirms that identity is shattered in the migratory experience since it does not resonate with the new cultural matrix. Contrastingly, Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre (1997) affirm that cultural identity is not usually activated in the context of everyday experience, it is thought to rise to consciousness as a consequence of events such as migration, intercultural marriage or situations such as war, that pose a threat to national identity or cultural values.

Sue and Sue (1999) seem to share a similar view of cultural identity formation, they claim that the development of a cultural identity is a dynamic process as opposed to a static one. They suggest that cultural identity development begins with the instance of an interaction between an individual and an oppressive society. However, they question the fact that no models have formulated a stage of cultural identity development prior to the intercultural contact brought about by displacement.

Bernal and Knight (1993) assert that cultural identity is multidimensional, in that it has various components according to which variation in ideas about one's cultural sense of self occurs. Concordantly, Phinney (as cited in Ward, 2001) claims that cultural identification involves the self-identification, categorization and recognition of oneself as belonging to an ethno-cultural group. However, the author also adds that one feels a sense of pride, affirmation and positive evaluation of one's culture, and is involved in ethno-cultural traditions, values and behaviors as well. Birman and Trickett (2001) seem to share Phinney's view of what constitutes cultural identity, as the latter is thought to involve self designation as a member of an ethnic group and also implies the presence of positive affect toward one's identity as a member of this group.

Bernal and Knight (1993) state that one of the dimensions according to which ideas about the cultural dimension of one's self vary, is self-identification. The latter refers to the ethno-cultural labels individuals use to define their cultural identity and the meaning that these terms hold for them. Another component is the knowledge one has of the customs, values, traditions, and behaviors associated with one's culture. A third dimension represents the feelings, preferences and values one attributes to one's culture,

including embracing, rejecting or having neutral feelings in relation to this one (Bernal & Knight, 1993).

The first dimension in which self-ideas vary, labeling, has been researched in terms of the type of labels used and the determinants or correlates involved in the decision to label oneself (Berry et al., 1988). Ethno-cultural labeling was found to be determined by generational status and competence in one's ethnic language, having implication for language use, behavior, and attitudes towards language maintenance. Birman and Trickett (2001) argue that language use may not relate to mastery but rather to situational demands and is thus better conceptualized as behavioral acculturation, although they contend that language preference is related to identity. These authors also claim that an ethno-cultural label is sometimes ascribed by others, or self ascribed in order to establish one's own sense of identity. The content of such a label has implications of being singled out as different and is perceived as a category one belongs to, as opposed to lived experience and shared history (Birman and Trickett).

Cultural Identity Development Models

Sue and Sue (1999) have developed a model of racial and cultural minority identity development that has become the main reference in the literature on cultural identity. The model outlines five stages of identity development experienced by people belonging to an ethnic minority group. This model delineates their quest for self-understanding in relation to their own culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship between the two cultures. The stages defined are: *conformity*, *dissonance*, *resistance and immersion*, *introspection*, and *integrative awareness* (Sue & Sue). For

each stage, attitudes and beliefs that form an integral part of a minority person's identity are manifested in how they perceive: themselves, others of the same minority, others of different minorities, and individuals from the dominant group.

In stage one, *conformity*, individuals favor cultural values of the dominant group over the ones of their own ethnic group, which are depreciated. In stage two, *dissonance*, individuals begin to question the attitudes and beliefs of the dominant culture. In the third stage, *resistance and immersion*, a change occurs; individuals adopt the perspectives and values of their own minority group and reject the ones transmitted by the dominant group. In the fourth stage, identified as *introspection*, the person is concerned with the basis of their minority group appreciation and dominant group rejection, and starts to feel uneasy with her or his ethnocentrism. In the last stage, *integrative awareness*, prior conflicts are resolved and the person is able to appreciate elements from both their minority culture, as well as the dominant culture.

Phinney (1993) has developed a three-stage model of cultural identity development based on Erickson's conceptual framework of ego identity formation. Her model is congruent with Sue and Sue's model in that it views an achieved identity as the result of a crisis or awakening, followed by a period of exploration or experimentation, and resulting in the commitment or incorporation of one's culture and ethnicity. The three stages Phinney proposes are: first, *unexamined ethnic identity*; second, *ethnic identity search/moratorium*, and third, *ethnic identity achievement*. It seems that Sue and Sue's model has a greater range of stages that could express more accurately the subtleties of cultural identity development; however, Phinney's model is especially formulated with adolescents in mind, reflecting perhaps more accurately the cultural identity development

process in adolescence. This one already encompasses an identity developmental component that could render the differentiation between cultural identity and identity development confusing.

The first stage of Phinney's (1993) model, *unexamined ethnic identity*, is equivalent to Sue and Sue's (1999) *conformity* stage, where self-depreciating views correspond with the dominant culture's stereotypes. In the second stage, the *search* dimension corresponds to *dissonance*, as it parallels the questioning and challenging of old attitudes. This stage also corresponds to *resistance and immersion* in its *moratorium* dimension, implying a rejection of the dominant culture. Sue and Sue's fourth stage, *introspection*, has no corresponding stage in Phinney's model. The last stage in Phinney's theory, *achieved ethnic identity* is equivalent to *integrative awareness*, in that it involves clarity and confidence in one's sense of ethnic identity. Laperriere et al. (1992) have found the second stage, *ethnic identity search/moratorium*, to be predominant for adolescents between the ages of 14 and 15 years old coming from an ethnic minority group. They have observed the third stage, *achieved ethnic identity*, occurring in greater numbers for 16 and 17 year olds.

Ward (2001) suggests that there are three main models describing and explaining changes in cultural identity. The first model is assimilationist, and is unidimensional and unidirectional. Migrants are expected to relinquish their cultural identity and identify progressively with the dominant culture through the adoption of the latter's values, traits, behaviors and attitudes. This model seems to correspond to Sue and Sue's (1999) *conformity* stage and Phinney's (1993) *unexamined ethnic identity* stage.

The second model described by Ward (2001), offers a bicultural perspective according to which identifications with host and home cultures are perceived as complementary rather than oppositional in forming the social identification of immigrants and refugees. Although this model fails to distinguish between individuals that weakly identify with both cultures and those who identify strongly with both cultures, it remains the most popular in American psychological literature (Ward). The bicultural model seems to hold the same structural characteristics as Sue and Sue's (1999) model of minority identity development, and Berry's (1993) acculturation framework, in that both incorporate attitudes towards one's minority culture as well as the dominant culture.

The third alternative model described by Ward (2001) conceptualizes home and host identities as domains that are independent. This more sophisticated approach has attracted international interest and attention in intercultural fields. Berry's (1993) acculturation framework is a prime example of this categorical model.

One last model that seems pertinent to this research is Sue and Sue's (1999) White racial identity development, which defines the development of members from the dominant culture. This brings us back to the definition of acculturation by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (as cited in Castro, 2003), which mentions the acculturation process of members of the host society. This model addresses the process whereby the identity of these members belonging to the dominant culture is affected. It includes five stages to which goals and tasks are attributed according to the following categories: *beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills*. These stages are: *preexposure/precontact, conflict, pro-minority/antiracism, retreat into white culture, and redefinition and integration* (Sue & Sue). In the first stage there is a lack of awareness of the racial

dimension of the self, which is followed in the second stage by an expansion of knowledge regarding this dimension. In the third stage the individual from the dominant culture develops a pro-minority stance and rejects inherent racist beliefs. In the fourth stage, there is a retreat into the dominant culture following a perceived rejection from a minority group member. In the last stage, the person moves towards a clear racial identity and a culturally transcendent world-view (Sue & Sue).

Assessment Tools

Ethnic and cultural identity scales used in assessment usually focus on dimensions such as: *belongingness*, *centrality*, *evaluation*, and *tradition* (Ward, 2001). *Belongingness* refers to the level of self-identification with one's ethnic group; *centrality* corresponds to the importance attributed to this group in relation to personal identity; *evaluation* encompasses the negative and positive perceptions one may have of their ethnic group; and *tradition* involves the practice and acceptance of the customs, values and traditional norms of one's ethnic group (Ward).

Birman and Trickett (2001) devised the Language, Identity, and Behavior (LIB) Acculturation Scale. The identity acculturation dimension was based on scales devised for Latinos and Americans, and is administered in the form of an inventory. Berry (as cited in Hocoy, 2002) designed a scale to assess acculturation attitudes and strategies through the Berry Acculturation Measure. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) was designed by Phinney (as cited in Cherry, 2002) to examine and measure ethnic identity as a cognitive and developmental dimension, and to measure belonging, admiration and commitment as the affective dimension. Sue and Sue (1999) affirm that

the Racial/Cultural Identity Model (R/CID) itself can be used as a diagnostic and assessment tool in order to gain a greater understanding of culturally different individuals.

Ward (2001) claims that the assimilation model usually assesses acculturation through self-report measures in acculturation scales pertaining to specific ethnic minorities. The bicultural approach uses the Multicultural Acculturation Scale and other scales that are designed to measure specific ethnic minorities (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, as cited in Ward). The categorical approach of acculturation often employs the Acculturation Index (Ward & Kenedy, as cited in Ward), and the Cultural Identity Scales (Felix-Ortiz et al., as cited in Ward).

Hays (2001) devised the ADRESSING framework, which is an acronym that one can use to assess the cultural influences that affect individuals. Each letter represents a factor to take into account in one's evaluation of a culturally diverse client: *Age, Developmental disabilities, Religion, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic status, Sexual orientation, Indigenous heritage, National origin, and Gender*. The advantage of this framework is that it is not restricted to individuals from a specific identity group, thus it is applicable to individuals from any cultural background, including those from the minority and the majority cultures.

Chapter 3: Art Therapy

Art Therapy and Migration

Dokter (1998) views migration as an exaggerated process of separation and individuation that can also be conceived as adding a stage to the life cycle. She conceptualizes migration as a developing process as opposed to a single event. The specific stresses associated with migration are related to cultural transition, and could lead to problems such as isolation, enmeshment or disengagement from the host society. Cultural transition is affected by factors such as the goals of migration and their realization, the availability of support systems, changes in language, lifestyle, education, and harmony or conflict between the home culture and the host culture (Dokter).

