"It has to be held"

Exploring the social unconscious among art therapy students in a South African context through social dreaming

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Bio

Leigh-Anne Alexander is a student currently enrolled in the master's degree program for Art Therapy at the University of Johannesburg. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Cape Town, majoring in Psychology and Religious Studies within the Social Sciences program. Building upon her academic foundation, Leigh-Anne attained an honours degree in Psychology from the University of Stellenbosch and an honours degree in Art Therapy from the University of Johannesburg. Leigh-Anne's research focuses on exploring the intersection of art therapy, the unconscious, and the transformative power of art therapy to facilitate discussions on race, social justice, and its role in pedagogical processes in the South African context.

Abstract

The content of this article explores a social dreaming matrix (SDM) and art-making workshop among art therapy trainees in South Africa. This article is a preliminary investigation into the social unconscious of art therapy trainees, as art therapy practitioners and allied practitioners, who need to promote thinking that derives from an intersectional framework, as practising from this framework may help practitioners to be empathetic, culturally attuned, and culturally sensitive within a multicultural context. In this article, I argue that analytic group-based practices or interventions, such as an SDM, are a worthwhile method of getting to know and actively engage in the critical discourse around the lived experiences of students, practitioners, and citizens

of South Africa. It may also prove a worthwhile directive for clients wishing to explore their social unconscious. This study considers knowledge and issues surrounding the complexities, contradictions, and discomfort of the lived experiences of future art therapists in South Africa. This exploratory approach aims to facilitate new insights into art therapy trainees' social unconscious related to their identities as art therapy trainees and future practising art therapists. The central conclusion of the findings reveals that art therapy trainees' social unconscious comprises five elements:　power, privilege, identity, alienation, and violence related to their roles as art therapists. Moreover, the SDM and art-making offer a tool to empower the pedagogical process for art therapy trainees.

Keywords: Art therapy, intersectionality, pedagogy, social dreaming, social unconscious

Introduction

The content of this article explores investigates how a social dreaming matrix (SDM) and art-making can give insight into the social unconscious of art therapy trainees through an SDM event held with the Honours in Art Therapy cohort at the University of Johannesburg in February 2021, conducted by Dr Hayley Berman, an art therapist and educator.

Social dreaming is a practice of 'sharing and working with dreams within a social space' pioneered and developed by Gordon Lawrence (1982) (Armstrong, n.d., p. 2). The dream-sharing event is termed the matrix[1] where participants sit in a snowflake configuration and participants share their night-time dreams, images, and associations for approximately one hour (Manley, n.d). The dreams are not interpreted or given meaning by the host,[2] but instead, participants are able to allow the dreams, dream imagery, and associations to surface and accumulate during the SDM.

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[1]　The term matrix is used instead of 'group', as Lawrence (2000) defined it as "a containing space where something grows, is bred and develops" (p.329). Lawrence, the joint director at the Tavistock Institutes Group Relations Programme, found that working with dreams within a group setting was taboo and only confined to one-to-one situations between analyst and analysand (Manley, 2009).

[2]　The term 'host' is used deliberately to avoid associations to roles such as 'consultant', 'conductor' and 'facilitator' (Armstrong, 2019). The role of the host is to manage the boundaries of the SDM (time, confidentiality, and tasks) and to lead the SDM (Armstrong, 2019).

This exploratory approach may offer new insights into how an SDM and art-making can make art therapy trainees' unconscious material conscious and how the SDM act as a means to enter into, reflect, confront, and engage in topics related to social justice, race, and oppression within the South African context. The purpose of this article is to evaluate the importance of using psychoanalytic and arts-based methods of inquiry for unconscious retrieval and the value that SDM can be a pedagogical tool for art therapy students in the context of teaching and training as future art therapists in South Africa. The central conclusion of the findings reveals that art therapy trainees' social unconscious comprise power, privilege, identity, alienation, and violence related to their roles as art therapy students and future practising art therapists in the context of South Africa.

