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Investigating the Use of Creative Mask-Making as a Means to Explore Professional Identity of Doctoral Psychology Students

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INVESTIGATING THE USE OF CREATIVE MASK-MAKING
AS A MEANS TO EXPLORE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF DOCTORAL
PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Antioch University Seattle
Seattle, WA

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements of the Degree
Doctor of Psychology

By

Laura Louise Bentley

July 2016

INVESTIGATING THE USE OF CREATIVE MASK-MAKING AS A MEANS TO
EXPLORE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

This dissertation, by Laura Louise Bentley, has been approved by the committee members signed below who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of the Antioch University Seattle at Seattle, WA in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING THE USE OF CREATIVE MASK-MAKING AS A
MEANS TO EXPLORE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

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The goal of this qualitative study is two-fold: to explore doctoral psychology students' current sense of self-identity as clinicians (nearing graduation) and their future sense of who they hope to become as practicing clinical psychologists using a creative arts methodology and to illustrate how the use of creative arts processes have clinical relevance for not only mental health clinicians and psychologists but also educators. Seven doctoral psychology students nearing graduation participated (individually) in a guided imagery and mask-making experience and in a phenomenological, semi-structured, in-depth interview following the art making. Through the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), an integrative, hermeneutically and phenomenologically-based interpretive research method used to analyze the narrative data, this study explored how the participants' experiences as doctoral students and who they hope to become as future clinical psychologists (Domain 1—Doctoral student as future psychologist) and their experiences about art-making and what they learned about themselves during the process (Domain 2—Guided visualization and art-making as

catalysts). Results from the domain “Doctoral Student as future psychologist” suggest that the doctoral psychology students nearing graduation often feel overwhelmed with the multitude of remaining tasks and obligations influencing their ability to make future career plans and that their primary focus for the future is hope that they will have a sense of greater self-agency and a more balanced life. Results from the second domain, “Guided visualization and art-making as catalysts” indicated that the vast majority of participants appreciated the creative arts/mask-making process and also were surprised about how much they learned about themselves, how the process helped them gain insight into their own identities as future psychologists and their understanding of their own struggles while in graduate school, and provided the participants with an increased understanding about how creative arts processes can be incorporated in the field of psychology for a means of exploration of ideas and problems, not only in a mental health setting with a client but also in an educational setting for use with future doctoral students. The electronic version of this dissertation is at AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, <http://aura.antioch.edu/> and OhioLINK ETD Center, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>

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Chapter I: Introduction

Overview

Substantial research, including both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, has sought to examine doctoral psychology students' professional development regarding skill sets and levels of competency necessary for practicing as a competent clinical psychologist (Goldberg, 1984; Watts, 1987). In addition to skills development, researchers and educators have been exploring ways for students to examine internal and personal experiences of emerging self-identity as professional psychologists. Often, instructors suggest journaling or writing reflection papers are suggested as ways to explore and track students' changing internal experiences. However, both of these tools are language-based and focus primarily on the narrative word. Some academic programs have taken steps among some professions—such as in medicine and nursing: to begin examining the use of less traditional methods for students to explore their own sense of developing self as professionals by using creative means such as drawing, psychodrama therapy, and poetry writing, in order to help facilitate greater accessing of knowledge and feelings (Rabow, 2003; Spouse, 2000). However, a paucity of examples exists that demonstrate ways in which the application of creative, imagery-based art activities can be used within the academic learning environments for students in training to become clinical psychologists.

As artists already know, the act of creation as in art-making can be exciting, illuminating, exasperating at times, cathartic, frustrating, and educational, and can take an individual to a different level of self-knowledge. “Art is inquiry, a way of asking

questions, seeking information, provoking thought, communicating and offering something about the world as perceived by humans” (Baumann, 1999, p. 107), and “art-making involves the continual co-creation of the self” (Brown, 2008, p. 203). The life of a student in a doctorate of clinical psychology program certainly rushes by quickly, and students often experience being in a fog throughout the process (Bruss & Kopala, 1993). Art and art-making can be viewed as a tool to help students through this process and through this fog. The current study, with guided visualization, creative mask-making experience, and investigative interview seemed to provide an opportunity for a creative reworking of the standard reflection paper.

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of experiential art therapy, specifically mask-making, to assist doctoral-level psychology students nearing graduation in exploring their current professional and their identities as a future psychologist. This study will investigate ways in which mask-making can provide a differing perspective, an alternative sense of understanding and richness for student’s internal development of their professional identity process using IPA—an integrative research approach that combines elements of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and narrative inquiry (Smith, 2004) in order to explore the essence of the experience, to explore ways in which participants make sense of their experiences and make meaning from those experiences (Brocki & Wearden, 2006).

Research Question

In what ways will a mask-making experience (and the masks that are created) serve as a means for exploring psychology doctoral candidates’ current professional identities and ideal future identities as clinical psychologists?

Operational Definitions

Hall, Hall, Stradling, and Young (2006) define *imagery* as “an internal representation of a perception of the external world, in the absence of that external experience” (p. 6). The term *guided imagery* is a term that has been used to describe a range of techniques (usually involving a directed and/or visualization or meditation) used by lay individuals and groups, religious communities, or as part of a clinically therapeutic or research process (Ching & Ching, 2006; Utay & Miller, 2006). For the purpose of this study, guided imagery refers to an exercise in which the researcher guides the participants to tap into their imagination and inner resources through a directed meditation/visualization (Utay & Miller, 2006).

Herein, *art* is defined as an activity that results in the creation of a visual product (Reynolds & Lim, 2007).

The word *mask* has many meanings. Edson (2005) has suggested that, across cultures, the facial coverings known as masks serve many purposes, such as passing down myths to future generations, marking group membership or alliance with an idea, allowing individuals to take on differing roles and identities, and covering that which the individual wishes to be hidden. I am using the term, mask, to refer to an object that is frequently worn over or in front of the face to hide the identity of the person and, by its own features, to establish another identity.

Professional identity refers to the set of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences by which individuals define themselves in their professional lives (Aversenti, Bentley, Hayes, & Hein, 2007).

The American Heritage College Dictionary (1993) defines *transition* as a process of change during which someone or something undergoes a change and passes from one form or identity to another, for example, from doctoral student to professional psychologist. By using the term *transition*, I am referring to a process of change from one role to another.

Symbol (derived from the Greek word *symballo*, meaning to bring together or join, as in rivers uniting streams”) is “an image or representation of the unknown conveying a subjective meaning and one greater than its obvious aspects” (Rush, 1978, p. 149).

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Art and Art-Making as Research Modalities

This study is an arts-based, phenomenological exploration using a creative arts technique to help facilitate personal reflection among doctoral psychology candidates nearing the end of their academic training. A human science, art-based perspective will be used to explore the experiences of the participants—as opposed to a natural science, positivist approach, with a focus on the “scientific method” as the only valid, objective, empirical way of obtaining knowledge (McNiff, 1998a). According to Giorgi (1989), the methods of natural science research (with a focus on categorizing and objective measurements of quantifiable data) were invented primarily to deal with the phenomena of nature and not with the experiences of human individuals. Academics, engage in an on-going conflict between “scientific” and “non-scientific” methods of inquiry; art and creative processes have often been categorized as “subjective, unreliable and not valid” (McNiff, 1998a). However, recent rapid growth among researchers indicate an increase in incorporating creative processes and artistic expression in examinations of human experience (Gilroy, 2006; McNiff, 2008). According to Butler-Kisber (2008), “There is a burgeoning interest in using arts-informed research to counteract the hegemony and linearity in written texts, increase voice and reflexivity in the research process, and expand the possibilities of multiple and diverse realities and understandings” (p. 269). In our expanding world, art and science do not have to be mutually exclusive. According to Leavy (2009), art and science are similar in that both attempt to explore elements and experiences of the human condition and seek to advance knowledge and understanding.

As artists have always known, “art is evidence of an act. . . . art makes an interior monologue visible, creating the potential for dialogue (with self and/or another/others)” (Gilroy, 2000, p. 40). Making art is also about discovering, inquiring, asking questions, exploring new meanings, and discovering new opportunities for understanding. Visual art-making can offer access to levels of understanding and personal awareness that can be difficult to verbalize (Havelka, 1968), the visual imagery that is created may illustrate subtle nuances of experience in ways that words cannot (Harter, 2007). Artwork can be viewed as “a different form of language that allows individuals to recognize and express deep thoughts, feelings, and emotions and understand all of these elements in a tangible way, by making an image” (Spouse, 2000, p. 255). Humans live in a complex and complicated outer world and “have a continuing and complex inner response to the inner world: needs, emotions, thoughts, fleeting and long-term—not transparent to us, not self-interpreting. If we are to understand it, we must give it . . . shapes and examine these shapes. Art is a way of doing this” (Parsons, as cited in Spouse, 2000, p. 255). Additionally, “it is this ability of images to convey multiple messages, to pose questions, and to point to both abstract and concrete thoughts in so economical a fashion that makes image-based media highly appropriate for the community of academic knowledge” (Weber, 2008, p. 43).

Personal and Professional Identity Development

Becoming a psychologist entails a unique process that is different from other educational processes: students must not only acquire a foundation of knowledge but must also go through a personal transformative experience. According to Langman (2000), counseling and psychotherapy students must immerse themselves in a subject that

is so human that they cannot help but be affected by the process. Professional development and personal development occur side by side and intertwine with one another. Personal learning influences professional performance and professional learning affects personal experience.

What is “professional identity?” Many concepts and terms are used to describe the professional growth and development of student psychologists—such as *professional identity* (McGowen & Hart, 1990), *professional socialization* (Green, 1991), *postgraduate development* (Fogel & Glick, 1991), and *professional development* (Ducheny, Alletshauer, Crandell, & Schneider, 1997). The construct of professional identity usually involves the formation of an attitude of personal and ethical responsibility to the profession as well as development of feelings of pride for the profession they will be entering (Bruss & Kopala, 1993). Flapin (1984) explains that one’s identity formation as a clinician involves an “emerging self” in terms of self-esteem, a self that is based in how students think they are measuring up to the ideals of their profession. Information about professional development also comes from research related to professions other than psychology. For instance, Miller (1992) examined the professional development needs of nurses and suggested that professional identity development needs to involve an understanding of values, areas of interest, and specific personal and professional needs. In one phenomenological, longitudinal study of nursing students (Spouse, 2000), the creative process and art-making were used and found to be beneficial as a means to explore identity. The students were asked to draw “what it felt like to be a nurse,” then the drawings were used as a means for discussion. As part of a course on personal and professional identity development, Rabow (2003) also used

drawing to explore the experiences of medical interns, specifically asking them to make drawings and other creative modalities such as collage out and about specific issues—such as their emerging sense of selves as doctors, issues such as feelings about death and dying. At the end of the course, the students reported that these artistic, expressive activities substantially added to their abilities to self-reflect on their experiences.