Sit (1996) asserts that immigrant and refugee clients are enabled to bridge cultural and language barriers between themselves and the therapist through the symbolic communication of their experience through art. Art therapy may heighten one's sense of self-awareness and thus assist the integration of cultural identity within one's self-concept during this difficult time. Contrastingly, several authors argue that traditional psychotherapy approaches need to be adapted to minority populations in order to be effective (Annoual, 1994; Calish, 2003; Callaghan, 1998; Rousseau et al., 2003; Sue & Sue, 1999). These approaches thus need to include: a valuing of diversity, validation of experiences, multicultural competence, facilitation in the internalization process of a positive racial identity, and an active promotion of empowerment, empathy, and mutuality (Calish, 2003). Callaghan (1998) also recommends to remain open to changing Western models of mental health and therapeutic intervention.

Majodina (as cited in Callaghan, 1998) considers that exile is a profoundly stressful experience, which engenders a great sense of loss as well as a long-term feeling of being ungrounded. Correspondingly, Wertheim-Cahen (1998) claims that migrants often suffer from depression, feelings of hopelessness, as well as anxiety and fits of rage connected to identity loss. Sit (1996) affirms that art therapy was found to be a beneficial approach in facilitating adjustment and integration of immigrant children experiencing such difficulties. She states that self-esteem can be improved as a result of the creation of images and objects that provide opportunities for the expression of feelings through verbal and non-verbal means. Concordantly, Wertheim-Cahen emphasize that creative arts therapies offer a non-verbal approach that is more appropriate than therapies in which language is the main means of communication. Creative expression, with a cultural focus, enables children to recreate a sense of coherence and meaningfulness of their world in relation to their pre-migration and migration experience (Rousseau et al., 2003). The therapeutic relationship involving the client and the art therapist provides support, which combined with improved self-esteem, increases the migrant's ability to face and overcome the new challenges encountered and to better cope with the transition period (Sit, 1996).

Art Therapy and Identity

According to Dokter (1998), the migration process engenders a different sense of identity that becomes clarified and altered through cultural contrast and distance, in relation to one's original ethnic identification. Grinberg and Grinberg (as cited in Callaghan, 1998) consider exile to create a profound identity crisis. Even though migration is not necessarily equivalent to the experience of exile, it has for many parallel

psychological implications: the loss of all the things that represent 'home'. This experience of loss is exacerbated by the experience of the host country and its people (Callaghan).

Cultural identity loss and poor social conditions have an effect on psychological health that can result in a psychiatric illness (Dokter, 1998); however these psychosocial issues and their impact on the illness are often ignored. The way in which the illness is expressed is strongly influenced by one's cultural background, experience of migration and perceived discrimination. These issues are often expressed through the structure of the illness itself as opposed to consciously by means of verbal complaints, and are conveyed as well symbolically (Littlewood & Lipsedge, as cited in Dokter). The fact that issues related to cultural identity loss and migration are mostly communicated symbolically substantiates the use of art therapy as a way to explore these issues more adequately than through verbal therapy only.

Campbell et al. (1999) affirm that identity issues are a dominant theme in art therapy. As a result of the use of images, self expression and conscious as well as unconscious forms of identity and its labeling are subjects that become powerfully charged (Campbell et al.). In a similar vein, Mauro (1998) states that art therapy was found to strengthen a sense of identity in clients, allowing them to create a more realistic and less defensive view of themselves and their social context. In turn, Rousseau et al. (2003) claim that creative expression activities help migrant children construct meaning and identity, and help refugee children work through their losses, traumatic experiences, and assist in reestablishing social ties. The authors offered workshops for immigrant and refugee children, using myths, metaphor, and art as the main therapeutic tools. The

temporal exploration of the migratory experience through storytelling seems to be a very useful tool in accessing the affect related to migration on one hand, and in permitting the assimilation of one's own experience and the reconstruction of one's own worldview and identity on the other.

McGoldrick et al (as cited in Dokter, 1998) claim that persons who learn values from the larger society which are in conflict with those they learn at home or who receive negative images of their ethnic group, often develop a sense of inferiority and even self-hatred, leading to aggressive behavior and prejudice towards other minority groups. Contrastingly, individuals with a secure sense of identity usually demonstrate a greater openness to persons of different backgrounds and act with greater freedom and flexibility. Defining one's identity when belonging to or developing within two different cultures can be an arduous task. Visbach (as cited in Dokter) asserts that defining one's personal boundaries can be a factor in forming a more balanced cultural identity.

Art Therapy and Acculturation

Dokter (1998) asserts that culture is a dynamic process that changes in each generation according to individual and group circumstances. She argues that migrants' distress can be connected to a sense of not belonging and not feeling at home anywhere, thus of experiencing a process of deculturation as opposed to acculturation. Sit (1996) claims that immigrant children often face issues of isolation, loss, low self esteem, feelings of frustration and helplessness, family separation, conflicts in self identity and culture shock. The factors mentioned by Sit as influencing this transition period are equivalent to the stressors described by Ward (2001) in acculturative stress. These factors

are: language ability, network of support, age at time of relocation, personality and level of self-esteem (Sit, 1996). Dokter (1998) also reminds us that despite the difficulties associated with the migration process, there are also strengths and new skills gained. The feeling of not belonging can also be reframed into a sense of belonging to both host and home societies. A migrant's well-being is not only determined by adjustment, cultural dislocation and the stresses engendered by the migration process; it is also greatly affected by the continuing response to the values and institutions of the host society (Dokter).

Mathews (1998) argues that art therapy is an ideal medium to facilitate understanding of the acculturation process, since allowing creative freedom generates a wealth of consciousness. She states that in her personal experience of acculturation, her identity underwent a process of disintegration and reintegration, in which art making was pivotal. Through her research inquiry, Mathews conceptualized four stages of her acculturation process and devised an acculturation model which corresponds to the following phases: *flight or migration, creativity, transformation, and resolution*. This model does roughly correspond to Sue and Sue's (1999) and Phinney's (1993) stages of ethnic identity development.

Lewis (1997) states that when working with refugees, the therapist needs to recognize and pay attention to whether there was a desire to relocate in the host country. This dimension has been labeled voluntariness of migration by Ward (2001) who emphasizes its importance in the acculturation process. Lewis (1997) also claims that refugee's possible desire to return to their home country, their capacity to find a social

network or community, their process of recovery from trauma, loss of family, and the devastation left behind should be explored and given special consideration.

Art Therapy and Assessment

Hocoy (2002) asserts that the appropriateness of art therapy intervention can be assessed using the Berry Acculturation Scale. He claims that individuals who fall into the assimilationist or integrationist categories of the acculturation model are more likely to be good candidates for art therapy intervention than those who make up the separationists or marginalized categories. Migrants who assume an assimilationist or an integrationist position would most likely engage in a therapeutic process since they possess a certain degree of dominant culture identification. However, the assimilationists are not reconciled with their own intercultural negotiation and are probably dealing with issues of culture conflict (Hocoy, 2002). It can thus be assumed that one's level of identity differentiation or choice of acculturation strategy will affect the effectiveness of a therapeutic intervention.

Cherry (2002) considers that in order to be a competent art therapist one's cultural background must be assessed and explored. She asserts that the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) devised by Phinney can be used to assess the cultural identity development of art therapy students. This test not only measures ethnic identity, though also affirmation, belonging, and commitment. A high score in ethnic identity is positively correlated to psychological wellbeing, coping ability, mastery, social interactions, self-esteem and optimism. A low score is correlated to loneliness and depression.

Assessing one's identity development stage in the context of a multicultural course allows one to gain a stronger identification that furthers one's capacities for empathy and understanding of culturally diverse clients. It would probably be helpful to use the MEIM in the context of art therapy intervention, in order to assess the usefulness of art therapy in assisting one's ethnic identity development. It would be particularly interesting to assess programs designed to facilitate the acculturation process of migrants, which would be dealing with cultural identity formation.

Clinical Applications

According to Dokter (1998), in the relationship between client and therapist what is of utmost importance is to achieve a dialogue that reaches across cultural filters and differences. What lays the ground for such a dialogue to take place is awareness on both sides of one's ethnic roots and culture. Many authors underline the importance of self-knowledge and examining of one's own biases in order to work effectively with clients of different cultural backgrounds (Calish, 2003; Campbell et al., 1999; Cherry, 2002; Dokter, 1998; Dosamentes-Beaudry, 1997; Hocoy, 2002; Lewis, 1997; Mauro, 1998; Sit, 1996; Wertheim-Cahen, 1998). Concordantly, Sue and Sue (as cited in Cherry, 2002), state that the culturally competent therapist needs to develop the following attributes and thus become:

Aware of his or her own culture and begin to value and respect differences.

Aware of his or her own values and how these values may affect minority clients by actively avoiding prejudices, labeling, and stereotyping.

Comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and culturally different clients, sending the message that he or she likes someone who is different because of and in spite of the differences.

Sensitive to personal experiences such as sociopolitical or racial influences that may indicate a referral of the minority client to a member of his or her own race/culture.

Aware of his or her own prejudiced attitudes, feelings, or beliefs and does not deny that he or she may have benefited from some aspect of the dominant society.
(p. 159)

Cherry (2002) explains that the therapist's view of others will directly influence his or her interactions with clients: examining the impact culture has on the therapist including his or her issues of racism and cultural identity, will allow the therapist to better understand the impact of culture on others and become aware of his or her own difference. In order to perceive the depth of meaning culture may have for a client, the therapist must first and foremost have a self-concept that includes an understanding of oneself as a cultural being. Cattaneo (as cited in Mauro, 1998) clarifies: "it is esteem and love for one's own cultural background and identity which form an important base for valuing the diversity in other peoples experience". (p. 151)

Mauro (1998) recommends that variables such as one's level of ethnic identity and acculturation, family dynamics, sex-role socialization, religious and spiritual influences and migration experiences, should be examined in culturally sensitive therapy. She also claims that clients who differ culturally from their therapist are likely to be

concerned with issues of trustworthiness, competence, goodwill, expertise, as well as adequate understanding of their social and cultural reality.