Background

In the past decade, scholars have advocated for cultural competence in art therapy, emphasising the need to investigate the profession's lack of greater sociocultural inclusion (Awais & Yali, 2013; Doby-Copeland, 2006; George, Greene, & Blackwell, 2005; Hiscox & Calisch, 1998; Robb, 2014; Talwar, Iyer, & Doby-Copeland, 2004; Ter Maat, 2011). Cultural competence is defined as a set of congruent attitudes, behaviours, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals to facilitate effective work in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al., 1989). Cultural competent art therapists take into consideration the specific beliefs, values and actions that are influenced by a client's ethnicity, race, culture, nationality, gender, socioeconomic status, political views, sexual orientation, physical capacity or disability, and historical or cultural experiences within their dominant culture (American Art Therapy Association, 2011). Culture, diversity, and identity are important concepts in art therapy practice (Talwar, 2015, p. 100) and these are important factors to explore in the context of teaching and training.

Formalised art therapy training only emerged in 2020 in South Africa. Considering this emerging field, practitioners need to construct knowledge and build effective practices that consider practitioners' understandings of their identity and differences from a social and cultural perspective (Talwar, 2017, p. 100) and be mindful of the effects of the political and social history and the context in which we serve (Solomon, 2005).

It has been nearly 30 years since the end of apartheid, yet racialised patterns of social inequality in South Africa remain present. South Africa is a country at war with itself. Its unparalleled violence is characteristic of colonised societies (Long, 2017), and these colonial patterns of the relationship remain deep in our social unconscious (Blackwell, 2003).

Literature review

Social dreaming is a practice of "sharing and working with dreams within a social space" and was pioneered and developed by Gordon Lawrence (1982) (Armstrong, 2019, p. 1). The dream-sharing event is termed the matrix and participants share their night-time dreams, images and associations (Manley, 2020). Social dreaming is a tool that allows individuals to think and feel visually and allows individuals to experience, express, and reflect on their unconscious content with a group of people (Berman & Manley, 2018). SDM is a viable method for exploring unconscious material that gives an insight into collective identities and unconscious processes in marginalised communities (Karolia & Manley, 2020; Van Beekum, 2013) and can act as a container for processing implicit racial bias and collective racial trauma (Bermudez, 2018).

SDM and image-making provide a space for "feeling the irrational", creating a space to discover new thoughts and reveal processes that had been unbearable to put into thought (Berman & Manley, 2018, p. 236). Dreams also give access to important personal and situational insights (Hyyppä & Bowles, 2016), which can help individuals enter into a space where tension arises through what is conscious and what is unconscious (what they know versus what is beyond their knowledge) (Lawrence, 2000). Dreaming can also allow individuals to enter a state of consciousness that incorporates three temporal dimensions: experiencing the past, processing the past, and preparing for the future (Macduffie & Mashour, 2010).

In the context of student leadership in a South African higher education institution, a study on social dreaming found that the students had a preoccupation with South African historical narratives (Pule & May, 2021). Pule and May (2021) found that students had relational dynamics of discomfort and defence mechanisms, such as splitting when discussing race and gender. They also found that student leaders needed a space to make 'sense' and renegotiate their anxiety around the discussions on transformation and diversity dynamics in South Africa (Pule & May, 2021).

This article contributes to original knowledge in exploring the use of SDM with art therapy trainees and in analysing material generated in the SDM through the lens of intersectionality.

Intersectionality is the concept that "describes the interaction between systems of oppression" (McBride & Mazur, 2008, p. 193) and promotes the understanding that human beings are shaped by the interaction of different social locations (Hankivsky, 2014, p. 2). Social locations are factors such as race, gender, class, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, age, and education that intersect as systems of oppression (McBride and Mazur, 2008, p. 198). These interactions occur "within a connected system of structures of power (for example, laws, policies, state governments, and religious institutions, among others)" (McBride & Mazur, 2008, p. 193). Practice stemming from the intersectional framework posits that one must be critical regarding pre-existing knowledge and assumptions regarding oneself and others (Talwar, 2017, p. 101). As discussed, art therapy trainees bring their histories and backgrounds that form part of their existence into these sessions. Social dreaming pays attention to these social aspects within a larger discourse.