Numerous studies and theoretical papers have examined professional identity development of graduate-level psychology students from a variety of perspectives. Bruss and Kopala (1993) described the transformations that psychology students go through during graduate school as paralleling Winnicott's (1965) developmental milestones of infancy and childhood. The authors also compared beginning students to newborn infants: brand new, in a strange, new environment, learning to take in all that is around them. Sheikh, Milne, and MacGregor (2007) developed a circumplex model that incorporates and synthesizes clinical coursework and training, outside influences, relationships and support systems, and the need for self-awareness and reflection in order to incorporate all the various spheres of students' learning. Ducheny et al. (1997) defined professional development as “an ongoing process through which an individual derives a cohesive sense of personal identity by integrating the broad-based knowledge, skills, and attitudes within psychology with one's values and interests” (p. 89). Elman, Illfelder, and Robiner (2005) define professional development as “the developmental process of acquiring, expanding, refining, and sustaining knowledge, proficiency, skill, and qualifications for competent professional functioning that result in professionalism” (p. 369). Ducheny et al. (1997) view professional identity as “the organizing mechanism for professional development” (p. 89). Coleman (1979) and Kirk (1987) described two

basic types of learning: traditional learning (using didactic teaching methods) and experiential learning. Several authors and researchers (Ducheny et al., 1997; Sheikh et al., 2007) stressed the importance of experiential learning as a key component of beginning training for clinical psychologists. However, a dearth of specific examples of interventions that can help facilitate graduate psychology students' personal professional identities.

Art Therapy

Art therapy is a therapeutic process in which explorations in creativity and creative expression with various art media are utilized to promote self-understanding, healing, growth and change (Malchiodi, 1998). Art therapy can assist both the client and the therapist explore the unconscious, enable expression and communication without words, and can move a client from being "in the moment" to a deeper psychological state and back again (Moon, 2007). As a method of exploration, art therapy can open up the client to areas of knowledge and understanding previously not consciously known and can provide a product, namely tangible evidence of the work and gains that have been achieved in therapy (Hinz & Ragsdell, 1990). According to London (1989), the focus of art and art-making not the end product but the process an individual goes through:

The end of art is not art, but communication, or better still, communion, breaking out of the solitariness and silence of one dimension of ourselves and making contact with "the other." That other might be intrapsychic; the unconscious mind acknowledging the subconscious; or it may be interpsychic: one person meeting another; or it may be even transpersonal: oneself touching the universe. (p. 74)

Anecdotally, following the tragedies of September 11, 2001, New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton wrote about the power of art and art therapy to work with people who might have been traumatized by those events. Through art therapy and art-making, traumatized individuals were able to make connections with each other in order to be able to be part of the shared horror and tragedy, and to bring memories of and feelings about what they saw or experienced to a visual form, allowing for exploration and processing of their experiences in a safe and contained manner (David, 2002).

The creative process and art-making. The creative process of art and art-making is basic to all people (Malchiodi, 1998, p. 26); through creative expression, individuals are often able to access thoughts, feelings, and emotions they might otherwise not be able to express, to give voice to their inner experiences (Lark, 1998), and to explore parts of themselves that might otherwise be denied (Kottler, 1986; Malchiodi, 1998; Manheim, 1998). Manheim (1998) suggested that creativity and the creative process can help individuals integrate their inner and outer experiences, thereby promoting ego autonomy and promoting self-actualization. “The creative act . . . uncovers, selects, reshuffles, combines, synthesizes already existing facts, ideas, faculties and skills” (Papp, 1984, p. 481).

Symbolic representation. Symbol representation has been found in artwork throughout human history and, although symbols often hold both private and individual meanings, many symbols and images seem to reoccur throughout the years with universal meanings (Malchiodi, 1998). The creation of symbols provides individuals with opportunities to create a sense of order about their own inner experiences and a means for them to outwardly express those experiences (Deri, 1984). According to Papp (1984),

“What artists have always known is that in order to deal with human dilemmas and ambiguities, one must bypass the rigid corridors of reason, science, and logical analysis and concern oneself with imagery, dreams, symbols and metaphors” (p. 479). According to Moon (2007), an artist and art therapist, all artwork can be viewed, in a sense, as a metaphor of the individual who created it.

Although artists have witnessed the use of symbols (such as metaphors) illustrated throughout art history, researchers and mental health clinicians are also recognizing some of the benefits of working with metaphors. According to Angus and Rennie (1988), a metaphor is “an experiential phenomenon entailing images and felt senses as part of an inner groping for meaning, wherein something is imagined or conceived as being something else” (p. 552). Metaphors allow for the communication of shared experience and of meaning-making (Shinebourne & Smith, 2010). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believe that the use of the metaphor is “one of the most important tools for trying to comprehend partially what cannot be comprehended totally: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices and spiritual awareness” (p. 193).

Animal imagery has been present in artwork throughout human history, dating back to Paleolithic times (Sivin, 1986). Animal symbolism can hold special meaning for individuals and can be especially important cross-culturally because many cultures have incorporated animal imagery and symbolism into their understanding of history and into their religious and/or spiritual beliefs (Henderson, 1999). The incorporation of animal imagery in art therapy directives provides a means for exploring one’s sense of self—from an alternative view. For instance, when a specific animal image is selected and explored through art, the resulting images, when used within a clinical setting, can help

artists explore various aspects of that animal in relation to themselves and gain increased understanding and acceptance about previously unknown or unacknowledged characteristics, skills, values, and strengths (Henderson, 1999).

The expression of and on-going dialogue with personal/universal symbols and imagery known as “archetypes” (the natural language of the unconscious) and the process of “active imagination” (the act of allowing things to happen) allows individuals to give form to unconscious expression, thereby giving a visible form and a meaning that can then be integrated into life (Ching & Ching, 2006; Jung, 1966; Nelson, 2007). Through this process, an individual will have increased access to feelings, can develop a deeper level of self-understanding, and be led toward integration and balance in life. Lark (1998) spoke generally about the benefits of the creative process, as well as specifically about her mask-making community projects: “Art making and symbolic processes . . . are natural ways in which to embody, to give representation to the invisible, voice to the silences and access through whichever intelligence systems of expressive preferences are most effective for the individual” (p. 68).

Masks

Historical and cultural uses of masks. Masks and mask-making are a historical and cultural phenomenon that dates back centuries and was/is present in almost every culture in the world (Baranski, 1954; Cook, 2000; Edson, 2005; Gregor, 1968). The earliest examples of mask-making were not merely decorative or a form of art but also appeared to have mystical and/or spiritual meanings, allowing wearers to transcend their daily identity as a means of change and transition (Janzing, 1998; Schultz, 1991). Many of the earliest known imagery of mask-wearing date back to the Paleolithic period,

approximately 20,000 years ago, and might illustrate the use of mask images as a means of transformation. In paintings on cave walls in Tassali, Spain and in Dordogne, France, figures are depicted wearing animal masks. In the “Trois Freres” caves in France, a man believed to be a shaman wears a stag’s head topped with huge antlers, an owl’s face, ears like a wolf, a long goat’s beard, bear paws and a horse’s tail (Sivin, 1986). Buildings in the hilltop acropolis in Cacaxtla, Central Mexico, contain wall images (which date back to 700—900 A.D.) of a Mayan man wearing a bird suit and bird mask—the human figure is clearly seen inside the disguise (Foreman, 2007). Anthropologists studying these mask images believe the imagery is evidence that priests and/or shamans might have worn masks as part of rituals of transformation—to transform themselves and become the physical representation of a god (Foreman, 2007).

According to Brigham (1979), masks were used historically in all areas of life: in celebrations; in mourning; and to gain attention from the gods because masks were thought to possess mythico-religious significance, to conceal identity, to create a different identity, or as agents of catharsis. More recently, Northwest Coast Indians created complex, intricate, and complicated transformation masks that combine human and animal characteristics and attributes, making a connection between the creator/wearer’s natural and spirit worlds (Sivin, 1986). By wearing a mask of specific animals or birds, the wearer was thought to be able to access to the wisdom of that animal (Dunn-Snow & Joy-Smellie, 2000).

In addition, numerous cultures have used masks as part of their death rituals. One of the common elements of all of these uses of masks seem to be either of transition—moving from one state of being to another—or transformation, becoming

another being. In ancient Egypt, facial masks were made of linen bandages soaked in resin and covered with plaster and painted for the process of mummification so the spirit of the deceased could recognize them in the afterlife (Foreman, 2007). In a sense, these masks served as soul transitions from life to death. Ancient death masks made of plaster, gold, silver, bronze, and terra cotta and covering the face of the dead have been found in graves, crypts, and burial chambers in Mycenae, Peru, Manchuria, and Korea and in Incan burial chambers, likely serving as a means for recognition by the souls after death (Sivin, 1986). As forms of social communication, masks are devices for linking one's daily activities to ancestors, the spirit world, and forces of nature, as conveyers of history, traditional beliefs, rituals, and ceremony. As a means of reenacting myths, masks tell stories and relay historical dramas in order to maintain tradition and social order (Edson, 2005; Foreman, 2007).

The key elements in many Western and non-Western traditions of mask-making and mask-wearing seems to be transformation from one role to another and/or trying on various identities. In Japan, the 500-year-old tradition of *Noh* theater continues to be a vital part of Japanese society and culture. *Noh* masks, traditionally worn by men, generally represent women, older people, warriors and demons (Sivin, 1986). Masks were first introduced in Chinese opera during the T'ang Dynasty, 618—907 A.D., during which time masks were painted particular colors to represent particular characteristics or attributes—such as red for loyalty, white for treachery, and silver and gold for supernatural beings (Sivin, 1986).

In more recent times, masks have also been used as a means for hiding from one's own identity or for changing identities. In 17th century Europe, individuals often

wore masks to hide their identities. For instance, members of high society wore masks when involved in socially deviant behaviors; criminals and prostitutes wore masks to hide their identities (Edson, 2005). In the twentieth century, masks have been associated with play-acting and children, theatrical endeavors, Halloween, as well as horror movies (Sivin, 1986).

The fascination about masks, mask-making, and mask-wearing continues, recently demonstrating a rebirth. “By their unusual nature, they arouse curiosity, stimulate the imagination, and transport the viewer [and the wearer] from the seemingly mundane activities of daily life to a different, often mystical time” (Edson, 2005, p. 7). Ulrich (2000) has stated that masks have assisted cultures around the world during periods of change, especially empowering transformation. As early vehicles of transformation, masks have been historically, culturally, and psychologically endowed with qualities that are both mysterious and luminal (Edson, (2005).

The psychological use, benefits, and risks of masks and mask-making.