Callaghan (1998) considers that individuals who experience difficulties in expressing feelings, use verbal expression to defend against emotions, feel disconnected from their body, display psychosomatic symptoms, have low self-esteem, feel tension and have difficulty managing anger, should be recommended for expressive arts psychotherapy intervention. In the same vein, Wertheim-Cahen (1998) suggests that children should be selected for art therapy on the basis of exhibiting the following behaviors: anxiety, aggression, lack of concentration, inability to show emotions, sleeping or eating difficulties and apathetic or chaotic behavior.

The aim of art therapy is then to help them cope with their present situation, prevent pathological developments, enable them to express themselves and engage their own creativity and fantasy (Wertheim-Cahen, 1998). Goals should be realistic in order to be reachable, such as alleviating feelings of isolation, offering temporary relief from acculturative stress and strengthening identity. Artistic expression itself, rituals and the therapeutic frame can act as containers for difficult feelings such as anger and sadness, they can help children feel connected to their world, and can facilitate as well the resolution of psychodynamic issues (Callaghan, 1998; Wertheim-Cahen). Themes such as loss, isolation and poor self-esteem often permeate the therapeutic process and need to be addressed. Wertheim-Cahen proposes that a preventative approach as opposed to a curative one be adopted in order to prevent the development of pathological symptoms.

Lewis (1997) recommends creative arts therapies techniques that utilize symbolic imagination, as this allows clients to enter into the realm where world views, stereotypes

and prejudices concerning oneself and others reside, allowing for awareness and transformation of these issues to take place. Mauro (1998) suggests the use of activities such as self-portraits, coat of arms, and collage as a way to further explore cultural identity issues. However, she also warns that cultural differences may affect images created within the art therapy context, and recommends that diagnostic readings should take into account the artistic traditions of the client's respective culture.

Through an analysis of therapeutic encounters, Wertheim-Cahen (1998) has derived the following conclusions about how the working through of issues can be expressed and supported within art therapy sessions:

One can derive comfort and support from artistic creations;

Negative experiences can be re-enacted in a constructive way;

A sense of autonomy can be encouraged by allowing clients to make their own choices in theme and material;

Pleasant and difficult feelings can be addressed and expressed in a symbolic way;

Emotions and tensions can be released through the use of art materials;

The need for power and control can be supported

Meaning can be attached to certain experiences without having to be explicit;

Experiences can be integrated at a conscious and unconscious level within one's own system of meaning;

Through the therapeutic environment and the therapeutic interventions the fragmented sense of self can finally be reconnected. (pp. 58-59)

According to Callaghan (1998), migrant clients' experiences of a fragmented life in an alien culture is manifested through absences and unresolved endings, which can be effectively addressed in therapy. The experience of being suspended, and in limbo demands an integrated response in one's interventions in order to contain the feelings of fragmentation. Wertheim-Cahen (1998) asserts that improvisational qualities are needed within art therapy sessions as well as flexibility and adaptability on the part of the therapist. For example, the client's own music may also be used in the context of art therapy sessions as a means to create an emotional link to their past and to their sense of identity.

Chapter 4: Case Vignettes

The concepts of migration, acculturation process, and cultural identity will now be illustrated through case vignettes. These issues will be related to the imagery made by adolescent migrants during their adaptation process and portray how the migration experience may be expressed through art and clinical exchanges in art therapy sessions. A description and clinical analysis of the therapeutic relationship will be offered including a discussion of the imagery produced during the sessions. It is hoped that this clinical dimension from art therapy practice will give a voice to those who have experienced migration and offer a space where the emotional component attached to this experience can be explored and better understood. There is often a tremendous sense of isolation, loss, fear and sadness that is lived by migrants, which can be even more accentuated in children and adolescents. (Sit, 1996).

Two research participants were selected for the case vignettes. These participants are migrant adolescents who participated in an art therapy intervention either in group or individual sessions. One adolescent participated in weekly individual and then group sessions from October 2004 to April 2005. The second individual participated in weekly group sessions offered from October to December 2005. These two adolescents were chosen to be part of this research project based on the fact that each of them expressed very poignantly and in their own unique way their migration process. The first adolescent had migrated shortly before our first encounter and her process had to do with acculturation and adaptation. The second adolescent mainly dealt with issues of cultural identity and loss. The images and case material produced by these two participants will

now be analyzed in relation to the issues studied: the acculturation process and cultural identity.

Case Vignette 1: *Marina*

In the first vignette I will present the case of an 18-year-old girl, who attended a francophone high school with a highly multicultural student population. She will be referred to as Marina, as her real name and identifying information will be concealed to ensure confidentiality. Marina was enrolled in welcoming classes, which are geared to help students attain French language proficiency in order to be integrated into the main stream of French language education in Quebec. Students who take part in the welcoming class system are usually immigrants or refugees who are newcomers to Canada, and who participate in this program for a period of a few months to approximately two years, depending on their capacity for language acquisition.

Marina was referred to individual art therapy sessions at her high school by a professional specializing in intercultural communication. She worked exclusively with the welcoming class program, and worked with students who were in crisis, or who had difficulties at school or at home. She represented the bridge between the school, families and the students and usually referred adolescents who she deemed suitable for art therapy in particular.

Marina was selected for art therapy intervention because she seemed to be unhappy and always tense and was somewhat socially isolated, as she did not have too many friends. She was very frustrated and upset that she could not speak French. The loss of her mother tongue and language of communication was associated to other losses

she had experienced, which intensified the difficult feelings she was going through. She often attracted people and was elected class representative though she did not perceive herself as someone that was liked or admired by others. She was a perfectionist with overachiever tendencies who won championships in the sciences in her home country, however she seemed to have low self-esteem. Her father had very high expectations for her and put a lot of pressure on her to succeed, as is very often seen in second generation migrants (Moro, 2002). She is driven to perform and dreams of becoming a nuclear scientist.

Marina attended four individual sessions during the months of November and December 2004 and two sessions during the month of January 2005. She was then transferred to a weekly art therapy group and stopped receiving individual services. The sessions that will be described here are the individual sessions in which she participated.

Marina was about 18 years old at the time of therapy and had just arrived two months earlier from Rumania. She was thin, tall, and dressed in a very sober manner. We spoke in English during therapy, which facilitated our communication. At the first session, she arrived in a good mood and was able to express herself easily. She claimed that her migration was not difficult this time since she had already experienced a prior migration process within her own country five years earlier. It was very difficult for her to leave her grandmother and friends behind at that time. She was more prepared for her journey to Canada because of that experience. She also claimed that she did not experience the migration process to be difficult because she felt that she could go back to see her friends if she worked a little. It seemed that Marina wanted to convince herself

that this process would be easier this time so as to not have to feel the pain associated with all her losses.

When I offered her the art materials she was immediately drawn to the dry pastels, however she did not know what to draw. I invited her to make a scribble drawing, and to illustrate the concept of the scribble, I drew one as an example. She then chose to use my scribble drawing as a support for her drawing. She created a planet in greens and blues emphasizing America and Europe (figure 1). She darkened in brown her home country with strong gestures, and then she colored parts of Canada, starting with Quebec, the province where she now lives. Hammer as well as Ogdon (as cited in Drachnik, 1995), assert that heavy strokes may indicate inner tension, forcefulness and aggression. We could thus infer that there was a great amount of tension and anger experienced by Marina over the loss of her home country.

Marina then darkened more spaces, claiming that the brown was for mountainous regions. She stated that mountains are very dear to her and she recalled how she loved hiking with her grandfather back in Europe. She said she enjoyed being able to see everything and have a clear view over the mountains. When I asked her where she would put herself in the drawing if she were part of it, she responded that she would be suspended in the air, between the two continents, above the earth. The image of this world where she feels like she is hanging in the air is a way to express that she does not know where she is.

In her second session, Marina seemed nervous. She did not make art and spoke at length about her French professor in her home country. She had a very difficult relationship with this teacher and was very taken by the feeling that she was treated

unfairly and that her effort and hard work were left unrewarded. She expressed that this experience made her dislike the French language in a very strong way, which impeded her from making more of an effort in learning it now that she needed to in the welcoming class. This strong reaction to such a situation might imply that she is dealing with transference issues about not having her efforts recognized by an important figure, and might also reflect her dislike for her host country. Every time I attempted to help her realize her feelings about this situation she shut off by saying that it was the past. When I tried to offer her a different perspective and bring her to new ground in relation to her experience, she retold her story in a cyclical and very repetitive manner. This reaction is most probably an acquired defense mechanism that gave her a way to protect herself.

We then conversed about what the term 'home' represented for her. This discussion started when I asked her if she missed her home. She replied to me that her home is the place where she lives. There is no distinction between her home and her house for her. I then explained that what I meant by 'home' was the place where we have emotional ties and where we feel that we belong, in contrast to a house, which is the place where we live. The discussion became tense and Marina seemed to have difficulty differentiating these two concepts, which seemed to be a defense mechanism to avoid acknowledging the painful feelings associated with the loss of her home. Between this session and the next, Marina was found in the washroom by a professor who reported that she was crying uncontrollably.

In the third session, Marina arrived with an impressive pile of postcards and stated: "So I'm going to show you my home". We spent the entire session looking at the various postcards of her native country and with pride she explained where each one was

from and what it represented. She thus offered me a tour of her hometown, monuments, the countryside, and also the mountains she liked to hike. There was a postcard where a dog appeared, which reminded her that there was a street dog who belonged to everybody, and whom she was very close to and missed very much. It seemed that she had come to acknowledge that her home and her house represented different things, and she also began to connect to the sense of loss that inhabited her through the feeling that she was missing a pet she loved.

While Marina did not mention to me the crisis she experienced in the bathroom, I let her know that I was informed that a teacher found her crying. She responded that it was good for her, that she felt much better and that it was finished and would not happen again, almost as if it was a weakness. I told her that it was all right to experience different emotions and express them without having to feel ashamed. Marina seemed different this session, she was more at ease and was also dressed more femininely.