I argue that framing the content of the SDM through the lens of intersectionality may inform the various intersecting identities, experiences and social locations of art therapy trainees and clarify how these intersecting factors may inform art therapists' assumptions and art therapy practice within South African contexts. Therefore, this article argues that SDM may be fruitfully employed as a way in which to discover and process unconscious subject matter such as perceptions, thoughts, and feelings around racial relations, gender, and social-economic status, among others. These elements may be housed unconsciously and be difficult to access for participants involved.

Methodology

This exploratory study examined the content of an SDM held with the Honours in Art Therapy cohort of 2021 during their orientation week in February 2021. Due to the UJ Art Therapy course being online, the SDM was facilitated online and the content was recorded on a videoconferencing application.

The SDM is classified as secondary data, as the data was collected in the past (February 2021) and made available to be used by another researcher. After gaining permission from the host of the SDM, I transcribed the audio

of the SDM workshop. The images created during the SDM were held up during the SDM session and the screenshots are included in this study. After transcription, themes (generated through the transcribed audio and screenshot images) were analysed by using Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines on latent thematic analysis (LTA).

I employed LTA to identify, analyse and find patterns or themes within the text and images (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 13). I found themes and images that required some interpretive work. Common themes were identified and interpreted through the theoretical framework of intersectionality. I found the content related to the social unconscious that suggested transference from cultural, social, and historical influences. I interpreted the content during my supervision. The material included verbal feedback and images created within the SDM. These were factors such as race, gender, class, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, age, and education that all formed part of the art therapy individual realities, which may have been conscious or unconscious.

Participants were drawn from the 2021 art therapy honours cohort. The participants were seven white female participants and two black female cis-gender participants aged between 21 and 63. Their socioeconomic positions varied. Participants were selected via convenience sampling and approached via email to participate in the article. Included in the research ethics application was a permission letter granted by the primary researcher to use the SDM recording and participants consented to the materials being used for pedagogical and research purposes. Participants' responses were treated confidentially and identities remained anonymous by using pseudonyms. Research ethics permission was obtained from the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture Ethics Committee of the University of Johannesburg. Participants could access contact information for mental health professionals if they found themselves triggered by the content that was generated by the SDM workshop.

 It is worth noting that I was a participant in this SDM workshop. Thus, this paper and the initial research question have a deductive approach. I was able to summarise the content of the SDM workshop with a predetermined outcome of analysing themes surrounding discourses on race, gender, social justice, and violence. It is worth noting that the interpretation of the verbal feedback and content of the images depicted in the SDM workshop is limited through my paradigm and may be biased.

Results

The SDM workshop occurred towards the start of the training in 2021, opening a discourse for students to engage on an ongoing basis with their personal and sociocultural positionality. It modelled a framework for students to use their unconscious active imagination, dreams, and image-making as a way of engaging as students and future practitioners. Firstly, participants engaged in the SDM workshop through the host, prompting them to verbally bring a dream they had experienced, in which they could either describe a dream in detail or bring a word that is freely associated[3] with that dream. After the verbal interaction, lasting approximately an hour, participants were then asked to create an image once the free association and dream-sharing ended. The images created by participants were influenced by the verbal feedback their fellow participants gave. Below I summarise content generated by the SDM workshop related to the social unconscious of art therapy trainees. I detail three central themes found within the content of the SDM workshop. The main themes that emerged from the SDM workshop were the group's perceptions regarding race, social justice, oppression, freedom, positionality, and violence, among others.

The group perception and responses are categorised into three subthemes: perceptions of access, perceptions of engagement, and perceptions of transformation. I reflect on these themes in the discussion below.

When the SDM started, the facilitator asked participants to share their night-time dreams, feelings and their free associations with the dreams. The image of a dancing monkey was brought to the start of the SDM. Associations of Penny Sparrow,[4] race, positionality, violence, and social justice entered the matrix and our subsequent engagement with these factors started to emerge. After the SDM, students were invited to create an image in response to the SDM. After the image-making, students were asked to reflect on their images and the SDM and freely associate with each other's reflections.

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3   Free association is a method in psychoanalysis whereby the patient verbalises whatever comes to mind to reveal unconscious elements within the patients' psyche.