Numerous examples in the educational, social science, and medical science literature can be found indicating the uses and benefits of masks and mask-making. Examples include such diverse areas as in the performing arts (Baptiste, 1989; Hitchcock & Bates, 1991), pedagogical methods (Ballengee-Morris, 2005; Cho, 1998), and community education and empowerment tools (Allen, 2007; Gerity & Bear, 2007; Lark, 1998). Additionally, masks have been used as tools of self-reflection (Johnson, 1993; Schultz, 1991), as a therapeutic or diagnostic aid (Fryrear & Stephens, 1988; Rush, 1978), and a research modality.

Educators in the field of child education, such as Ballengee-Morris (2005) and Cho (1998) found that an examination of masks and/or masks-making can have many uses with children, especially educating children about culture and teaching multicultural issues. Art educators have also found that mask-wearing and mask-making can be especially beneficial for children, as one art teacher noted, as masks allow individuals to play new roles, take on new parts and personas, and, in addition, the students not only make art but also produce new knowledge and understanding (Ballengee-Morris, 2005). Masks and mask-making have been used with children dealing with grief. For instance, Harting, Tompkins, and Ryan-Wenger (2004), using mask-making with a children's grief support group, asked the children to create a mask or a face to symbolize their feelings of grief. The authors then used the mask images to explore these feelings with the children, allowing children to express their feelings in the safety of a creative art project.

Masks and mask-making have also been used by psychology and mental health students to explore aspects of themselves, deal with difficult emotions, and in their processes of transitioning from student to clinician. Schultz (1991), an art therapist and artist, made a series of masked images as a way to not only explore difficult emotions, but also to gain deeper experience on transitioning from being a student to becoming a master's level therapist. Becker (2004) also explored personal mask-making as part of the process of transitioning from psychology student to completion of a doctorate degree. Through a series of 12 archetypal masked images, Becker attempted to know, accept, and incorporate various aspects of self.

Brigham (1979), reviewing the historical uses of masks and mask-making from an anthropological, religious, and psychological perspective, found that many (if not

most) of the historical examples of the uses of masks contained elements of trying on new identities or of transition or transformation. One of the first examples of the clinical uses of masks as a means to explore a different identity was Pollackek and Homefield's (1954) study of the uses of mask-making and mask wearing with children with speech problems. While wearing masks and exploring various ways of being, the children's stuttering lessened—in essence, through the transformation into a different persona.

The ability for exploration and transformation makes mask-making a powerful clinical tool. Wearing a mask allows users to take on alternate personas (wearing the image of the mask) and therefore, allows users to experience themselves in a manner that might not be as accessible as their own face. By creating and looking through the eyes of masks, we can gain opportunities for exploring aspects of ourselves previously unknown or unacknowledged. Janzing (1998) noted that “the goal is to create an interpersonal dialogue, a dialogue between the client and the parts of his personality that are represented symbolically by the mask” (p. 154). Mask-making encourages exploration of and the deeper understanding of one's self. Using mask-making in the therapeutic session allows for the client's own natural meaning-making, “the engagement of unconscious personal and cultural constructs,” thereby being “transformative as well as descriptive” (Lark, 1998, p. 66). Therapeutic mask-making can also provide individuals with a tangible way to explore and articulate difficult thoughts, feelings, and emotions. For instance, soldiers receiving treatment at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (part of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center) for traumatic brain injury and for psychological health concerns (such as PTSD) made masks with the help of an art

therapist, providing the veterans with an opportunity to articulate and illustrate hidden feelings and parts of themselves (Alexander, 2015).

Relatively few reports in the literature report negative reactions to masks and mask-making. Dunn-Snow and Joy-Smellie (2000) suggest that art therapists who choose to do a mask-making experiential with clients be well-trained and examine and match the appropriateness of mask-making with the specific needs of the client. The authors specifically caution about making plaster masks on individuals, who might have difficulties with loss of control, because the clients need to stay still for a period of time. In addition, the authors caution the use of masks and mask-making with any clients who have fragile egos (such as with patients with dissociative identity disorder or active psychosis) because this kind of modality can increase the risk of ego disintegration.

My personal history with art and mask-making. Ever since I was a small child, I have been privileged to feel and experience the power and pull of creativity and the healing presence of art and art-making in my life. From the first time I picked up a crayon, I traveled to various places and various worlds, walking down new paths, and creating new creatures and creations. From about age five until my teens, life in my family was often chaotic due to an older sibling's out-of-control behaviors, on-going drug and alcohol abuse, and acute mental illness. Although, being so young, I often did not know what exactly was going on as my parents struggled to keep my sister alive, I could feel the stress in our house, the tense days turning into weeks, could see my mother crying, while, at the same time, telling me nothing was wrong—in an effort to “protect” her youngest child. Through my creativity and art-making, I found a way to feel safe and

comforted as I explored my experiences, dreamed of new adventures, and daydreamed about fantasy worlds.

Throughout the years, I have been especially fascinated by masks and mask-making. Playing dress-up and play acting with masks and costumes allowed me to transport myself to a different, magical place—away from the stresses of my childhood—and allowed me to transform into whomever or whatever I wanted to be, to try on new identities and new personas, to be different from the shy, unobtrusive blond-haired girl who sat quietly playing. Halloween was always my favorite holiday and I spent weeks planning the costume I would wear that year—down to the least small detail.

I remember a Halloween party, when I was in my twenties, to which I went made up like a black cat. I made my own costume, painted my face, and wore a cat mask painted black, with silver, grey, and white highlights. When I arrived at this party, no one could tell who I was. I felt free and, for once, comfortable in a crowd, and, at that moment, not quiet and reserved, not the wall-flower I normally felt like. I was free to act playfully, with a sense of acceptance and with my normal nervousness gone. Remembering this experience, I can still recall how amazing it felt. By taking on a different persona and identity, I transformed myself and was personally transformed through the process.

During one assignment in a class about humor in psychology, I painted my face and got dressed up like a clown so no one could recognize me. I dressed as this clown driving through the streets, and people pointed and laughed; I felt free enough to laugh right along with them. Somehow, the anonymity of my painted, mask-like face and the anonymity of going out in public dressed like that facilitated my feeling free enough to

laugh and act playful. Wearing my painted clown mask (and costume) provided me an opportunity to try on a different persona and, through the experience, to learn about myself.

I am automatically drawn to masks and masked images in my artwork and my life. I have made many masks throughout my life and have experienced, through my own personal experiences, that the process of mask-making can allow an individual to access painful and difficult feelings in order to move through those feelings. As I look back on the many masks I have made, I can see my life history illustrated in its wide range of experiences and emotions: from pain, depression, trauma, and anger to freedom, happiness, love, and joy. The mask-making process serves as not only an artistic medium that has helped me deal with and move through some difficult times and emotions, but, also, the masks themselves now act as a tangible, visual reminder of emotions I have experienced, events with which I have struggled and overcome, and the kind of person I have become. Through my own experiences with masks and mask-making, I have discovered the power of this tool and to experience the use of this type of directive for ourselves and our clients. While attending one of my master's level classes in Art Therapy, I had an opportunity to be a part of a group that designed and implemented an exploratory pilot study using a mask-making experiential with beginning master's level mental health students as a means to help facilitate personal professional identity development (Aversenti et al., 2007). This dissertation project is an adaptation and expansion of that previous study. In the current study, my participants were clinical psychology doctoral students nearing graduation and I focused was on their lived experiences of current and future professional identity, using a specific guided imagery

directive, a more in-depth and comprehensive semi-structured interview, and narrative data analysis using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

The Benefits and Risks of Guided Imagery

Guided imagery, as defined by Bresler and Rossman, co-founders of the Academy for Guided Imagery, is a “range of techniques from simple visualization and direct imagery-based suggestion through metaphor and storytelling” (as cited in Uta & Miller, 2006, p. 40). The type of guided imagery of this research uses a script to facilitate (or guide) the subject within a narrative structure for their imaginary journey (Hall et al., 2006).

The concept of guided visualization or imagery is not a new approach to helping. For many years, guided visualization has been well established within Native America and other indigenous populations; in Hinduism, Christianity, and other religious traditions, and within traditional Chinese medicine (Dirlam, Ching, & Ching, 2006). The concept of using imagery when working with a client also goes back many years. Schoettle (1980) pointed out that Freud’s psychoanalysis is based on the “unraveling of the patient’s fantasies, daydreams, and dreams”, a continuing primary focus of psychoanalysis (p. 220). Utay and Miller (2006) reviewed the use of guided imagery and found numerous benefits of guided imagery use in the medical field, such as with stroke patients, cancer patients, and children recovering from burns. Arbuthnott, Arbuthnott, and Rossiter (2001) completed a review of various studies on the use guided imagery from the fields of medicine and nursing. These authors concluded that these techniques can assist patients dealing with recovery from serious illnesses or injuries; in stress reduction

and pain management; and in treating individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks, and mood disorders.

Heinschel (2002) found evidence for the use of guided imagery in the treatment of anxiety, alleviation of pain, and improvement of immune functioning. Some clinicians suggested that the use of guided imagery might be dangerous to use with some clients, possibly out of fear regarding the recovery of “memories” of sexual abuse. However, Hall et al., (2006) contend that, although some of the relaxation techniques used with clients in directed guided imagery can place individuals in a more relaxed state in which they may be more suggestible, no evidence exists that the use of guided imagery in therapeutic sessions (or in research) will produce recovered or false memories.

Numerous studies examine professional identity development among counselors and psychologists, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In addition, the literature clearly supports the use of art therapy, of creative arts processes, of mask-making and of guided visualization as ways to help people explore, gain access to deeper and, possibly, unrecognized feelings and ideas. Within the academic arena of medicine (De la Croix, Rose, Wildig, & Willson, 2011; Thompson, Lamontt-Robinson, & Yonnie, 2010), nursing (Rieger & Chernomas, 2013), social work (Hafford-Letchfield, Leonard, & Couchman, 2012; Walton, 2012) and mental health counseling (Keller-Dupree & Perryman, 2013), researchers and instructors are beginning to explore the use of non-verbal, experiential ways of learning as a part of the educational process for clinicians. However, the literature continues to show a dearth of studies exploring the use of creative arts methods within the field of clinical psychology education. In addition, to date, no studies have focused on exploring doctoral students’ sense of change from student to

professional psychologist. I believe that art therapy techniques can be useful in helping doctoral students nearing graduation become more aware and reflective of their process in terms of their graduate school experience, their uncertainty, and their hopes for their future professional selves.

Chapter III: Methodology

Philosophical Aspects of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

As a research philosophy, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is an integrative approach that attempts to focus on the “person-in-context (a particular person in a particular context), and that person’s relatedness to the phenomenon at hand” (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006, p. 109) to distill an understanding of the individual’s lived experience. The philosophical roots of IPA can be found in the major theoretical underpinnings of two specific philosophies—phenomenology and hermeneutics. Smith (2004) describes IPA as phenomenological because it primarily focuses on the individual and a desire to explore his or her lived experiences, and ways in which this person makes sense of those experiences in order to understand the distilled essence of the experience or phenomenon.