The fourth session was our last session before the Christmas holidays. Marina arrived with a big pile of French books this time and explained that it was the work she had to do during the vacation to prepare for the next semester. It seemed that the size of the pile of books reflected the weight of the effort it entailed for her to learn French. However she appeared to feel less intimidated about learning the language and seemed slightly more motivated. She told me that before wanting to become a scientist she used to want to be an architect. Her father, who expects her to have a profession in a scientific field, might have encouraged or rendered desirable this change of career choice. This might have been another loss experienced by Marina that went unacknowledged.

I invited her to build something with the art materials if she wished. When she noticed the Popsicle sticks she accepted happily saying that she always dreamed of building a house. She thus began the construction (figure 2) gluing the wooden pieces together and adding clay between the pieces on the inside to glue the corners. Marina then thanked me for “all that I had done for her” claiming that I helped her a lot, and we ended our session after wishing one another well.

After the Christmas holiday, we had our fifth session. Marina talked about her vacation and explained that it was mostly boring and lonely. Christmas felt strange and uneventful to her without her cousins, grandparents, and the family that was usually there to celebrate with her immediate family. Coming from Rumania and being of Christian faith made this an important ritual, however being separated from all the elements that constituted this event rendered it a difficult experience for her. Marina also spoke of her feelings about her partial integration into classes within the mainstream school system, which she recently started. She seemed intimidated and doubted her ability to succeed in her new courses. She then worked on the house she had begun before the holidays.

I discussed with the intercultural specialist who referred Marina to me that we would offer her the option of switching from individual art therapy sessions to an art therapy group that was to begin three weeks later. This group would be offered for twelve weeks to the students from the welcoming classes only and would be designed to deal with issues related to the migration process. We both agreed that it could provide a wider social network for Marina and allow her to explore further her emotions through a more structured intervention framework. It would also enable her to feel less lonely with her multiple losses since the experiences of most other participants included similar losses

that could resonate with her own. I explained the purpose of the group to Marina and told her that she could transfer to the group or continue with individual sessions if she wished.

The next session was our last individual session. Marina discussed how she felt a lot of pressure from the intercultural specialist and people around her to have more friends. She was slightly angry that this issue was being given so much importance and it also seemed to make her feel inadequate. She told me that she tried to spend time with people from her country and her brother's circle of friends however she did not have too much in common with them and the relationships were very superficial. She was 18 years old and most of them were much younger than her, which probably made it even more difficult for her to relate to them. She said that there was one girl in her class whom she seemed to get along with well, and she thought that maybe they would become friends. She was trying to express that she was making efforts to have friends in what appeared to be a somewhat defensive manner, as if she was trying to prevent me from lecturing her as well. I reminded her that she had not arrived here so long ago and that it was natural that she did not have too many friends. I also told her that some people feel fulfilled by having many friends at once even if they have superficial relationships with them. She seemed to me to be the kind of person who enjoys fewer but deeper relationships, which usually take time to develop. I thought that her feelings needed to be validated and even though I encouraged her to reach out to people that were interesting to her, I did not pressure her to find friends.

She then started asking me about the group and I gave her more details on what she could expect. She told that she would be interested and thought that it would be a good thing for her. The week after was a pedagogical day hence we agreed to meet briefly

two weeks later on the day the group would start to terminate our individual sessions and allow her to take back her art work. Two weeks later we were unable to meet because Marina was busy with her science fair project though she did start attending the group that evening.

Clinical Impressions

Marina is evidently dealing with issues related to adaptation, loss, language acquisition and the acculturation process. This recent migration probably triggered an awakening of the feelings connected to her first migration within her country, which were rather difficult and might have been unresolved. She appeared to be very disconnected from her emotions and seemed to spend a lot of energy trying to repress them. Art therapy offered her a place where she could explore these emotions in a safe space. The clinical work was a way to help Marina through the world, as well as assisting her with 'landing' on this new ground. Connecting to emotions related to migration and acknowledging them facilitated this landing process.

Her difficulty making art throughout the sessions is probably linked to her inability to inscribe herself into the new culture and social world she is now part of, and showed her need for an outside structure. This need may be related to a desire to work with a known and familiar structure within this new social realm. Her understanding of cultural signifiers is only partially transferable in this new place where she has no bearings. Moro (2002) considers migration firstly as a psychical act that involves the rupture of one's external framework, and thus entails a rupture of one's internalized

cultural framework as well. This internalized framework is what helps individuals decode outer reality. Losing this matrix of reference is considered to be a traumatic event (Moro).

In the first session, Marina showed an element of denial of the irreversibility of this migration as she stated that by working a little she could choose to go back and see her friends. This denial is probably a coping mechanism that prevents her from feeling the sense of loss and pain associated with leaving those dear to her. Since she had already experienced this kind of loss, she was trying to protect herself from the trauma associated with this event. Her first image revealed that she felt quite dissociated from her present situation. Hammer (as cited in Drachnik, 1995) tells us that an object drawn far away indicates feelings of withdrawal and an inability to cope; Jolles (as cited in Drachnik, 1995) claims that a bird's eye view indicates that the person rejects the drawn object.

Marina is able to make an image when a support is provided to her through the structure of the scribble drawing. Having an outer structure facilitated her expression. Her inability to create spontaneously could have been connected to feelings of being intimidated since it was our first session. However, since it was repeated throughout the sessions, it suggests she may have been blocked at an emotional level. Art making within art therapy involves connecting to emotions, which was a painful task for someone who wanted to escape these.

Marina's resistance to talk about what a home meant to her and where this one was geographically located was probably a way of avoiding to acknowledge that she had lost her home and that she was now far away from this one. The defense mechanism that surfaced when discussing this topic may have come into play during her first migration within Rumania. Marina mentioned that this migration was very difficult, especially

leaving her grandmother behind who had raised her. When she was confronted with migration a second time, it seemed to reawaken the feelings of loss and pain she had first experienced. Her crisis in the washroom in between the second and third sessions is probably related to her denying and repressing these painful feelings. I suspect that this crisis was related to a realization of her multiple losses. This emotional catharsis seemed to have opened her to the feelings associated with her two migration experiences and relieved her of some of the tension she was experiencing. Connecting to her emotions helped her landing in Canada and coming down from her suspended position. This allowed her to arrive the next session with a clearer idea of what the concept of a home represented for her and where this one was located. Evidently, in her case, this concept stretches beyond the boundaries of the house and encompasses symbols of national identity such as the land and monuments. The pride with which she described each place depicted in the postcards seemed to show that she felt a deep sense of belonging and strongly identified with her home country.

Marina's choice of building a house is an interesting metaphor for the reconstruction process she has to go through. According to Drachnik (1995), in images, the house could represent one's sense of self and can also symbolize the human relationships that are lived out inside one's house. Along this line of thinking, it could be argued that Marina is reconstructing her sense of self, her sense of who she is now in this new country. Being removed from the familiarity of a known social sphere where her role and identity were already defined, she is now confronted with having to realize who she really is in absence of the people, activities and places that defined her sense of self. Her acculturation experience involves creating new emotional ties to people and places and

through this attachment creating a point of anchoring which could then be considered a home. This 'home building' could thus be understood as the creation of connections of an emotional value, that help ground one through engaging in roles that enable one to feel like an active member of society.

For Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1993) the house symbolizes the center of the world, and embodies the image of the universe. It signifies the inner being of a person and its levels, basement, and attic correspond to various states of being and levels of the psyche. The cave represents the subconscious, the attic symbolizes spiritual elevation, the roof signifies conscious control of the head and mind, and the outside of the house is related to the 'masks' or appearance of a person. It could be inferred that these masks are also associated with self-identity, since they represent the interface between the outside and the inside, and one's presentation to the outside world. The house is also a feminine symbol with its attached meaning of refuge, mother and protection.

In addition to its structuring qualities, Marina probably used the house as a form of container and refuge, protecting her from the anxiety and uprooting provoked by migration. She mainly laid out the outer structure of the house, and was focused on gluing the sidewalls together to create this structure. This might reflect the fragmentation she experienced and her need as well as her capacity to 'glue' the pieces together, in order to create a sense of meaning and coherence. The focus on the outer structure of the house might also reflect a process of identity formation and development. This process is ultimately a way to acquire a self-definition, which will enable her to relate to the world from an anchored position. Building this house symbolizes building a center. The house not being completed may reflect that the process of adaptation or 'building' oneself in a

new land is a long-term process, and will not likely be finished without a resolution of the issues of the identity and acculturation processes.

The house is also the container of the family unit which is reconfigured during migration, as each member may undergo changes in their role outside and inside the house affecting the whole family structure. According to Thomas and Schwarzbaum (2006) migration can engender shifts in intergenerational and gender roles that can develop into acculturation conflicts. They claim that the parent-child relationship tends to become more strained after migration since old support networks might have vanished without being replaced by new ones. The child might then not be able to adequately rely upon the support of his parents and be forced into a more emotionally independent role.

The group sessions that Marina joined later were a lot more structured and she was able to make images freely of a high aesthetic caliber and engage her creativity. Being provided with an outer structure might have helped her rebuild the inner structure that was deconstructed in her migration process. Since our self-definition is intimately tied to our social world, a change of outer reality will undoubtedly engender a process of re-definition of the self and of our cultural identity (Ouellet, 2003). This cultural identity will then act as a point of reference around which everything can fall into place. This inner frame helps structure one's relation to the outside world.

Through the group art therapy sessions, Marina was able to explore her cultural identity and start building this inner frame of reference so important to her acculturation process and well being. She also began creating a social network that helped her feel less isolated and allowed her to witness that others are also going through a similar process.

This gave her an opportunity to create emotional ties that would assist her in feeling more grounded.

Case Vignette 2: *David*

In the second vignette I will present the case of an adolescent boy who was 14 years of age, and who attended a weekly art therapy group that ran for ten weeks. He will be referred to as David (pseudonym). The title for the group was “A creative journey” and its objective was to foster personal growth and self-knowledge, with a focus on exploring emotions and memories. It was offered to students selected by the school nurse and the planning room staff in an Anglophone high school. These students were referred to the group on the basis of their need for support, independent of the issues they were dealing with. Some students were socially isolated, others practiced self-mutilation; one was raped, another was dealing with anxiety and others came from violent homes. It was a very heterogeneous group and regular attendance was problematic. The group was mainly attended by three group members in the beginning and then by a different set of members afterwards, who came together in the last session only. The age range of the participants varied between 13 and 16 years of age. Problems in group formation and attendance were mainly caused by group heterogeneity and member selection, as well as miscommunication amongst the school personnel responsible for organizing the group.