4   In 2016, KwaZulu-Natal real-estate agent Penny Sparrow tweeted racist remarks about New Year's Day beachgoers calling them 'monkeys' (Wicks, 2016).

Perception of access

The theme of perception of access inspired the first image: engaging in conversation around social justice, race, oppression, and positionality, among others. Images of barbed wire, fences, prison bars, and roads emerged. Figure 1 and the quote below reflect the participant's lack of access to these conversations around social justice. J's perception of access to engaging in conversations around social justice seems to have left her stuck. She was stuck between being an outsider and an insider in a liminal space.

J stated:

"Restricted access, a mirage, freedom […]the barbed wire fence. The image of the barbed wire fence stood out for me. And then the fence gets less restricted as it goes on and the person there at the end, there is actually no fence in front of them. But there's a stop sign and they still don't move".

Figure 1: J's Image of a person between barbed wire and stop signs

Perceptions of engagement

C presented her figure (see Figure 2) of a violent scene that she had encountered in her life. The SDM allowed for memories to emerge that

previously laid dormant, adding to complex layers of engagement with issues around race. The violent scene was the image of the three wise monkeys: a Japanese maxim of 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil'. In the Buddhist tradition, the proverbs are not to dwell on evil thoughts. The proverb can also refer to a lack of moral responsibility of the people who refuse to acknowledge transgressions or to 'turn a blind eye'. This relates to the confrontation of violence in the South African context and that participants felt like they could not engage and when they did, they felt the urge to turn a blind eye. C stated:

> "Black man [...] chained in the middle of the highway… And then… It has to be on the shoulders, it has to be held […] We don't want to look and we don't want to hear and we don't want to speak [sic]".

Figure 2: C's image of violence witnessed

The participants' perceptions of engaging fluctuated between anxiety and awareness, dissociation and responsibility. However, some participants, like S (see Figure 3), continued feeling anxiety, fragmentation and uncertainty about engaging. For instance, S stated that:

> "So, uhm, for me this felt very fragmented […] I wasn't […] participating in the way I should have been, or, I could have been […] I don't know if it's something to do with dreams. I just feel like dreams are such, such delicate things […] almost revealing. […] I'm not really sure what I'm trying to say about this one actually [sic]".
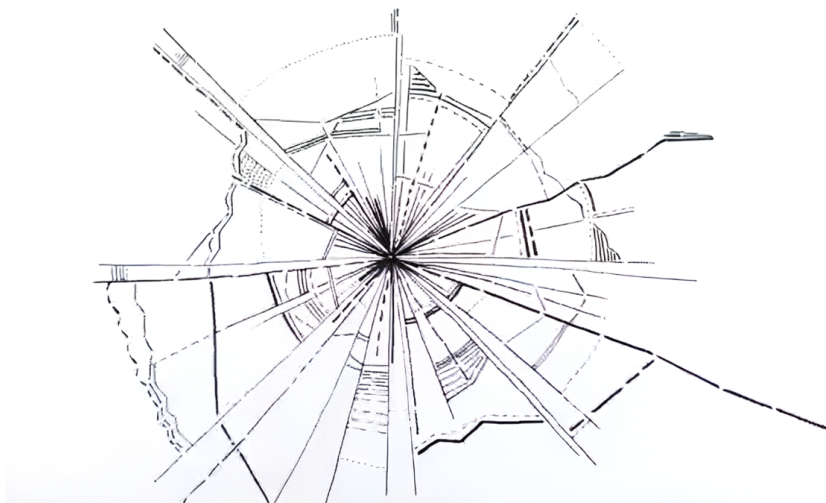

Figure 3: S's image of fragmentation

Hereafter, the host entered the matrix and responded by making her artwork in response to the content brought by the participants in the SDM. It is worth noting that the dreams are not interpreted or given meaning by the host,[5] but instead, the host added their image to help guide the participants' dream imagery and associations during the SDM. The host stated:

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5   The term 'host' is used deliberately to avoid associations to roles such as 'consultant', 'conductor' and 'facilitator' (Armstrong, 2019). The role of the host is to manage the boundaries of the SDM (time, confidentiality, and tasks) and to lead the SDM (Armstrong, 2019).