IPA also draws upon the philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutics because it recognizes the central role of the researcher in making sense of the particular experience (Smith, 2004). IPA research can be viewed as “a double-hermeneutic” experience—the participant is trying to make sense of his or her personal and social world while the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make meaning of the experience (Smith, 2004, p. 40). Tappan (1997) spoke about the hermeneutic focus:

Hermeneutic approaches view the knower and the known as fundamentally interrelated, and thus assume that any interpretation necessarily involves an essential circularity of understanding—a hermeneutic circle in which the interpreter’s perspective and understanding initially shapes his [sic] interpretation

of the given phenomenon, and yet that interpretation, as it interacts with the phenomenon in question, is open to revision and elaboration. (p. 651)

With IPA, there is no attempt to restrict or remove the shared experiences of the researcher—such as through “bracketing” (Creswell, 1998). Instead, researchers can draw upon their own experiences and interpretative resources in order to make sense of what the person is saying and/or the story he or she is telling (Smith & Osborn, 2003); the researcher does not change or influence the meaning of the individual’s narrative but, rather, tries to better understand the meaning through the researcher’s own shared experiences.

According to Smith (2004), IPA has three specific characteristic features of IPA: idiographic, inductive, and interrogative (p. 41). IPA is *idiographic* (p. 41) in that analysis begins with an intensive, highly-detailed examination of one case until a degree of closure or “gestalt” has been achieved, then moves on to the next case (and so on). Only when all cases have been analyzed can the researcher examine across cases for analysis of convergent and divergent themes. IPA research can be viewed as *inductive* (p. 43) because the researcher does not attempt to validate or negate a specific hypothesis. Rather, the intent of the research is exploratory, not explanatory—to explore a participant’s experience through broader research questions to collect expansive data, “to explore, flexibly and in detail, an area of concern” (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 53). IPA is *interrogative* (p. 43); through prompts and further open-ended questioning, the researcher attempts to delve deeply into the participants’ experiences and understandings of those experiences.

Choice of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Doctoral students nearing completion of their clinical education are, by the very nature of this significant life experience, in the process of developing new professional identities as clinical psychologists. IPA research has been particularly well-suited to areas of inquiry which are complex, process-oriented, and/or novel (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Most IPA work (especially in health psychology) has focused on personal changes that occur or are associated with major life transitions and transforming one's sense of self or identity (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA's focus on significant life-changing events and *identity* in "all its guises, manifestations and complexities" (Smith, 2004, p. 49) seemed to make it a perfect fit for working with doctoral students approaching graduation and becoming clinical psychologists.

This research method combines effectively with art, art-making, and creative expression (Betensky, 1995; Nelson & Rawlings, 2007; Rabow, 2003; Spouse, 2000). Betensky is an art therapist who, early in her career, recognized the potential for using a phenomenological method with her clients regarding art and art-making. Betensky (1995) notes that the art project itself can be seen as "a phenomenon with its own structure" (p. xi). Betensky advocated for clinicians and researchers to assist clients in exploring what is within the artwork and, through verbal narrative descriptions and reflexive dialog, discovering the connections between the artwork and clients' inner experiences.

Participants

Sampling strategy. Doctoral students in the last year of training were offered the opportunity to participate in this research project. This researcher hoped that participation would be a pleasant, beneficial experience, and would, in addition, illustrate

to the participants (in the process of becoming clinical psychologists) as well as to others currently practicing and teaching in the field of psychology an example of ways in which the creative process and creative expression could be used in an academic and/or therapeutic setting. IPA research usually utilizes purposefully-selected and carefully-situated samples in order to focus on the experiences of a “particular people in a particular context” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 29), which clearly applies to doctoral psychology candidates.

The research in this dissertation is based on several assumptions about participants. Because participants were doctoral students enrolled and accepted for an advanced graduate-level program, I assumed that the participants have the verbal and intellectual ability to express themselves easily, coherently, and fully. Secondly, I worked on the assumption that the participants, as students in a psychology program, have access to and are able to recognize, express, and articulate their emotions, thoughts, and feelings.

Participant recruitment. After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval, I recruited participants through posters describing the study and placed throughout a local university that offers a doctoral program in clinical psychology. I asked interested students to contact this researcher in person, via email, or by phone. In addition, I posted a general email message describing the study on the university’s email and website. Selection of subjects was on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Sampling size. Research studies using IPA are increasingly characterized by purposeful, homogenous sampling, using a small number of participants specifically selected to illuminate their experiences regarding a specific research question or area of

interest (Smith & Osborn, 2003). I selected eight individuals who were enrolled in their final year of a doctorate of clinical psychology program at a local university, who had no prior experience with art therapy (either as a clinician or a client), and who were willing to participate in a mask-making experiential and an interview participated in this study. Unfortunately, due to a mechanical failure, one of the interviews was not electronically recorded. Therefore, this participant's narrative data was not available for transcription, and the mask image has not been included. The remaining seven participants formed a purposeful sample. The small sample size is consistent with the ideological focus of IPA because this sample size allows for the researcher to be able to perform an in-depth, thorough, detailed, and finely-nuanced analysis of the interview data (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith, 2004) and attempt to understand a "particular experiential phenomena (an event, process or relationship) . . . from the perspective of particular people in a particular context" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29).

Research Procedures

The guided imagery and mask-making experiences and the initial phenomenological interviews were held in private classrooms on the university campus. Participants were seen individually and, upon completion of informed consent documents, initially asked to complete a short survey that collected basic demographic information and baseline information about the student's past history with art-making. Then each participant was given a short guided-imagery exercise that asked each person to imagine an animal/creature/being image that either represented or communicated to each participant about his or her current identity as doctoral candidates/clinicians or his or her idealized future identity as a clinical psychologist. At the beginning of the

mask-making process, I assured each participant that they could make no mistakes or wrong ways of creating their mask images. The participant was then given a paper-maché mold of a basic face form, along with a variety of materials such as various colors of paint and paintbrushes, colored markers, oil and soft pastels, feathers, craft fur, and construction and tissue paper and asked to create two images on the mask in response to the animal/image s/he imagined. On the inside of the mask, participants were asked to create an image of their current experience as doctoral students in a rigorous clinical psychology program who will become future clinical psychologists; on the outside of the mask, participants were asked to create an image of how they imagine they would be as future psychologists. Upon finishing their masks, participants were then asked to describe their creations, their experiences and process making the image, and any discoveries they had made through a semi-structured interview. In IPA, the interview questions start out general. Participants are then allowed to explore their experiences further with gentle prompts to allow “the space to think, speak and be heard” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 57), in order to elicit detailed stories, thoughts and feelings. The following are examples of questions/statements (see Appendix C for additional questions and possible prompts) that were used during the interview:

1. Please describe your emotions and thoughts during this experience.
2. Tell me about your animal/creature/being.
3. How do you feel about this animal/creature/being?
4. Do you identify with any characteristics of the animal/creature/being you made?

5. Do you see any similarities and/or differences between you and your animal/creature/being?
6. Are there any aspects of these similarities and/or differences that you think will be relevant to your transition from student to practicing clinical psychologist?
7. Did you experience any new learning about yourself, about your experiences, or about your future hopes and dreams through this process?

The guided-imagery experience, mask-making, and narrative interview process took 45 to 90 minutes. Interviews were recorded using a high quality digital recorder, and the mask each participant made was photographed with each subject's permission—both inside and out. In order to insure confidentiality, participants' names and other identifying information were removed from the audio recordings. The audio recordings were then sent to a professional transcriptionist and interviews were transcribed verbatim. Upon receiving the transcribed data, I also reviewed the narrative data with the audio recordings, in order to substantiate the veracity of the transcriptions as well as grasp any nuances in the speech patterns and flow of language with each participant. The original audio recordings, the transcribed data, the pictures of the masks, and all data analysis work have been kept securely stored in a double-locked file cabinet in a secure location. Pseudonyms have been assigned to each participant in order to protect his or her identity.

Data Analysis Procedures

The guided imagery script was read to each participant in order to prevent any differences or discrepancies in this part of the research project. In addition, the interviews were conducted using scripted questions and a semi-structured IPA interview

method. Regarding mask-making, it was especially important to follow Moon's (2007) caution about respecting the creation and meaning of a person's art. Moon stresses the importance of dealing with clients and with their art "with a sense of awe and wonder and try to establish a respectful conversation with them that honors many possible meanings" (p. 4), rather than systematic labeling or reductive interpretation. For this reason, I completed only a descriptive analysis of the artwork, allowing each participant to find his or her own meaning in the colors and materials he or she used and in the masks that were created.

Smith et al. (2009) developed the IPA methodology as a creative, flexible means of interpretative analysis designed to explore ways in which research participants make sense of their experience. By using IPA, I intended to analyze the narrative data by using techniques that stayed true to each participant's voice, allowed me to listen to his or her stories and to gain an understanding of his or her experiences. Through sustained engagement with and interpretation of the text, the researcher represents not only participants' stories but also co-creates their identity through their story, while maintaining the integrity of the participants' understanding of ways to make sense of their experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Smith et al. (2009) describe IPA analysis as both iterative and inductive and that the analysis of the transcript data includes the following strategies:

1. A close, line-by-line analysis of the experiences, concerns, and understandings of the participant;
2. Identification of emergent themes—both convergent and divergent;

3. A dialogue between the researcher, the coded data, and the researcher's knowledge about psychological issues;
4. The development of a visual structure or frame which shows the relationships between themes;
5. Organization of the material in a format that can be traced through the analysis process;
6. The use of transparency and supervision to help test and develop the coherence of the interpretation; and
7. Reflections on the researcher's own perceptions and processes.

Although IPA research does not adhere to a specific set of rules in terms of the data analysis process, the process should adhere to the general principals of IPA analysis (Smith et al., 2009). Thematic data analysis using IPA requires close interactions between the researcher and the text, with the researcher repeatedly returning to the text in order to validate emerging themes and meanings (Shinebourne & Smith, 2010). All of my analysis of the transcribed interviews was done by hand. As suggested by Smith et al. (2009), regarding conducting analysis of narrative data using IPT, I analyzed the first interview data using the following steps: 1. reading and rereading in order to begin to actively engage with the words, 2. initial noting, 3. developing emergent themes, and 4. searching for connections across emergent themes. After my initial reading, I then moved to the initial noting—making notes in the margin of the transcript—to identify the overall flow of the transcript, any particular linguistic comments that came to mind (such as word usage, use of language, pauses and breaths, etc.), any descriptive comments (focusing on content), and any conceptual comments that came to mind. My second step

in the narrative data analysis process was to scan the transcribed interview data for emergent themes, making note of these themes on the margins. During the third reading, I documented any emerging themes and phrases that illustrated themes, identifying significant data, trying to capture the “essence” of the experience in the words in the text through “a free textual analysis” (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 67).