Rutan and Stone (1993) assert that in new groups heterogeneity frightens participants and makes the development of cohesiveness difficult. They also argue that individuals in crisis should be excluded from groups since their problems demand too much attention. This was the case of one group member who was recently put into a

foster home and who had just experienced rape for a second time. Her stories and experiences required a great deal of time and attention, and overwhelmed other group members. Rutan and Stone (1993) also state that group members should not have developed relationships with each other prior to the group. This particular group was composed of different sets of friends, which represented a major challenge for group cohesion.

The group started with an interdisciplinary team of two art therapy students and one nurse intern leading the group. The group had the same structure every week and only varied in theme and art materials explored. It started with each person expressing how they felt through a symbolic weather forecast and was followed by an explanation of the theme and art activity of the week. Each individual participant would then make art, and afterwards we gathered in a circle and observed and discussed the imagery made, reflecting on the creative process. The session ended through a closure exercise called the 'Magic Box'. This is a metaphorical exercise where each person puts in something they might want to leave behind (e.g. anxiety, stress, head ache, etc.) or something they would like to keep for the sessions (e.g. confidentiality, respect, etc.), and take out something they need or would like for the group or themselves (e.g. strength, happiness, trust, friendship, etc.). Each group member was given a private journal that they could work in at the beginning of sessions or if they finished their artwork early.

David was the only male participant in the group. He was referred to the group because of his social isolation, and because he was often teased by other students. He is medium height, robust, and has an intense way of looking at people. He is friendly, talks a lot and seems to have a hard time enduring silence. He is somewhat awkward in the way

he relates to others and gives the impression of being a unique individual. He often takes a pause before answering a question or while thinking of what to say. David migrated within Canada from one province to another two years earlier. He came from a very small city located in the countryside and moved to Montreal, one of the major cities in Canada. One other group member migrated from a Canadian province to Quebec as well, another participant was adopted from another country, others were second or third generation migrants.

In the first session, group members were invited to get into pairs and to ask each other the following three questions in order to get acquainted with one another: "Where would you like to travel if you could go anywhere? What is your favorite and least favorite food? What do you like to do in your free time, and what hobbies do you have?". Each person would then present their partner to the group and share the answers given to these questions.

I was paired up with David for this exercise. He told me that he would like to travel to Europe to visit the land of his ancestors and that the first country he would like to go see is Great Britain. He said that his grandparents and great grandparents came from a variety of origins and countries and he listed at least seven or eight different countries including Great Britain, Russia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Ukraine, etc. He then stated that he liked to have pizza for breakfast and did not dislike anything in particular. He also mentioned that he enjoys American football and building things, and he would like to eventually become an engineer.

When it was his turn to ask me the questions he came up with his own set of questions and immediately asked me where I was from, how long I had been here and

other questions related to my own migration process. Sensing his desire to talk about these issues in his life, I asked him similar questions, which led to a long discussion on his migration process and the identities of his ancestors. I had to remind David to ask me the three chosen questions since it was almost time to conclude our discussion and present each other, and we had covered many topics yet not the ones selected for that day. We then presented each other to the group and then moved on to the next exercise.

Each member was invited to trace their hand on a piece of paper and decorate it with symbols of their hopes, fears and expectations for the group. During the art making two of the students were talking and seemed to already know each other. David was attempting to join in the conversation and was easily included by the two others, despite being a male, an outsider and socially awkward. It was obvious that he really wanted to make contact with others and strived to be accepted.

He drew a fairly intricate hand with detailed fingers holding a football; the skin was not given a distinctive tone and was colored in a rainbow. He explained that this was a spontaneous drawing and that he just drew what came to mind. He seemed less inclined than the other members to explain personal symbols and his hopes, fears and expectations for the group. He did however express that he hoped to meet new people.

In the closing exercise David had great difficulty coming up with something to take out or to put into the “magic box”. The group decided to leave behind ‘confusion’ for him in the box and to take out ‘balance’.

The second week, the introductory exercise led to a rich discussion of religious beliefs and practices initiated by David. This brings to the surface his need to share, discuss and disclose certain personal issues. He explained that he was going to miss

school because he was Jewish and a major Jewish holiday was coming up. He told the group that he followed the religious precepts of his religion on some occasions only. Each group participant then explained their religious affiliation, whether it corresponded to or differed from their parents, and spoke about their involvement in religious activities. The group was then asked to decorate the folder that would contain all of their artwork. They were provided with markers, magazine images, scissors and glue. They were encouraged to use personal symbols so that the folders would represent each one of them.

David asked if we had a book that had images of flags in the room that he could use. We looked extensively and could not find one though he managed to find the examples he was looking for. He drew various flags (figure 3) to represent the ethnicity and country of origin of family members with the Israeli flag in the center and bigger than the others. He also included the symbol of his astrological sign and ascendant, after the other members decided to incorporate theirs into the design of their folders. This action speaks of his need to integrate the group and shows that he is trying to emulate the others to be considered one of them.

The group discussion about the folders turned into a discussion of the students' relationships with their parents, which flowed with ease from one member to the next. One group member said that when one parent gives her permission to do something and the other says no, she uses the permission of the one who gave it and does what she wants or feels like doing. David claimed that he also manipulates his parents this way, and through this sharing of similar issues, attempts again to gain acceptance in the group.

During the art making process the girl participants who were already friends were having a discussion this week as well and David participated again in the conversation,

though this seemed somewhat forced by him, as he had a different sense of appropriate timing of questions and response, and of topics to discuss. In the closing ritual, David, after much reflection decided to put 'tiredness' into the magic 'box' and he did not take anything out of it.

The next week no one was present, as the person responsible to send students weekly reminders omitted to send them that day, leaving the group members to believe there was no group being held. After the problems experienced in getting the group started and fully formed, it was mutually agreed upon that the nurse would no longer participate so that the therapist per student ratio could be more reasonable since it started at one therapist per student. This group structure was intimidating for the students and was not beneficial in suiting their therapeutic needs.

The following week, four new female group members came and the three original group members, including David were absent. The new participants were given a chance to introduce themselves and decorate their portfolios.

In the fifth session, the four new group members whom were all friends and David attended the group. David worked in his journal while waiting for the group to start. The first part of the workshop included an introductory activity in which each person was asked to explain the meaning of his or her name. David expressed that he did not like his name and would have rather been named after his grandfather. This could mean that he does not like himself and has a poor self-concept. It could also indicate that he identifies more strongly with the cultural heritage passed down through his grandfather.

The art activity consisted in creating the image of a safe space, or a space where one feels good, either real or imaginary. Students were given paper and a choice of oil or

chalk pastels. David was very absorbed in making his image (figure 4). He depicted his old home that he had left behind, next to an island. He claimed that this was the place where he grew up and felt at home. He told us that he lived there until he was 12 years old and had to leave behind his best friend in order to come to Montreal. One of the new members also expressed that she moved a few years ago from her home in Ontario where she felt happy and lost all her friends by coming to this new city.

In the closing exercise, David did not know initially what to take out and what to leave in. He then decided with great hesitation to leave 'confusion' in the 'magic box' and take out 'fortune'.

During the sixth session, one original group member and one new member as well as David were present. In the introductory inner weather report David explained that his weather today was "the eye of the hurricane", thus symbolically expressing feeling intensive negative emotions. It is interesting that the theme of the day was "emotions and memory". The art activity was split into two parts one exploring the emotional dimension and the second memories, which was linked to the emotional aspect. The first part consisted of creating two minute chalk drawings on newsprint, of the following emotions: sadness, fear, anger, calm, happiness and excitement. The images were then grouped into clusters of emotions. Each emotion cluster contained the images of the three participants. These drawings were then compared in terms of their differences and similarities in themes, textures, movement, shapes and colors. For David, sadness resulted in solitude and isolation, fear included courage, anger blurred everything, and calm was equivalent to balance. Because of the dramatic effect of the first three emotions, it was difficult for the students to get into the lighter emotions and they made somewhat stereotypical

drawings using icons such as peace signs and smiley faces. They also admitted that they seldom experienced these emotions and that they were unfamiliar with them, which may explain the recourse to symbols and signs prevalent in popular culture, yet probably lacking in personal meaning and depth.

Many memories were evoked by this first exercise and the second part of the workshop offered a space to explore these memories. The participants were instructed to choose any of the emotions explored and think of a moment, an event, or a situation where they felt this emotion. They were then asked to make an image of one specific memory evoked by this emotion, using paints on paper.

David combined fear and sadness in a picture heavily framed in black, of his old room in the house that he left behind (figure 5). The walls are orange as they were in his room, and during the art making process, David was very proud to have been able to mix the orange he was looking for to represent these walls. He depicted himself alone, sitting on his bed at night and looking out the window. It is the last night he spent in his house before the move. That house has been torn down (since he moved away) by the people who bought the land, and who decided to build a brand new house.

Telling this story was very emotional for David and he shed a tear and was talking with some difficulty, showing the heaviness that inhabited him and the deep mourning he must have felt. He expressed how he felt scared of the unknown at that moment and how he also felt that the decision to move was made for him by others.

After telling his story, Amy, another group member, told hers. She spoke of the feelings of anger and sadness that were triggered when she fell in love with a Jewish guy, and was not allowed to date him by his mother, because she was not Jewish. The

boyfriend's mother found the young couple in her house and she chased Amy out of her house and made a public scene screaming at her. This event deeply marked Amy and made her feel mistrust for Jewish people in general.

As she told this story David started turning his body further and further away from the circle, holding on to the table behind him. My co-therapist pointed out that Amy seemed to be conscious of the relation between this event and her mistrust of Jewish people, and since David had previously stated that he was Jewish, she asked him how he felt at that point. He replied that it seemed that the mother had crossed the line in the behavior she exhibited with Amy. My co-therapist concluded by pointing out the similarities in their two stories, underlining the feelings of loss, pain and powerlessness they both felt. At the time of the closing exercise David volunteered to start and put sadness inside the 'magic box' though he could not decide what to take out.