"I ended up making an imaging of the barbed wire […] I sort of threw water on at first […]. There was something about needing to dissolve some of the sort of horror. I think, but at the same time, really, representing it".

The host reiterated the theme of water brought by J's image (Figure 2). J's image defined the water as a 'mirage' hidden behind a barbed wire fence. The symbol of water within the matrix had transformed and diluted the image of the barbed wire.

Figure 4: Host's image of water thrown on the barbed wire fences

The naming of the horror and the amelioration of the horror brought reflections offered by C, who stated:

"Our history is hectic and heavy […] it can be so divisive because it's so […] what we see determines where we stand. […] I remember when I was young, I used to hate our country, I really, really did. And there's a part of me that really hate our country and hate what we have to hold, what you see the poverty […] the stuff that just isn't

solved straight away […] it's just like. […] An open wound and I feel like we've had an open wound for a long time and possibly, it has to become even more open [sic]".

C had brought the second image in the matrix (see Figure 2) and further explored her emotions and reactions to the content offered by the group. Beneath the barbed wire fences strewn with water was an open wound. A wound that is unable to heal.

Hereafter, the host entered the matrix again and noticed that participants like S, whose image is depicted in Figure 3, felt fragmented and how it reflected parts of themselves being "on a trampoline being double bounced". The SDM facilitated the participants' questioning their perceptions of participation and the host asked the group:

> "Thinking about attachment and social attachment? What kind of society have we grown up in that's become our parental figure? Having had an apartheid parent for so many centuries and then having a different parent. Having Mandela as a parent, having Mbeki as a parent, Zuma as a parent, Ramaphosa as a parent. What sorts of parental figures have we been through in our time and our ancestors' time? And how's that impacted who we've come to? What is our image? Our social image? [sic]".

Through the host bringing associations of intergenerational inheritances, participants started reflecting on their inheritance and subsequent role in the South African context.

MP brought the theme of a bystander into the matrix, which related to C's image (see Figure 2) about witnessing transgressions and each person's subsequent role as the victim or perpetrator of injustice and violence. MP stated that:

> "I see this with my brothers. With all the domestic violence and femicide that's going on […] I know that there are good men out there, but, like they put their hands in their pockets they've just become bystanders. In the sight of any injustice that they see. So, this is the perpetrator that is fundamentally evil [sic]. But for bystanders, it's another story to victims because, like the silence, silence means [they are] content. Your silence means that you have seen this, this brutality going on, but you choose not to do anything [sic]".

Perception of transformation

MP bringing the theme of bystanders into the SDM, created new associations, thoughts, and feelings around transformation. It brought into question our thoughts and feelings regarding race, racism, activism, social justice, and oppression, as well as the subsequent role that art therapists played in the transformation.

This relates to the theme of holding, reflection, and bystanders that was brought up earlier in the SDM. Participants started to perceive themselves not as being restricted by barbed wire or fences but as able to make meaningful changes through action. The subject of action brought about the theme of what it means to be an art therapist in South Africa. MP stated that:

> "We as therapists, are not really activists and not bystanders. We are in between. In any war, in any injustice, you must choose sides so. Either we are activists or we, we are collaborating with the perpetrator, whatever the perpetrator is doing, we were endorsing it if we are not saying anything [sic]".

In summary, the SDM brought about discussions regarding what art therapists hold and how much responsibility we take on.

The SDM ended by reflecting on our positionality, attitudes, beliefs, identities, and feelings regarding race, oppression, social justice, and transformation. We were conflicted, ambivalent, and anxious. We were also in-between practitioners and activists, between holding and challenging, and constructing and deconstructing what we perceived as justice and injustice.

Discussion

The purpose of this article was to explore the social unconscious of art therapy trainees through the use of an SDM workshop and how it related to their identities as art therapy trainees and future practising art therapists. The emergent themes of this discussion revealed that art therapy trainees' social unconscious content comprised power, privilege, and identity. The second emergent theme consisted art therapy trainees' experiences of alienation and violence.