After the first transcript had been thoroughly read, re-read, and analyzed, I then moved on the next transcript and followed the same steps. In addition, the themes that I discovered from the first transcript helped orient my analysis of the transcripts for the rest of my participants—looking to not only discern repeated patterns but also identify and acknowledge new, emergent, and divergent themes. For each additional transcript, I went through this same in-depth analysis, constantly checking back between my own sense of making meaning with what the participant actually said. After each transcript had been thoroughly analyzed by the aforementioned interpretative process, I listed the emergent themes on a sheet of paper—first in chronological order, with the specific quotes/words connected to each identified theme, then a clustering of these themes through “iterative” analysis (a close interaction between myself and the words/themes/meanings), looking for patterns and for sub-themes. After all the transcripts had been thoroughly analyzed by the above interpretation process, I constructed a table (a visual charting) of sub-themes and super-ordinate themes for each participant, with identified samples in the transcript where key words of each could be found as (see Appendix A).

The next step of the data analysis process involved searching for connections across emergent themes: looking for frequency within and across transcripts; merging or subsuming similar or repetitive themes; and changing, dropping, and/or re-analyzing any

themes that did not appear central to the text/clearly connected to the narrative data. After my initial step of identifying emergent themes within each transcript, I wrote down each theme (with the identifying words and associated page numbers) on notes and spread them out on the table. Initially, I was looking for connections and divergences across these themes. However, as suggested by Smith et al. (2009), I also explored the narrative data using abstraction (putting similar themes together and renaming them), polarization (identifying oppositional positions and relationships between themes), contextualization (identifying key events between and across themes), numeration (the frequencies of themes within a text and across texts), and function of the language use in order to identify super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes. Important to note is that specific themes have been included in my final analysis not based solely on the number of occurrences the themes arise within the narrative data (such as being endorsed by a majority of participants) but also because of their importance in the texts as well as by the richness and intensity of their data.

Three domains were discussed during the interviews: (a) the participants' doctoral level experiences and sense of current self-identity as they near graduation, (b) their experiences during the guided visualization/mask-making and interview, and (c) what was discovered about their future selves and who they hope to become as practicing psychologists. During my final thematic analysis, I collapsed the themes into two domains: "student as future psychologist" (with three superordinate themes and eight subthemes) and "Guided-visualization and art-making as catalysts" (with two superordinate themes and six sub-themes). My intention is that this final analysis has provided a "detailed interpretative analysis of themes" (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 89)

that goes beyond standard thematic content analysis and provides for a richer, nuanced understanding of the experience of the participants and the masks participants created.

Chapter IV: Results

A total of eight individuals participated in this research study. Unfortunately, due to a malfunction of the digital recording device, one of the interviews could not be transcribed, so this participant's data (and completed mask) has not been included. Because several of the participants in my study discussed thoughts and feelings of an extremely sensitive and personal nature, I have chosen only to disclose the demographic of gender attached to each mask and resulting interview data in order to preserve confidentiality. In terms of demographics, four of the seven participants are female and three are male. Five participants identified as Caucasian, one participant identified as African American, and one identified as multi-racial. Three participants are married, two are single, one is divorced, and one is partnered. The average age of the participants was 36.2 years. The average amount of time the participants were in the doctoral program was 4.5 years. Findings from the data analysis itself, as well as pictures of the mask images, are explored in the following section. Participants were instructed to create the interior mask image of how they see themselves, as doctoral psychology students nearing graduation and to create the outside of their masks images of who they hope to become, as future clinical psychologists.

Participants in Context

Julie. Julie (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) described the animal she saw during her guided visualization as some kind of weasel or a raccoon—"a long, thin-nish thing with a little sort of face who could say, "Oh, here I am, you know, friendly, cuddly." Julie said she thought her animal was "like a friend," a being who could put its head on her stomach and communicate with her, an animal who was helping her see

herself, tell her things about who she is now and where she is going. On the interior of her mask (her current self), Julie used the red and black tissue paper to symbolize the brain and the general positive and negative aspect of her experiences while in graduate school. The textbook at the bottom is also a symbol for the learning that supports her. The pieces of fur symbolize the animal in the woods—a quiet reminder of who she is and the importance of focusing on herself and what she really believes. On the outside mask image (her future self), the blue again signifies a sense of calmness; the yellow represents



Figure 1. Julie's mask—inside (current). *Figure 2.* Julie's mask—outside (future).

“the excitement and thrills” she believes she will experience working with her future clients. Julie expressed surprise during the interview process when she realized she painted her mouth bright red and believes this means that, in the future, she will have own voice and believes that she can talk more freely.

Molly. Molly (see Figure 3 and Figure 4) described the image that came to mind during the guided visualization as a “rather scraggly type of animal that is . . . very wild,” “almost a scavenger survivor type of animal. . .like a hyena but with a very soft coat and . . . approachable and . . . open and warm yet still that confident survivor. The green, red and white feathers represent “something starting to peek out,” a reminder that she knows who she is and what she is doing and can feel confident.



Figure 3. Molly's mask—inside (current).



Figure 4. Molly's mask—outside (future).

Jeffrey. Jeffrey (see Figure 5 and Figure 6 for his mask images) described the animal he communicated with as a fox, “kind of a small, subtle animal” who appeared exhausted. On the interior mask, the black rings around his eyes symbolized his exhaustion and the red streaks are for the intensity he feels right now. The greyness also

signifies the pressure he feels as he nears completion of his doctoral program. Jeffrey said he colored the interior lips blue to represent feeling deprived. The yellows and greens he painted on his cheeks represent the hope that keeps him going until he is finished with his degree. On the outside of his mask (his future self), Jeffrey described using “like Rasta colors up on top,” representing a more balanced future. Jeffrey also painted the chin of the outside mask blue—“I thought it would be nice to have my grounding influence as water underneath.” Jeffrey emphasized that he wanted red around the eyes on the outside mask image because he wants to remember the pain and struggle he has experienced during the program. The black lines are meant to symbolize remembering the pressure,



Figure 5. Jeffrey's mask—inside (current).

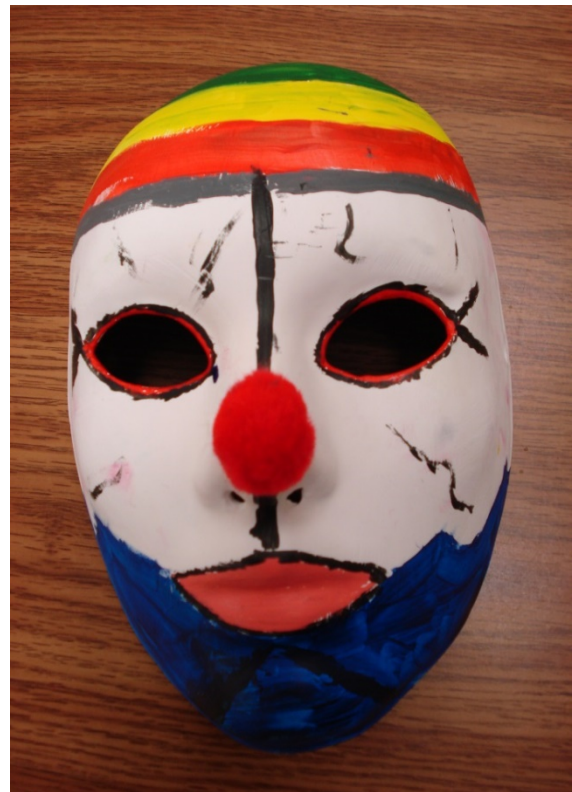


Figure 6. Jeffrey's mask—outside (future).

pain and struggle. In contrast, the pink lips are his hope that he will have a future life as a clinical psychologist that is more in balance. His bright red nose, “the clown nose on the front,” is his hope that he will get his sense of humor back. The bottom of his “future” mask image is blue because Jeffrey perceived blue as a grounding color: the color of water, which he experiences as balancing and grounding.

Marissa. Marissa (see Figure 7 and Figure 8 for her mask images) described the animal she interacted with during the visualization as a raccoon, “this shy little critter,” an animal who is wild but also “really quite complex . . . They’re very shy and cautious



Figure 7. Marissa’s mask—inside (current).



Figure 8. Marissa’s mask—outside (future).

and yet they're also ingenious and fierce when they need to be and . . . very protective” and that “they win most battles they're in.” On her interior mask image, the red dot on the inside of her mask represents her brain, her mind; the lines coming off the brain represent “so many paths” she could follow: “I'm interested in so many of them that . . . it's just a jagged kind of electrical storm with. . .green and purple lightning bolts” (her two favorite colors). The storm feels intense because Marissa mentioned that, along with excitement, she also experiences intensity that she needs to start making decisions about which one of the many career interests she should follow. Marissa also feels sadness because she recognizes that following any one specific career path will mean she will have to put other career interests on hold and perhaps come back to them at a later time. The various colored lines that Marissa drew in the interior mouth area represents a chain link fence. For Marissa, the fence represents both protection and hiding.

The white on the front of her mask, Marissa intended to be “much more pristinely blank.” She initially interpreted the white area on the front as being a symbol of not really knowing what the future holds for her but also thinks the white could represent her hopes that her future will be calmer. The front of her mask she described as being much less chaotic, but she said “There's still some chaos in that the lines . . . there is difference in the shading of line . . . but there's only jag and it goes down the middle, splits . . . splits in half and I think that represents that I'm always going to feel kind of split . . . in different ways” and “always feeling I'm moving between multiple worlds.” She said that that she feels that, in her future work as a psychologist, she hopes she will not be “so splintered down so many paths.” The green on her cheeks represent her pagan connection to the earth and her environmentalism. Her bright red lips are there because she expects that, in

the future she will be more freely talking, will feel free to have a stronger voice. And there is some silver again on her chin but “it’s no longer a fence” but that there is “subterranean stuff that will always likely remain hidden but it’s not going to be caged.”

Mark. Mark created a vivid representation of the imagery he saw during his guided visualization. Mark talked about the importance of making his mask images “very visceral and basic” (see Figures 9 and 10). He initially laid down the green tissue paper as a “foundation,” a foundation of grass that symbolizes “potential and freshness.” On the inside, the grass is lighter “so it’s more youthful,” and on the front it is deeper and there are hues of turquoise and darker greens and Mark talked about being “deeper in, I’m deeper into taller grasses, it’s growing more thickly,” moving him into “a more summer state of mind.” The inside of his mask contains imagery he created of a wolf—a wolf that is hunting his clients’ weaknesses. He also said the image of the wolf represented where he felt he was right then as a doctoral student nearing graduation—“still waiting, stalking my prey, my future, my success in my pursuits.” He said he made a specific decision to make the imagery graphic as he experiences that he is gaining increased understanding about the immense power that a psychologist has when working with clients’ past histories and mental health concerns. On the outside of Mark’s mask, he portrays his face and that, when he is in pursuit of his client’s “weaknesses,” he is gentle in his exploration but “ruthless in that pursuit.” He represented his gentleness through the mouth and the “lotus flowers that blossom around it, the petals, the lotus petals.” Mark also discussed the blood on his face as, “you know, the blood of my client’s pain spilling on my face and, I’m willing, willing to be stained.” His eyes he painted red to be “protecting”—“my eyes have a particular clarity in there. They’re red and so they cannot be stained” so he

retains his ability to see. The blood on his face symbolizes his willingness to “not shy away from the suffering” of his clients but approach them with compassion.