The following two weeks David was absent from the group sessions. One week later the school was on strike and the group was cancelled. The week after that was the last group and most members attended, including David. Students were given an opportunity to complete the project that they began the week before the strike even though there was another activity also planned for this day. This activity consisted of decorating a box representing their self: the outside was to embody what they decide to show of themselves and what people see when they look at them, and the inside was to symbolize what they decide to keep private and what people don't see about them. The first week of the group, participants were asked to focus on the outside of the box, and the following week to focus on the inside. The students who had not attended the first group session were given a smaller box to work with and were given the instruction to start by

the side of their choice, though they were warned that they would not have a lot of time to complete the decoration of their artwork.

David focused almost entirely on the outside making a house-like representation with mirrors looking like windows on each side. The box was painted in gray and blue and he explained that the mirrors represented the fact that he would always act the way people expect him to, reflecting the image others have of him. He was asked if he felt that he could not be himself around others and he replied repeating what he had previously stated, saying that he just behaved according to others' expectations of him. This might be indicative of the development of a false self, as a defense mechanism aimed to protect him from rejection and help him be accepted by others. This 'chameleon' behavior could also be linked to identity issues, since it is difficult to be oneself if one's sense of self is not yet defined. David did not have much time to work on the inside of the box and simply left it unfinished.

During the second part of the group the participants decorated a quarter pie of a circle with markers. The pieces were put together to form a mandala on the ground in order to represent the individuality of each member and their coming together as a whole. At this point we served a plate of cookies and the participants were disappointed and angry that there was not more food. We had discussed two weeks before the possibility of bringing food or snacks and because of the time constraint caused by having to combine two workshops into one session due to the strike, it was decided that we would only bring a light snack. Since this group took place in the school context it was not possible to extend sessions over the Christmas holidays which were about to start, and the semester was ending. The group members, however, had great expectations of the food that would

be served and were left feeling angry and hungry. This hunger may have represented their need for emotional and psychological nourishment that would no longer be provided through the art therapy group.

Each participant had a table with all of his or her artistic creations and chose what to keep and what to leave behind. David chose to keep everything he had made. Some of the students spontaneously took pieces from the ones others were throwing into the garbage and broke off pieces together from clay sculptures that they then chose to share with each other. To take part in the sharing from which he was excluded so far, David asked one of the participants if he could take an image that she was leaving behind and she agreed. He chose a mandala piece from the most dominant group member. These pieces were actually meant to represent each group member, their coming together and their coming apart. Choosing the piece from the most admired group member may have been another plea for acceptance and integration. As well, being associated with a popular person could improve his status at school. As in the very first session, David could not think of something to take out or leave into the 'magic box'.

Clinical Impressions

David seems to be struggling with cultural identity issues, social isolation, and a great sense of pain and loss from having had to leave his home and friends behind. His acculturation process was probably made even more difficult by being ostracized and laughed at by other students. He seemed to be very lonely and it was obvious in his interactions that he longed to create friendships and friendly connections with others. According to Dokter (1998) the way in which one joins and deals with a group is a

metaphor for the ambivalence and struggle one is experiencing in integrating into the host society. It may thus be inferred that David struggled to join in the host community, yet was not successful. One positive aspect of the group for him was that although he was not truly integrated into the group, which may be in part because he was the only male, the others still accepted him and always treated him with respect. He was also able to find his sense of loss and displacement reflected in the experience of a fellow group member who had also migrated.

Throughout the sessions David had some difficulty expressing what the art meant for him as well as sharing in the closure exercise. He seemed to want to reveal the least about himself and mostly shared about his life what resonated with the experience of the others. He did however communicate how he felt about his migration process and religious identity, probably because he felt a great need to express these feelings.

From the very first contact he demonstrated a preoccupation with the issues of acculturation and identity through his questioning of my identity and migration process, and he also showed a readiness to explore these issues through image-making. The first image he produced of his hand colored by a rainbow could be interpreted as an array of different, not yet integrated identities. He was not able to choose one color to represent him, since just like the diverse ethnic makeup of his ancestors, his identity could only be construed as a rainbow of identities, all seemingly foreign at this point.

These cultural identities reappear in the second session in the form of flags. The latter are symbols of national identity and are a common symbol in the imagery created by migrants. The Jewish flag appears at the center of the constellation of identities (figure 3), showing the importance of religious identity and affiliation for David. This preoccupation

is also apparent when he initiated a talk about religion at the beginning of the session.

The next largest flag was of Britain and it is located on the bottom next to his astrological sign. The remaining flags were somewhat equal in size and decorated the top and sides of his folder. David crossed out two of the images he drew in relation to his astrological sign. These were covered with heavy lines and seem to be initial attempts at drawing his astrological sign. This need to completely cover and hide could be linked to a sense of shame and could indicate perfectionist tendencies or that he has difficulty showing his errors to others.

It is interesting that David chose flags as personal symbols to represent him on the folder. The folder is the outer shell and container of all of the artwork to be produced during the sessions. It thus parallels our sense of identity and sense of self that is presented to others as an interface for the emotions, thoughts and memories guarded within. It is clear that David is going through a phase of cultural identity development and his immediate preoccupation is to develop a more integrated sense of identity.

This search of cultural identities all the way to his ancestors could represent David's need to find roots and ground himself through them. The uprooting he experienced through migration most likely created a need to belong and feel attached again. Since he lost the physical place to which he had developed an attachment, and was relocated into a hostile environment, he could only truly recreate an attachment to an inner world that feels safer than the one outside. The cultural heritage he was exploring was a need to reconnect to what Moro (2002) calls the 'filial vertical axis', which represents conscious and unconscious transgenerational transmission and family lineage. The horizontal axis consists of the affiliation dimension, an external transmission through

groups to which one belongs. Since David was probably not able to inscribe himself onto the horizontal axis through groups of affiliation, he remained focused on the vertical axis, which provided him the anchoring he needed to start building his identity.

In the third session, David seemed more comfortable and was able to explain what the image he made represented to him. He probably felt secure and contained within the art therapy framework and started trusting the other group members and the art therapists leading the group. When asked to make an image of a place where he felt good and safe, he recreated the house he left behind (figure 4). The image includes the land and river next to the house and an island as well. It seems like a highly idealized and romanticized image. Talking about his home, David communicated a sense of resentment at having left. His house, the neighboring land, his hometown and his best friend represented great losses to him. These losses were probably left without a meaning after the transition to Montreal was so difficult that it could not compensate for or justify moving. David and his family moved because of financial reasons; they owned two houses and could only afford to keep one, hence they sold the house they lived in and moved to the city. David would have chosen the other option; selling the house in the city and staying in the one they lived in.

The next session, David arrived feeling strong emotions. The image he made is a continuation of the house theme explored the prior week. He created the image of his bedroom, and the last night he spent there. Telling the group about this image and recounting this experience was very difficult for him and he cried. The image communicated a great sense of loneliness, fear, and loss. Like most children and teenagers, David is an involuntary migrant. He expressed that he did not have a say in the

decision to leave, which made it more difficult to accept this new situation and could also render the acculturation process more challenging. David began to get in touch with his feelings of loneliness, pain and loss in this session. I also suspected that there is a great deal of anger that he has internalized. The grieving process that he started was also the beginning of his healing process, which will hopefully enable him to invest himself emotionally to a greater extent in this new society.

David painted a heavy black frame around the image of his bedroom. This frame may represent his strong need to contain the emotions he feels in relation to the loss of his bedroom, his house, and his prior life. Lusebrink (1990) states that an outline encapsulates a form and thus protects and defends the individual from the sense of vulnerability that inhabits him or her. Uhlin (as cited in Drachnik, 1995) suggests that the use of black is often seen as blocking out or repression. According to Fincher, Cooper and Furth (as cited in Drachnik, 1995), it also indicates a loss of ego, is associated with death and the unknown. The moment depicted by David is connected to these themes since it is related to migration and represents losing the identity, sense of self and status he had within his hometown. He expressed that he was scared of the unknown at that moment, and the life that he knew was coming to an end, which is a symbolic death.

In the same session, another group member revealed her ambivalence towards people of Jewish faith because of a painful experience she had, of rejection by a Jewish woman. This comment seemed to upset David, who through his body language expressed his discomfort. The fact that he was already put into a vulnerable position after having revealed and connected to difficult emotions probably made this confession of prejudice have a stronger impact on him. This presented a difficult situation because we had to

allow the other participant room to express her feelings, and due to pressure of time constraints we may not have adequately responded to David's needs. An unintended result was that it might have broken the trust he had developed in the context of the group. It was notable that the following two sessions David did not come. It is also not uncommon that after revealing more than usual in a session, clients skip the next session to balance the effect the session had on them.

The next session was the last session and David chose to create a self-box with mirrors on the outside to represent him. He claimed that the mirrors represented his own mirroring of what others expect him to be. This may reveal a poor self-concept and his inability to assert himself with others. Ultimately this may be linked to a wish to be accepted by others and a fear of rejection, as well as to a not yet developed sense of identity. The self-box strongly resembled a house, which indicates that this one is associated to a representation of the self.

Discussion

Acculturation is an important element of the adaptation process experienced by migrants and ethnic minorities as it involves exposure to acculturative stress and has psychological implications (Birmann & Trickett, 2001). It also has repercussions for the cultural identity of migrants and their inner construction of a cultural frame of reference that in the course of this process undergoes redefinition through the loss of their original cultural matrix. It was determined that the migration process involves many losses and can be traumatic. Cultural identity integration was found to be a central task of the acculturation process and was deemed to be of utmost importance in adolescence since identity issues are a key feature at this stage of development.

Very little is known at this time about the type of activities that are most effective in facilitating intercultural adaptation hence more research is needed in this particular area (Rousseau et al., 2003). Kirmayer (as cited in Rousseau et al., 2003), however, tells us that associating significant figures to a symbol or myth may be enough to re-establish the perception of social order. Art therapy provides the context in which symbols related to important figures can be explored through the distancing action of the metaphor, allowing the resolution of problematic migratory experiences through a non-threatening medium.