In the second theme, I argue that the SDM became a viable method for uncovering the unconscious psychic content of art therapy trainees. I discuss

the role that liminality plays within the SDM and how this further contributes to SDM as a tool for the pedagogy of art therapy training.

Power and Identity and intersectionality

At the centre of the SDM and prior to it, was the diminished awareness participants showed to reflect critically on their unconscious experiences and perceptions regarding their positionality. Their positionality was reflected in their responses to the content generated within the SDM. The participants' perceptions of engaging fluctuated between anxiety and awareness, dissociation and responsibility. Some participants, like S (see Figure 3), continued to feel anxiety, fragmentation, and uncertainty about how to engage.

The SDM was an opportunity to enter a space where participants could bring about repressed feelings, perceptions, and emotions related to the context in which they serve. The SDM and art-making offered an opportunity to project, confront, and explore facets of the self and identity[6] (Joseph et al., 2017). Madison and Hamera (2005, n.p.) state that "for many of us, the performance of identity has evolved into ways of comprehending how human beings fundamentally make culture, affect power and reinvent ways of being in the world". Although the SDM did not analyse the participants' identities in detail, it did create an awareness of the group's varying responses to the material and how the responses could inform one another about the intersubjectivity between members of the group. Participants had moved from struggling to gain access to these conversations, to grappling with the horror and violence, to feeling immense sadness and reflecting on their positionality and lived experiences as art therapy trainees in a SA context.

Alienation and violence

South Africa's legacy of violence is characteristic of colonised societies (Long, 2017) and these "colonial patterns of the relationship remain deep in our social unconscious" (Blackwell, 2003, p. 456). Two important themes that stood out in the SDM were when C brought the association and image of a black man

6   Identity is defined as "a set of complex, often contradictory and conflicting psychological, physical, geographical, political, cultural, historical, and spiritual" factors "that are pieced together by an inward and outward journey that connects us to the larger world" (Parisian, 2015, p. 130).

chained on the highway (see Figure 2), a new awareness emerged among the participants. The man on the highway represented the need to confront the violence. The SDM allowed this dormant memory of C to resurface, becoming an important junction within the SDM. Do you drive past or do you stop? To witness or to help? Who holds the violence and the responsibility? There was ambivalence felt towards who holds, when to hold and how much to hold. It is in the conflict of who takes responsibility and how to engage with such violent material. At first, participants were unsure of how to access conversations around social justice, oppression, and activism. The problematic access to the conversations can be explained through the concept of alienation. Alienation is the estrangement, disaffection, or withdrawal of a person from another (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Alienation also refers to the position of a former attachment (Merriam-Webster, 2023). To elaborate, Fanon (1952) had originally argued that alienation derives from the internalisation of colonialism that transforms into violence against the black self towards other black people, leading to alienation from oneself and one another (Blackwell, 2013). The alienation felt towards the black man chained on the highway gave way for empathy and understanding to emerge within the SDM. The SDM acted as a mechanism in which participants detached themselves from their conscious reality and entered an unconscious state that allowed feelings of alienation to emerge. The SDM and the process inherent in it revealed that the SDM can be used as a way to think differently around an experience that is not constrained by linear thinking patterns (Manley, 2020, p. 1). This speaks of how unconscious retrieval and the art-making process can be a vehicle for understanding one's self-concept both internally and within a cultural structure. Through investigating the meaning behind the symbolic self, one can see change and transformation, therefore causing the changing of their self-concept both internally and within a cultural structure, which invariably impacts the therapeutic relationship between practitioner and client. The SDM also facilitated participants' ability to enter into a liminal space, which offered participants a deeper understanding of their unconscious perceptions, thoughts, and feelings around race and violence and allowed them to discover and process difficult subject matter.