Figure 9. Mark’s mask—inside (current).



Figure 10. Mark’s mask—outside (future).

Mary. During the guided visualization, Mary (See Figure 11 and Figure 12) was initially only able to see “a lot of tall grass” so she used green tissue paper on the inside to symbolize the grass. She said she then saw animals—initially “a big animal, like a deer, like a cougar” but only saw fleeting images and realized what she was experiencing was “like birds, like when you look under something and you see . . . a bird and it’s sort of part of its landscape and peering out at you . . . so the inside of my mask is sort of like looking out of the bushes or . . . grasses.” “It’s like you’re part off the environment . . . but a bird came to mind, a small bird, like a hopping bird.” For Mary, the bird was not a representation of herself but rather about curiosity, a desire and need to understand and about “sharing this moment together.” Mary said the outside of her mask

is less detailed, “maybe less clear” because she feels she is “still in that unformed” state—not committed to any particular area or field of psychology, with no coherent game



Figure 11. Mary’s mask—inside (current).



Figure 12. Mary’s mask—outside (future).

plan for the future. She described the brown paint on the sides as like wood—“like a tree with . . . green, green growth . . . so it’s more solid” but “still really green and flexible in terms of what direction to go,” “a sense of solidifying but not becoming stagnant or rigid.”

Austin. Austin said that, during the guided visualization, he felt himself very relaxed; while visualizing himself in the woods, “some creature” came up to him. Austin said he didn’t form any image as to what this animal might be— “because I like . . . I like

all animals and it's hard for me to choose amongst one.” He painted both the outside and the inside of his mask blue (see Figures 13 and 14) because it is his favorite color. He said he painted his outside somewhat similarly to the inside because “If I painted them totally different . . . I'd be like saying that, in a year or so, when I'm done I am going to be this whole different person and this would be problematic. I just want to do more of it and do it better.” Austin said he put in the eyes to make it “a little more human.” Austin painted the eyes green and brown because his eyes switch between green and brown and hazel and brown. Austin painted the red psychology symbol on the outside, the same red



Figure 13. Austin's mask—inside (current).



Figure 14. Austin's mask—outside (future).

he used to paint the mouth. Austin thought that, if he didn't paint in an actual mouth, that this might suggest he was either “restrained or covered up . . . or muted” and he thought about the importance of making the outside mask image look “a bit more human.”

Interestingly, Austin used the low-temperature glue sticks—which he thought were building materials, “like textiles”—to build a triangle on the interior of the mask. Once he was done creating his mask imagery, I informed Austin about the material making the triangle as actually being glue sticks; he laughed. Austin also reported thinking about the importance of creating his mask images with “simplicity,” “like a minimalist kind of thing,” thinking it would be “disingenuous” to make his mask too cluttered.

Main Findings

After analysis of all seven participants’ narrative data, five super-ordinate themes (and their sub-themes) were identified across two domains: Domain 1: Doctoral Student as Future Psychologist; Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making as Catalysts. The two domains, super-ordinate and sub-themes, as well as their prevalences, are displayed in the following tables.

Table 1

Domain 1—Doctoral Student as Future Psychologist Super-Ordinate and Sub-Ordinate Themes

| Themes | Prevalence |
|--|------------|
| Finding one’s own path: The Personal Self in the Professional Context | |
| • Doctoral Education as Overwhelming and Demanding | 4/7 |
| • Valuing the Process and the People | 5/7 |
| • Integration of the Personal and Professional | 4/7 |
| Sense of Personal Authority and Self-Agency | 5/7 |
| Looking Forward: Hope for a more Balanced, Holistic Self | 5/7 |

Table 2

Domain 2—Guided Visualization and Art-making as Catalysts Super-Ordinate and Sub-Ordinate Themes

| Themes | Prevalence |
|---|------------|
| Process Facilitating Reflexive Stance | |
| • Apprehension, Artistic Angst and the Intimidation of “art-making” | 5/7 |
| • Moving into a more reflective state | 4/7 |
| Reflections of Meaningful Experiences Captured through Imagery | |
| • Enabling Development of Self-knowledge and Gained Insight | 7/7 |
| • Appreciation for the Experience | 7/7 |

(See Appendix E for a master list with identifying themes and quotes. See Appendix F for the distilled results of super-ordinate and sub-themes emerging from the seven individual interviews.)

Super-ordinate and sub-ordinate findings. Under the domain “Doctoral student as future psychologist,” three superordinate themes were identified:

- Finding one’s own path: The personal self in the professional context
- Sense of personal authority and self-agency
- Looking forward: Hope for a more balanced holistic self

This domain primarily describes the participants’ experiences (both positive and negative) while in graduate school, their process of learning and their developing sense of selves as future psychologists, as well as their accomplishments and hopes for their future.

Finding one’s own path: The personal self in the professional context.

Doctoral education as overwhelming and demanding. Four out of the seven participants mentioned the struggles of the multiple tasks, demands, and responsibilities

they have had to juggle, as well as the exhaustion they have experienced as doctoral psychology students. For instance, Molly (see Figures 3 and 4) described her feeling overwhelmed and anxious as she tries to struggle with the various responsibilities and tasks of being a doctoral student. “I have so many different demands and so many different loose ends I’m trying to tie off” and that, at times, she could get “bogged down or, um, anxious about the details of life.” She described that she, at times, struggled with losing perspective about her goals and get caught up in her anxious state—illustrated on the interior side of her mask by the scraggly yellow lines and the less fully-formed mouth. Jeffrey also talked about feeling overwhelmed by the demands of life as a doctoral psychology student: “not being balanced, not being . . . so strong” and the exhaustion he has experienced as a doctoral student as illustrated in his mask by the black rings he colored around the eyes of his interior mask (see Figures 5 and 6). He used other lines and colors on the interior of his mask to describe his feelings:

I feel like I have a lot of weight on me right now . . . and this it like the intensity.

It’s a . . . the redness was the intensity because this greyness is just a lot of pressure on even, just everywhere . . . and all these cracks in the façade happening and, um, the lips are blue because . . . I’ve been in this too long without any type of, um, any type of tangible reward . . . and so, it’s like, it’s just a kind of representation of living an aesthetic life essentially for a long time and just kind of, you know, feeling denied, deprived and needing more balance.

Marissa also described feeling exhausted as a doctoral student: “everything feels kind of harried . . . as a student. It’s one project at a time, one day at a time.” For Julie, the red and black crunched up tissue paper on the interior of her mask (see Figures 1 and

2) illustrated the demands she has experienced as a doctoral student—“it’s not simple, it’s not easy, it’s not smooth. And it’s full of setbacks and strife and things like that” and her hopes for a more balanced future.

Valuing the process and the people. Although most of the participants discussed feeling, at times, exhausted and overwhelmed with tasks and the obligations of being in a doctoral program, five out of the seven participants also specifically mentioned how much they valued what they have learned from their training and from their instructors and doctoral supervisors, even if, at the time, several had not understood the value of the tasks they were being made to do. For instance, Julie, when describing the black and red crunched up tissue paper on the interior of her mask as symbolizing the “setbacks and strife,” she also described using yellow as the excitement.

It’s all about excitement and thrills and learning things and . . . just when those moments come together and when that stuff they’re making you do that’s making you crazy makes sense. And you’re like, “Wow, I’m really glad I did that.”

Julie also specifically spoke about her appreciation for the people she has met during her doctoral program, “like the professors and the other mentors . . . who do do all the things that they do to help you stay sane and help you think and develop and deepen your relationship with yourself.” Mary also talked about how much she has changed since entering the program as well as how both the positive experiences and the frustrations she has experienced will help her in her future profession as a clinical psychologist: “I felt sort of grateful for [the] really wonderful experiences in learning and growing . . . and also frustration . . . I’ve taken the experience and used it and feel like it’s made me so much a better clinician.” She described her professional development during her studies

as “a sense of solidifying but not becoming stagnant or not being rigid.” Mary also discussed her mixed feelings towards finishing the program—“I feel ambivalent, I feel sad, oh, I’m going to miss . . . [the program and the people], I feel wonderful.”

Austin said that his lack of experience with the mask-making materials (specifically, hot glue sticks) led to unexpected results that also symbolized his doctoral training: “I picked up the wrong thing . . . what ended up being something different than what I thought it was and how like I feel.” He described making a triangle with the 3 glue sticks. He talked about triangles being strong shapes, “like metal, like the metal in the shapes of triangles holding up bridges . . . how I feel like I have a pretty strong foundation” in order to go forward in his career path, “a good base to grow from” as a clinical psychologist. Mark also described his education as providing him with a good foundation for his future career as a psychologist, symbolized by the green paint on both the front and the back of his mask: “to me that symbolizes potential and freshness.”

In contrast, although both Molly and Marissa spoke of how they much they value the knowledge and various experiences they had as students, they also spoke of wishing their doctoral education had gone differently. Molly reported that she struggled throughout the program with balancing her classes, her responsibilities, and her life obligations with on-going anxiety. Mary wished she had been able to “remain [more] grounded, um, throughout the trials.” She spoke of having wished that, during her program, there had been more instances during which she could have felt “encouraged to try and find out [she] could be confident about,” opportunities to “look for the good in . . . in what I’ve done or what I have accomplished and nurture it.” Although she did not

think she was discouraged from finding her strengths and accomplishments while in her doctoral program, Molly said “It hasn’t ever really been encouraged either.”

Marissa’s main regret about the program was that she thought she often had to either censor or hide parts of herself while in the program, such as her history of having spent most of her twenties and early thirties impoverished and struggling with mental health issues. Marissa described the animal she saw during the guided visualization as a raccoon:

I think the raccoon came up because they’re, they’re really a quite complex creature. They’re very . . . they’re very shy and cautious, and yet they’re also very, um, ingenious and fierce when they need to be and very self-protective . . . and . . . hey win most battles that they’re in. That’s, I think, also representative [of me] as I often times feel like I am battling in life.