Children and adolescents are particularly at risk of exposure to difficult acculturation processes as their migration is usually involuntary. This entails a more challenging transition period and the negotiation of two cultural frames that may be in conflict, as the home culture and school culture can often be contradictory. The support that art therapy may provide in terms of a transitional space where these two worlds can

coexist with all their incongruence seems invaluable, as integration may be facilitated through this process.

Marina seemed to have used the art therapy as a space where she could clarify and explore her feelings. She brought external elements such as postcards and her French books in order to create a bridge between the world she knew and the unknown one to which she was becoming acquainted. She needed to acknowledge the loss and pain she experienced leaving her country, family and friends, as well as to address unresolved feelings about arriving in a new culture and being forced to change, learn, and adapt. This process also implies accepting the multiple losses engendered by leaving behind important emotional ties, a sense of belonging and familiar frames of reference, thus giving a voice and releasing the pain attached to them. Marina was able to start this process when she was provided with the opportunity to participate in art therapy sessions. Through art therapy, her emotions were given a chance to surface, which helped her cope with this new situation of loss.

David used the art therapy group session as an outlet for his emotions and expressed his sense of identity confusion, loss, isolation and painful acculturation process. He explored what cultural identity meant for him, and connected with confusing and painful feelings associated with his difficult migration process. His isolation and desire to connect and be accepted by others was very apparent throughout the sessions. He demonstrated conformist tendencies with few attempts at asserting his individuality. He had a lot of unresolved issues linked to his forced migration that generated negative states and painful feelings. Through art therapy he was able to gain awareness of his feelings and express them in a holding environment. He was able to explore further his

identity issues and strengthen his identification with his ancestors and cultural roots. The group context also allowed him to feel less isolated.

Both Marina and David chose the house as a symbol they explored in their art. The house seemed to represent their sense of self, and in David's case, the self that he lost and needed to reclaim. Marina was already in the process of reconstructing this self, and David was beginning to grieve and connect to the pain of this loss. They both connected to the pain associated with their migration, and used imagery that represented their home. David was able to draw this image, however Marina brought postcards to illustrate it. In the art therapy, David explored issues related to his cultural identity development and acculturation process, and Marina focused mainly on migration and her acculturation process.

Marina's developmental profile corresponds to what Marcia (as cited in Kroger, 1996) calls *foreclosure*. Adolescents in this phase usually make a commitment to a social role without having undergone a crisis or decision-making period. Marcia considers that such individuals avoided the identity formation phase by embracing values and roles of authority figures they identified with in childhood.

According to Sue and Sue (1999), cultural identity development begins with the experience of racism or one's interaction with an oppressive society. It seems evident that Marina had not previously examined or considered issues pertaining to her cultural identity, which could be related to an identity foreclosure and may reflect that she came from a mostly homogenous culture. This corresponds to Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre's (1997) claim that cultural identity is not usually activated in the context of everyday experience. This one develops after events such as migration, which challenge one's

existing identity and cultural values. Acknowledging her feelings and exploring her migratory experience through images facilitated the beginning of her cultural identity development.

As Legendre (2000) suggests, Marina's identity shattered in her migratory experience. It did not resonate any longer with the cultural context, leaving her feeling suspended and unable to 'land' on this new territory. This sense of being suspended and excluded corresponds to Berry's (1993) marginalized position. This one is characterized by a lack of identification with both the dominant culture and the culture of origin. Marina began to engage in the cultural identity development process with her questioning of what her home represented for her. Identifying that her home is Rumania, helped her gain awareness of her identification with her country of origin and thus allowed her to come out of a marginalized position and explore a different acculturation strategy.

With respect to Marcia's (as cited in Kroger, 1996) theoretical model of identity formation, David fits most closely the *diffusion* phase. Marcia views individuals in this phase as unable to make an identity commitment resulting either from developmental deficits or from cultural conditions offering few possible identity options. The diffusion status is associated with superficiality and unhappiness in males, as well as low self-esteem, autonomy, great loneliness and hopelessness (Marcia). The diffused individuals are usually distant, withdrawn, isolated and are likely to be stereotyped in their relationships with others. They are not involved in intimate relationships and appear to lack a real sense of self that would allow them to contribute to such relationships, whether in groups or in dyads. This reflects David's need to conform to what others expect of him, as his sense of self has not yet been sufficiently developed. Being rejected propelled him

into an undesirable identity role and he might not have had the choice of exploring other options. His social awkwardness might also be due to a developmental deficit.

David could be considered to be in the *ethnic identity search/moratorium* stage of Phinney's (1993) model. He is in an exploratory phase where he is questioning his cultural identity, which precedes a sense of achieved or integrated identity. According to Laperriere et al. (1992), adolescents between the ages of 14 and 15 years old are found predominantly in this second stage, placing David in the norm of development for this model.

In terms of Sue and Sue's (1999) model, he is deemed to be in the third stage, *resistance and immersion*, as he demonstrated a certain romanticizing of his cultural heritage, corresponding to minority group-appreciating views. This stage is characterized by an appreciation of oneself and one's ethnic group, a conflict between feelings of empathy for other minority experiences and feelings of culturocentrism, as well as a depreciating view of the dominant society. David's attitude towards others belonging to different minorities as expressed in his relationship with the group members and myself, was marked by curiosity yet also denoted a sense of distance. He thus demonstrated a certain ambivalence that could be related to a feeling of inner conflict. Even though he did not make direct negative comments about the dominant society, he did imply that he did not feel like he belonged and his general attitude seemed to be one of rejection. He also excluded the Canadian flag from the collection of flags on his portfolio representing his cultural heritage, which may indicate that he did not identify with the dominant society, and was not able to integrate this one within his cultural identity.

In terms of Berry's (1993) acculturation model, David would be assuming a separationist position, which implies maintaining one's cultural identity and rejecting the dominant culture. I suspect that David would assume an integrationist position in which he would retain his cultural identity and move towards greater involvement within the larger society, if he was not being rejected by the latter.

In conclusion, migration is a form of death and rebirth that one undergoes. The current cultural identity development models reviewed provided an important contribution to the understanding of the identity formation process. However, these models did not include the conceptualization of the stage that precedes the beginning of the identity development process, thus precluding an understanding of individuals with an undifferentiated cultural identity such as Marina. The development of a model that considers and encompasses the experience of individuals that have not yet begun their identity formation process is paramount in fostering a deeper knowledge of the migrant's experience or of individuals belonging to an ethnic minority. Similarly, Berry's (1993) model of acculturation seems to lack a more comprehensive definition of the acculturation process itself, as opposed to the sole delineation of resulting states.

Art therapy allowed a sense of greater self-knowledge to emerge and thus assisted in the cultural identity development of both Marina and David. It offered to them a window of expression for their respective feelings of loss, loneliness and sadness that inhabited them. They discovered commonalities in their own experiences, which resonated with those of others in the group. This helped them to feel less isolated.

Art therapy would profit from additional attention to the interplay between cultural identity, migration and the acculturation process and its depiction and resolution

through art, as this aspect has not yet been fully developed in the current literature. It is hoped that other studies in the field of art therapy will examine these issues in greater depth, in order to form a more comprehensive body of knowledge that will give the tools to professional in this field to deal adequately with the growing migrant population.