Liminality within the SDM

Participants started to enter into a liminal space, where different experiential states of being started to emerge. Liminal spaces can be conceptualised as

a space that is somewhere in between the back/front stage (Manley, et al., 2015). Dreaming allows individuals to enter into a state of consciousness that incorporates three temporal dimensions: experiencing the past, processing the past and preparing for the future (Macduffie & Mashour, 2010). Liminality within an SDM can be described as the shared space between participants where a 'collage' of images, dreams and associations link connections between participants (Manley, et al., 2015). It can also be described as the "in-between-ness to off-shore-ness; from physical spaces to experiential states of being and evoking feelings of excitement, agency, opportunity, abandonment, despair, and dependency" (Manley, et al., 2015, p. 8). This finding can be related to Hooks (2015) paper 'Petrified life', where he argues that the numerous social and political complexities of a certain period can be encapsulated through time. Hooks (2015, p. 1) states that "everyday post-apartheid experience is characterised by historical dissonance, by the continuous juxtaposition of forward and backwards-looking temporalities. In this sense, the SDM created a space where time/temporality became suspended and participants could simultaneously reflect on their layered perceptions, emotions, and beliefs about their identity, race, oppression, and social justice. The temporal dimensions experienced by the participant allowed them to reflect on their past experiences of violence (for example), their present emotions and future aspirations for social action, and further argue that social dreaming can be used as a mechanism to "nudge us out of our social isolation and fragmentation" (Bermudez, 2018, p. 12), allowing them to enter a space where many expressions can emerge.

SDM as a tool for the pedagogy of art therapy

Pedagogy informs epistemology, which is the coming to know and the knowledge system underlying teaching. The failure to evaluate pedagogy limits the effects of change through education (Murphy, 1996).

Knowledge production within the SDM came from a predominantly all-white female stance and it speaks to the ontological foreground from which the SDM derived. Although these predominant categories are not intended to disqualify certain identities, there was a notable lack of representation in terms of race within the art therapy programme.

Art-making became a tool to empower the pedagogical process, as individuals could analyse their environment, synthesise their thoughts,

and suggest new ideas for environmental improvement (Tsevreni, 2014). Participants' awareness of avoidance and ambivalence regarding social justice, race, and oppression were made vivid by the images and allowed them to draw new associations with their perceptions of access, engagement, and transformation. Engagements are the "the action of making, the feel of the material, the awareness, learning, unlearning, investigating, and reworking" (Talwar, et al., 2018, p. 68) tap into what Springgay (2010) terms "pedagogies of touch". The SDM enabled art therapy students to create, disrupt and defer knowing and made way for new meanings to emerge, which could "point us toward freedom if we were to bring in knowledge from the margins" (Gipson, 2015, p. 144).

In this paper, I explored the intersubjective processes occurring in between the dichotomies of privilege/non-privileged or coloniser/colonised as a worthwhile starting point. If one were only to evaluate the dichotomy between the oppressed and victims of oppression, then the ambiguities, contradictions, and illogicality of life under apartheid would be concealed (Adam & Moodley, 1993, p. 10). The SDM created an opportunity for the "multiplicity of voices to be heard" (Blackwell, 2003, p. 462), as there cannot be one single version of the truth.

The exploration into the social unconscious of art therapy trainees created a possibility where art therapists could foresee the opportunity to enact change and subsequently not be 'stuck' in the forward and backwards-looking temporalities of post-apartheid life (Hooks, 2012).

Conclusion

The central conclusion of the findings revealed that art therapy trainees' social unconscious comprised power, privilege, identity, alienation, and violence related to their roles as art therapy students and future practising art therapists in the context of South Africa. The SDM and image-making facilitated the ability for art therapy trainees to use their unconscious active imagination, dreams, and image-making to grapple with the complexities of the lived realities of art therapy students in South Africa.

Limitations

The limitation and bias of this article is that it was a deductive approach that aimed at observing art therapy's social unconscious content within a predetermined framework. The findings cannot be generalised to the wider population as the sample size was small and homogenous (art therapy trainees).

Recommendations

My recommendations would be first to encourage art therapy practitioners and allied practitioners to promote thinking derived from an intersectional framework. Practising this framework may help practitioners be empathetic, culturally attuned, and culturally sensitive within a multicultural context.

I would also recommend the inclusion of SDM and other analytic group-based practices as a method of coming to know and actively engaging in the critical discourse around the lived experiences of students, practitioners, and citizens of South Africa.

Future research that uses art-making and unconscious retrieval processes may be a worthwhile endeavour to examine mental health practitioners' identities both internally and within a cultural structure.

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