She also described the raccoon as “pretty stealthy,” not always visible to people and protective of themselves and felt as though this was also a good description of herself: choosing when to be seen and which battles to fight. During the program, Marissa said she repeatedly had to decide exactly when and how much of her own history she self-disclosed. She illustrated this rather eloquently on the interior of her mask by the multiple colored lines at the bottom (where her mouth would be), representing a chain link fence:

the fence is definitely keeping things in and under wraps . . . not sharing a great deal of my own experiences, um, past experiences in life because they don’t really fit in with the professional and middle class sort of world that I am in right now . . . and because there are things in here . . . my own mental illness . . . [that is] not really acceptable in a lot of ways and I feel like I’m in a closet about that.

Marissa said that she repeatedly heard people in her doctoral program talk derogatively about people struggling with mental illness:

I hear so much judgment being in the way in which people, both colleagues, students and practitioners talk about people with mental health issues . . . and there is just a lot of stigma and judgment that I think is very negative and that I don't want to deal with so I really don't talk about it.

During her program, Marissa experienced on-going conflict between being protective of herself by not disclosing her history of mental illness and believing that, if she were to disclose her history, she might be able to change this stigma and prejudice,

If I were able to be more open with other mental health workers, if they know I have this, this history, it might actually benefit their clients . . . they might be able to see them in a different light and potentially think of a different future outcome for them.

However, Marissa said she often thought the risk was too great, worried that “people might not have as much respect for me or just a fear,” “it's too threatening in a lot of ways so I definitely kept behind the fence,” so she kept quiet, hoping that, at a future time, she will feel safer to talk about her own history. Although she valued her experiences and learning while in the doctoral program, she expressed sadness that she thought that she had to hide parts of herself and her past experiences in order to be safe in the program.

Integration of the personal and professional. During their interviews, four out of seven of the participants described the importance of exploring, learning to understand, and accepting the effect of their own past personal histories, backgrounds, and

experiences and interests, as both children and as adults, on future work as clinical psychologists. Although Molly did not talk specifically about her own personal history and the reason she was interested in becoming a clinical psychologist, she said that she experienced (and continues to experience) many struggles throughout her life. Yet, during the program, she learned more about herself and ways she is becoming a “confident survivor.” She knows that she has been through trials and that “there are more trials to come . . . and just knowing yourself in a more complete way . . . remaining grounded,” she realized that understanding these past experiences will help make her a more competent, compassionate psychologist. For Julie, deciding to become a clinical psychologist came from her life-long belief that, given the right type of support, people have an inherent desire to succeed in life. Because Julie received this kind of support as a child, and she came to the program believing in the individual, her person-centered approach has only strengthened during her schooling. She maintains a belief that, regardless of theoretical orientation, therapists need to “focus . . . on the human. Not on the textbooks or on what other people are saying but on the individual sitting in front of you and that’s something I think that has been increasingly strong throughout what I’ve been doing here the last . . . forever years.” Talking about comparing herself to the animal she saw in the woods, Julie stated:

I think that neither one of us are the flamboyant ones, the attention seekers . . . even though I do tend to talk a lot in class and, and get noticed . . . it’s . . . you know, in my work as a therapist, I just want to be solid, human, approachable.

During her narrative interview, Julie specifically mentioned that her focus as a future clinician, will be about “working with the person, whether it’s a family or a couple of an

adolescent . . . it's about keeping the focus on them.” She has no interest in creating new theory or becoming famous in the field. Her sense of fulfillment as a clinical psychologist will come from her person-centered focus.

Both Marissa and Mark talked extensively about the effect of each of their childhoods, their upbringing, their past experiences, and their belief systems on their experiences as doctoral psychology students and the effect of these experiences on their work as future clinical psychologists. As mentioned previously, Marissa explained that she struggled both financially and with mental health issues while in her twenties and early thirties. During our interview, she disclosed that, for several years during this time, she survived on government support and went to a local community mental health center for counseling and case management as she struggled with on-going mental illness. Describing her mask imagery, she talked about the chain link fence she made “for keeping things in and under wraps”—the part of her past history she believed necessary to keep private and not disclose to other students or professors in her program. Marissa stated that her past history did not “fit in the professional and middle class sort of world I am in right now.” She thought she had to keep her history of mental illness “in the closet” while in school because of the stigma and judgment she heard from other students and other mental health professionals. Yet Marissa also realizes that her past struggles with mental health issues and with living in poverty provide her with experiences with these issues from not only a philosophical or academic-learning level but a deeper understanding. Her experiences not only benefit her in her future work with clients but also have nourished her desire to become an advocate for educating people in the mental health field about these issues.

During his narrative interview, Mark also discussed that he believes his own personal history has affected his understanding of working with clients and their issues. Mark said that, in his family, the “ends justify the means,” that “where I come from, you can be cruel in my family.” He described a conversation he had with his father during which he asked his father why his father sometimes said “cruel things” to him. His father asked Mark, “What’s your weakness, what do you need me to say, to be supportive of you . . . I say this to make you persevere, to make you strong.” Mark said he then had a useful conversation with his father, but Mark learned from that experience that “there’s something about the idea of transforming cruel realities into gentleness and encouragement in a good way that appeals to me.” When describing his mask imagery, Mark talked about the interior image of himself as represented by a wolf with his tongue hanging out, how the wolf is himself waiting to hunt his client’s “weaknesses, things that keep him from being mentally and emotionally strong . . . memories of helplessness, for example.” Mark said that his childhood helped him develop a sense of fearlessness that he can bring to his pursuit of his clients’ healing and has also defined his understanding of his future work with clients:

I think there is something perverse . . . about what we do [as therapists]. You know, we really get our bread from unveiling the wounds, the most vulnerable wounds of other people . . . and I think that it’s important to acknowledge that in our profession.

Mark recognizes that all psychologists and mental health professionals are affected by the work they do, whether they realize it. Because Mark is “pursuing” his client’s past history, memories of helplessness, etc., he said “When I help them hunt the memory

down or the pain down . . . it bleeds and it feels the compassion of my tongue . . . and the blood makes the lotus blossoms open and my sense of radiance is interdependent with my client's pain and . . . hopefully, I can transform that cruelty into gentleness and elegance.” Mark believes this understanding will help define who he will become as a clinical psychologist.

Sense of personal authority and self-agency. The majority of the participants (four of the seven) commented about how their belief that, although though they are close to graduating with their doctorates in clinical psychology, they still do not experience having control over their futures or their identities. For instance, Julie described her experience of her life as being in a state of chaos because she lacks “full ownership” of her identity as a mental health clinician and future clinical psychologist because “it is still being dictated by other people.” Multiple tasks, obligations, and academic activities requirements interfere with “just the ability to just do therapy and just work with people . . . just really think about them and be thoughtful.” She talked about looking forward to the near future, looking forward to the time when, as she stated, “I will have more control over what I do and how I do it.” She also looks forward to the time that “I will have a voice and my voice will matter more, will be respected and valued more.” The fire-engine red lips on the exterior of Julie mask illustrates the import the importance of feeling confident and credentialed. Molly also described feeling overwhelmed by the tasks she still needs to accomplish before she graduates (“so many loose ends to tie up”) that prevent her from feeling a firm sense of personal authority and agency: “there’s a lot of things . . . that I’m facing right now where I’m not quite sure how it’s supposed to work or how it’s all going to come together and that can feel paralyzing.” Marissa also

mentioned being too occupied with school activities and obligations that she does not believe she can take the time to experience her own developing sense of personal authority: “Can’t think too far in the future, it gets a little overwhelming.” Although Mary expressed gratitude for the experiences she had while in the program, she also described difficulties visualizing herself as a future psychologist: “I’ve taken the experience and used it . . . and I feel like it’s made me a better clinician . . . but I guess I feel unfinished . . . sort of tied to the program . . . one foot in and one foot out.” She described feeling somewhat frustrated with the place she is at: “I mean for me, I came out of the program with a lot of experiences . . . I’m still in that unformed [state]. I’m not even committed to any particular area . . . I mean, I loved it, I learned a lot and no real business plan in terms of where I want to do.” However, even though her uncertainty about her future course causes some anxiety, she also feels optimistic about her future: “I still feel green and flexible in terms of which direction to go . . . if I get into this area, I’ll go down that path.”

In contrast, although Jeffrey also expressed feeling “bogged down” with all the loose ends that need to be tied up in order to graduate, he has also come to understand that the process of moving from doctoral student to clinical psychologist has already been happening. During his guided visualization, he discovered that the animal he communicated with told him to “kill your heroes.” He realized that, as he continues to take classes and nears the end of his doctoral education, he needs to begin defining himself as a clinician, integrating the knowledge and education that makes sense for himself and releasing the rest:

What I've found is that . . . trying to integrate everybody and what they're telling you is not going to work . . . the pieces don't fit because what I need to do is define myself as a therapist and I don't need influence from other people anymore. I need to listen to myself . . . just kill my heroes, figuratively, you know . . . just listen to myself.

Jeffrey said that he already experiences this process occurring as he nears graduation.

Looking forward—hope for a more balanced, holistic self. Five out of seven participants specifically discussed their taxing, overwhelming and exhausting experiences as doctoral psychology students. They are hopeful that their futures as clinical psychologists will allow them to have a more balanced, holistic life. For instance, Julie talked about the blue paint on her interior mask as “this little sort of puddle of peaceful calm in the bottom of her chin” that is there to remind her of her future and where she is going: “somewhere where it is less chaotic . . . where I will have more control over what I do and how I do it.” On her exterior mask image, she again painted blue on the top as signifying “the calm peacefulness” of her hoped for future self. Jeffrey’s interior mask image and his description of the meaning of his colors and lines (“cracks in the façade”) clearly articulated the feelings of being overwhelmed, “some sadness, feelings of exhaustion and . . . some reflection on hope.” He spoke about his experience of a sense of pressure and intensity for too long: “I’ve been in this too long . . . without any tangible reward or benefit,” feeling deprived and unbalanced. However, Jeffrey was able to illustrate a sense of hope for a more balanced future by the yellow and green paint: “These colors I usually associate with more kind of hope, underneath the cheeks so hopefully, they’ll bubble up . . . to the top . . . to keep me going.” The black nose on the

inside symbolizes a loss of his sense of humor: “I feel like even my humor if gone at times . . . and you know and it keeps you going . . . I want it back”, so he put a clown nose on his front to remind himself that he has not lost it, he can get it back. When thinking about the green and yellow: “You know, I was thinking like Rasta colors on top . . . I was thinking just kind of more of a freeness, a balance and in harmony and just kind of a positive vibe.” Jeffrey mentioned that he purposefully put lighter black streaks on the exterior mask image (his future self) because he does not want to forget his struggles because they are part of who he is becoming as a future clinical psychologist; the black line down the middle of his mask signifying “symmetry and balance.” His “healthy pink lips” also represent “a future life that has balance.”