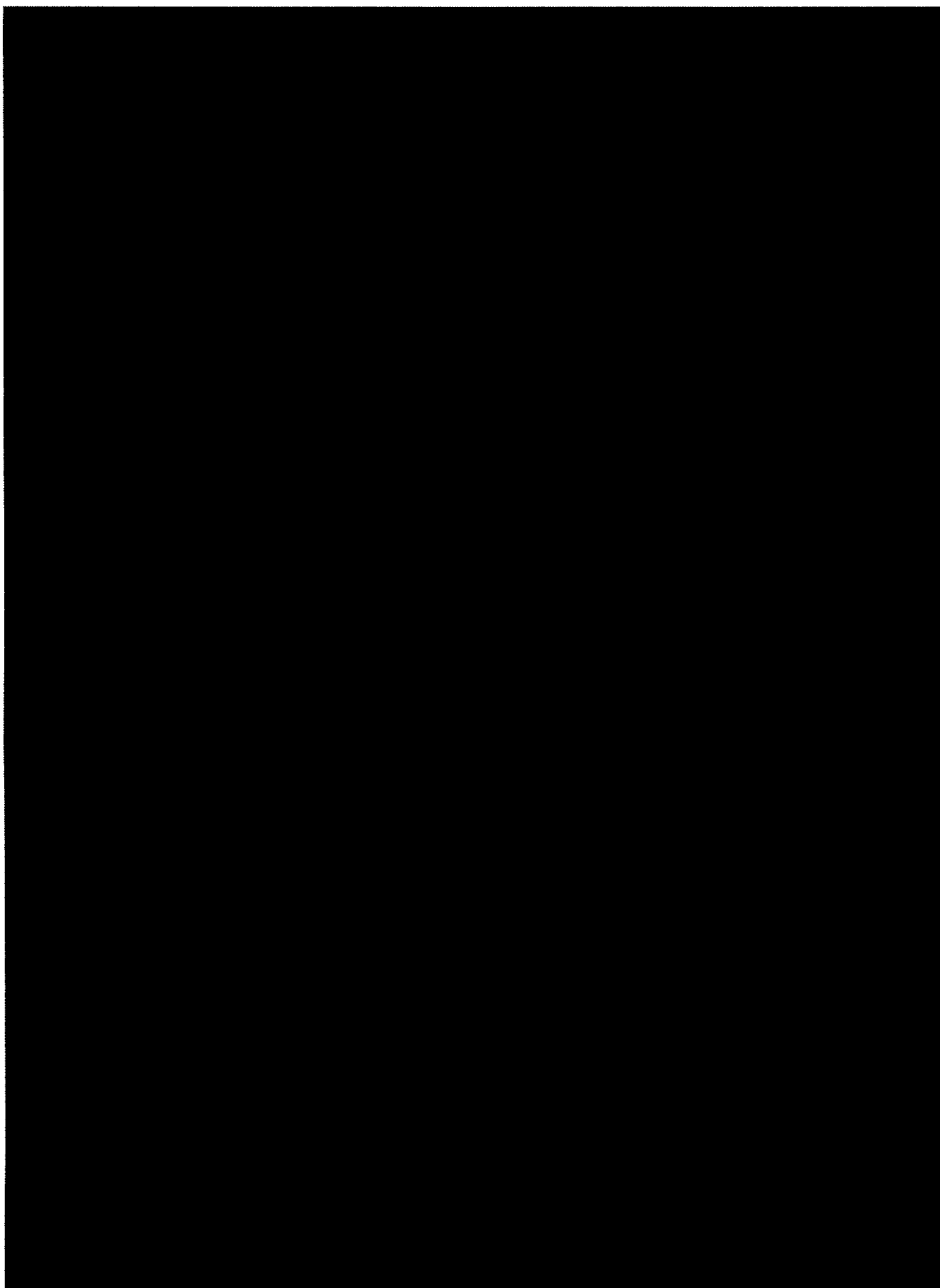


Figure 1

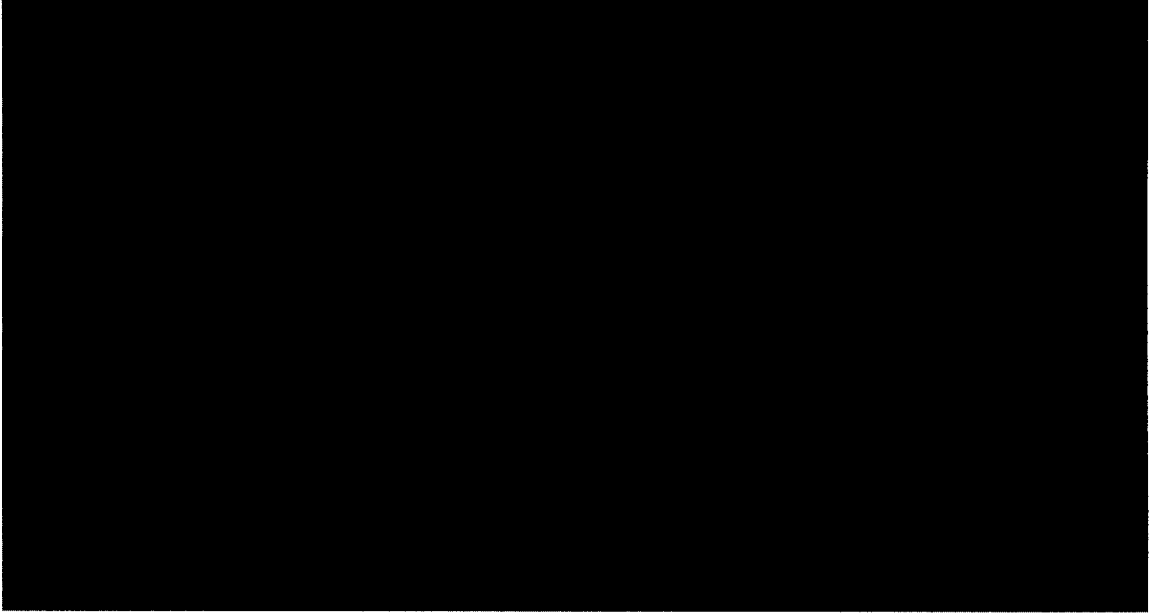


Figure 2

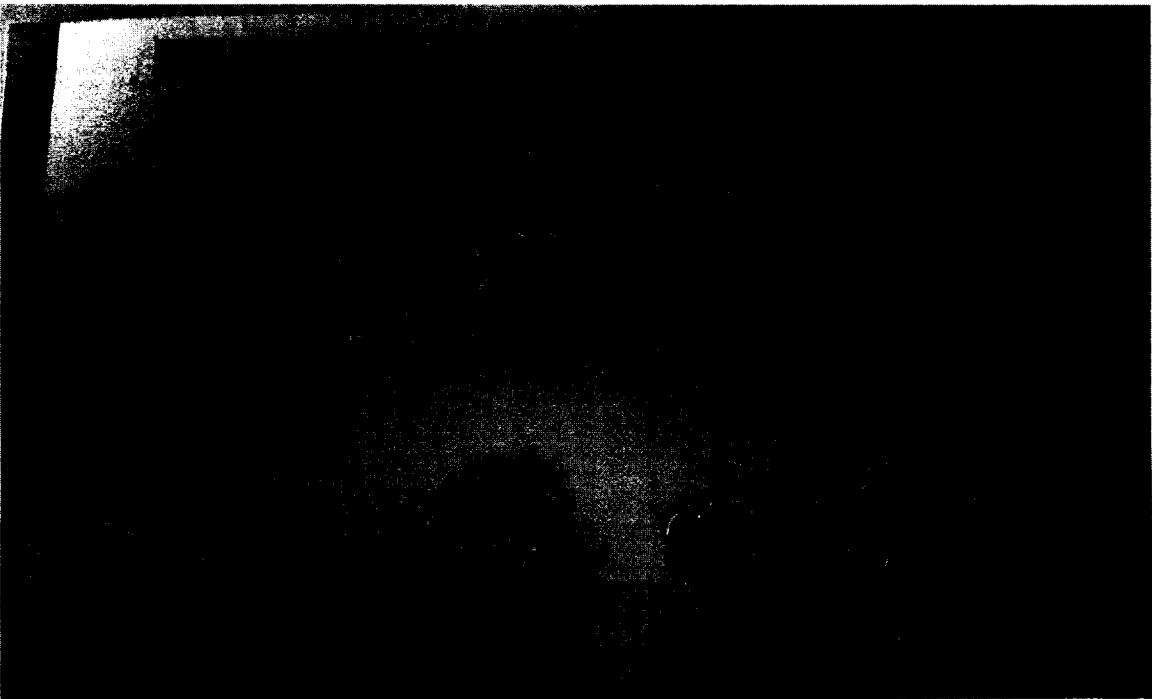


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

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Appendix

- A. Client Assent Form
- B. Letter of Information
- C. Client Consent Form

Formulaire de Consentement

Centre Ana Luisa Cabezas/École Calixa Lavallé

Stagiaire en art-thérapie : Yasmine Lemzoudi

Superviseur : Pascale C. Annual

Permission

Dans le cadre des ateliers offerts intitulés « Art et Migration »:

Je soussigné(e) _____,

autorise Yasmine Lemzoudi _____,

à photographier les projets artistiques, d'enregistrer sur vidéo ou cassette audio certains ateliers qu'elle jugera appropriés à utiliser et/ou à publier à des fins éducatives ou de supervision universitaire, et/ou scientifiques, pourvu que des précautions raisonnables soient prises pour préserver l'anonymat. Je comprends que mon refus de signer ce formulaire n'affectera d'aucune manière les services offerts.

Je fais cependant la ou les restrictions suivantes :

Je suis intéressé(e) à participer dans un projet de recherche de Maîtrise en art-thérapie qui pourrait inclure : des images des projets artistiques, des citations de verbatim, des notes sur le cas et les résultats d'évaluations faites dans le contexte des sessions. Je comprends que l'information découlant de ces sessions restera confidentielle.

OUI _____ NON _____

Si oui, je comprends que je recevrai de l'information qui explique le projet en détail et un formulaire de consentement approuvé par le comité d'éthique du département des arts thérapeutiques de l'Université Concordia.

Signature de l'étudiant(e) ou du tuteur : _____ **Date :** _____

Signature du (de la) superviseur(e) : _____ **Date :** _____

Consent Information

Art Therapy Student: Yasmine Lemzoudi (MA In Progress)

Supervisor: Louise Lacroix, MA, ATR, Associate Professor
Concordia University

Background information:

One of the ways art therapy students learn how to be art therapists is to write a research paper that includes case material and art work by clients they have worked with during their practicum. The purpose of doing this is to help them, as well as other students and art therapists who read the research paper, to increase their knowledge and skill in giving art therapy services to a variety of persons with different kinds of problems. The long-term goal is to be better able to help individuals who engage in art therapy in the future.

Permission:

As a student in the Master's in Creative Arts Therapies Program at Concordia University, I am asking you for permission to photograph your art work and include selected images in my research paper. I am also asking you for permission to include notes that were taken on your participation and background. A copy of the research paper will be bound and kept in the Concordia University Library, and another in the Program's Resource Room. This paper may also be presented in educational settings or published for educational purposes in the future.

Confidentiality:

Because this information is of a personal nature, it is understood that your confidentiality will be respected in every way possible. Neither your name, the name of the setting where your art therapy took place, nor any identifying information will appear in the research paper or on your art work.

Advantages and Disadvantages to your Consent:

To my knowledge, this permission will not cause you any personal inconvenience or advantages. Whether or not you give our consent will have no effect on your future involvement in art therapy or your standing at school. As well, you may withdraw your consent at any time before the research paper is completed with no consequences, and without giving any explanation. To do this, or if you have any questions about this research study, you may contact my supervisor *Louise Lacroix*, at 848-2424 ext. 7384.

If at any time you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call Adela Reid, Compliance Officer, in the Office of Research

Adela Reid, Compliance Officer

Office of Research, GM-I000, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

Phone: 514-848-7481

Email: adela.reid@concordia.ca

Consent Form/ Formulaire de Consentement

Authorization for photography of artwork and the use of case material related to the arts therapies.

Autorisation pour la photographie d'images et l'utilisation du matériel clinique au sujet des arts-thérapies.

I, the undersigned _____
Je, soussigné(e)

Authorize _____ Yasmine Lemzoudi _____
Authorise

to take any:
à prendre/utiliser:

	YES OUI	NO NON
photographs/photographies	_____	_____
case material/matériel clinique	_____	_____

that the therapist deems appropriate, and to utilize and publish them for educational purposes, provided that reasonable precautions be taken to conserve confidentiality.

Que la thérapeute jugera opportun à utiliser et publier pour des fins éducatives, à la condition que des précautions raisonnables soient prises pour que soit conservée la confidentialité.

However, I make the following restriction(s):
J'émetts cependant les restrictions suivantes:

Signature of participant or of Parent (if under 18 years old) _____ Date
Signature du Participant ou du Parent (si l'enfant a moins que 18 ans)

Witness to Signature _____ Date
Témoin à la signature