As previously mentioned, during our interview, Molly discussed the difference between the inside (her current self) and the outside (her future self) of her mask as a difference between feeling the exhaustion of student life (the multiple lines and colors) and wanting to keep parts of the outside mask “pristine;” as she stated “I’m hoping life will be calmer when I’m done being a student.” The blues on the outside signify “remembering what it is like to feel more grounded and confident,” reminiscent of feeling more in balance and connected to the earth and to water. Although Marissa recognizes that, even as a clinical psychologist, she might experience “moving between multiple worlds, multiple cultures,” she stated that she looks forward to a future in which she can be an advocate and also feel less chaotic, having “a calmer life,” and a life in which she openly recognizes that she has “something to contribute to the conversation.”

Guided visualization and art-making as catalysts. Under the second domain, Guided Visualization and Art-Making as Catalysts, two superordinate themes were identified:

- Process facilitating reflexive stance
- Reflections of meaningful experiences captured through imagery.

Process facilitating reflexive stance.

Apprehension, artistic angst and the intimidation of “art-making.” Four of seven of the participants expressed some momentary anxiety about their use of the art materials and about their artwork and mask-making. For instance, Molly compared the pressure she had been experiencing at this point in her program, regarding all her doctoral school obligations and her uncertainty about her future career path as “paralyzing,” the same sort of experience she had when she first saw all the art materials: “You know, especially coming in here and not being artistically inclined and just seeing all these materials, I definitely got hit with the same feelings.” However, she said that, through the process, she was able to relax: “yet a certain flow does kick in and it almost just felt like a reminder that the unknown isn’t necessarily a bad thing. And it’s OK to try and be creative.” Mark also expressed a feeling of trepidation related to using the art materials to make mask images. When asked about his experience of the process, Mark stated, “I guess I was, ah . . . a little nervous just cause I don’t make art as part of my life but I am curious, sort of, to see how it would come out and just sort of apprehensive about it not coming out to represent something real for me . . . how I feel about things and part of that is not fully knowing how I feel, especially in the language of images.” During the interview, Mark said that, as he was working with the art materials, he thought about

importance about not doing “anything in a medium note.” He got in touch with the sensation of the materials, the flow of the paint, sensing that he was getting back to “just kind of basic and visceral” and wanting to stick with that type of imagery: “I just stopped hesitating . . . and just decided not to worry about how it looked.” Mark stated that, although his wolf image “didn’t carry the full power” he had in his mind, he was happy that the image communicated “kind of” what he was going for.

Austin said that, initially, as he was doing his artwork, he kept thinking “If I were looking at someone else’s art, there’s a lot I would be looking at and . . . I don’t know, kind of like projective assessment . . . What were they thinking? What does it say about them? Is it really . . . simplistic or was it very complicated?” Although Austin was not familiar with the various art-making materials, he experienced “it’s not the wrong thing . . . what ended up being something different than I thought it was and it turned out . . . how you feel.” In contrast, Marissa said that her initial struggle with the art materials was whether to let her perfectionism about making art guide her process: “There was, um, a momentary internal battle about whether I was going to try and make something . . . that I liked artistically speaking versus something that was just sort of a quick and dirty representation of what was going on.” She said she decided to go with a “quick and dirty representation” and then pondered how best to represent “very cognitive thoughts through a wholly visual medium of color.” Marissa later remarked that she was surprised she about her ability to illustrate, through a visual medium, her thoughts about where her position in the program, her struggles, and the type of clinical psychologist she hopes to become.

Moving to a more reflective state. Six of the seven participants stated that the guided visualization and mask-making process helped them take a step out of their rushed and busy lives and move into a calmer, more reflexive state of mind. For instance, Julie, when asked to describe her experiences of the guided visualization, stated,

Well . . . part of it was feeling the pressure and getting into a thoughtful place, going from that day-to-day world and all the different [activities], you know, getting lunch together, getting my stuff together, finding parking . . . all that stuff . . . just needing to get into a meditative place to allow to see where the experience takes me. Which is a little hard to do when, like, real life keeps entering your brain but then there was sort of a peacefulness . . . where my stomach starts to relax, when the animal talks.

Molly and Austin also experienced the process of listening to the guided visualization calming. For Molly, her initial anxiety started with sitting down and seeing all of the art materials and feeling pressured because of fears about “not being an artist,” while Molly listened to the guided visualization, she said “a certain flow does kick in . . . As I was relaxing more, the images would become more vivid and, if anything would pop into my head at all [such as life obligations], I would lose sight of it but, as my muscles relaxed, the image was clearer and clearer.” Austin said he experienced the guided visualization very relaxing and jokingly said, “That was pretty nice. If you made a meditation, a guided meditation tape I’d buy it;” listening to the guided visualization was very helpful; “it’s nice to do that after a, you know, a day of working.” Listening to the visualization helped him feel more open to working with the art materials and completing his mask images.

For Marissa, Jeffrey, and Mark, the process of working with the art materials and making their mask imagery felt calming. Marissa said that, initially, she had difficulty with the guided visualization; “You know, I could see everything, I just couldn’t hear what the image was saying.” She stated that she felt she was not able to communicate with her raccoon was because “everything feels kind of harried . . . it gets overwhelming so trying to have that conversation was challenging.” She also said, “I also found the medium of making something visual kind of calming and focusing in and of itself.” Jeffrey also experienced working with the art materials surprisingly calming: “I noticed when I was doing this, I was, um, surprised at how, how a drawing , even just putting some lines up somewhere . . . and just put me . . . kind of puts me in a more reflective and receptive mode.” Several times during our narrative interview, Mark expressed anxiety about working with the art materials but said that, as he was laying down the green tissue paper on the blank mask image, he found himself feeling calmer; “the laying of the foundation [the green grass] really helped me . . . it’s more youthful . . . it helped move me into a more summer state of mind . . . so I just started putting something on paper and decided not to worry how it looked.”

Reflections of meaningful experiences captured through imagery.

Enabling development of self-knowledge and gained insight. All seven participants mentioned having learned either new information about themselves, who they are now, how they think about themselves as future psychologists, having developed a new perspective about themselves and their futures or having been reminded about who they really are and what is really important for them at this point in their lives. Five of the

participants incorporated symbolism related to animals they communicated with during the guided visualization.

Julie said that, once her stomach relaxed during the guided visualization, her raccoon started to talk and she recognized it as “a voice of wisdom and strength and insight” and alternately viewed the animal image as “it’s me talking to me . . . and what I’m doing is focusing in on what I really think and believe and telling it back to myself,” as “a friend who is helping me see myself,” and as an archetype of the “wisdom of her elders,” all of whom will be with her as she pursues her career path. As Julie looked at her mask and at the two pieces of fur, she said it reminded her of her raccoon and the raccoon’s saying to her, “Hey, this is what’s important to you. This is who you are. This is where you are going,” reminding her that her goals as a future psychologist is not “to create a new theory . . . to make my name famous . . . or be president of this or that” but just to do good clinical work with her clients. As she looked at her future mask, she recognized that the bright red lips symbolize that, in her future, she will “have a stronger voice and a clearer presence” and her voice will matter.

Molly also expressed experiencing the animal she communicated with, “a rather scraggly type of animal that is, um, very wild,” helped her get in touch with “remembering what it’s like to feel more grounded and confident . . . and keeping the big picture in mind instead of [getting] bogged down or, um, anxious about the details of life.” She described her animal as “almost a scavenger survivor type of animal . . . very much like a hyena but with a very soft coat and something open and warm, yet still that confident survivor.” Molly thought her animal was a metaphor for herself: being “a little scraggly” as “the aspect of myself that perhaps has been through a lot of trials,” but still

having a softer side and confidence. She also said that, through the long process of her doctoral education, she at times has gotten so caught up and “bogged down” with all her various responsibilities that she gets lost in her anxiety. She expressed gratitude for the experience because she thinks “I need to remember who I am and not let anxiety dictate what I am in touch with about myself.” She said that she thought that, having her mask image to look at, she will be reminded crucial important aspects for her future as a psychologist.

Marissa also communicated with a raccoon during her guided visualization and also thinks the raccoon is a symbol for herself and her life;

They’re, they’re really actually quite a complex creature. They’re very, they’re very shy, clever and cautious and, yet, they’re also very ingenious and, um, fierce when they need to be and very protective and, ah, they win most battles that they’re in. So that’s also representative as I oftentimes feel like I’m battling in life.

For Marissa, her life while in graduate school has been an on-going battle between wanting to be an advocate and an educator for other students, her instructors, and her supervisors about the stigma related to people who deal with mental illness and being quiet, protective of herself and just getting through the program and graduating with her doctorate. When looking at her mask images, she also realized that her lips on her future-self mask are bright red, signifying that she will have a voice and will feel safer: “I think, really, just feeling like I actually do have a leg to stand on, I really do have something to contribute to the conversation.”

Although initially feeling nervous about being inexperienced in communicating through “the language of images,” Mark’s inside and outside mask images are graphic in their symbolism. Mark said that animal he communicated with during the guided visualization was a wolf waiting to hunt. He sees this as a metaphor for himself trying to “hunt down” his clients’ “weaknesses, things that keep [them] from being mentally, emotionally strong, memories of helplessness.” Mark said his philosophical and theoretical orientation is based on “the idea of transforming cruel realities into gentleness and encouragement in a good way.” Mark also discussed that, during his doctoral program, he often thought he had to often hide his views during class discussions for fear of ways in which his imagery and word usage might have been interpreted. When asked whether he had learned anything new and/or had developed any new insights during this process, he stated:

Yeah, to be less apologetic about the way I think about my work. Often I’m taught to lead from behind in therapy and I am not sure that’s my style . . . though I appreciate having to do it a lot of the time. But I think my focus is leading from behind until there’s something to grab onto and, when there is something to grab onto, not be afraid to do that . . . not to shy away from suffering with our clients. Mark also said that this process has helped him to better understand that, in essence, psychologists and other mental health professionals get their “bread from unveiling the most vulnerable wounds of other people.” We need to “always come from a place of compassion” in order to help others.

Jeffrey visualized a fox as the animal he saw in the forest during his guided visualization. Although not a metaphor for himself, his animal communicated with him

about himself and his needs to prioritize at this point in the program. His fox told him to “kill your heroes.” Jeffrey stated that, at this point in his program and as he nears graduating with his doctorate, “What I need to do is define myself as a therapist . . . and I don’t need influence from other people anymore.” He needs integrate the knowledge he has gained through classes, internships, and supervision: discern what makes sense, let go of what does not make sense, and listen to his own voice: “just listen to myself.”

During the guided visualization, Mary thought she initially saw glimpses of “a big animal, a deer, a cougar” in a setting of long, tall grasses. However, Mary discovered that the animal in her guided visualization turned out to be a bird: “Like when you look . . . you look under something and you see like a bird, and it’s sort of part of a landscape and peering out at you . . . It looks at you and you look at it and you share this moment in this environment.” When asked whether any similarities or differences existed between Mary and the bird, Mary said that it was not that the bird was a symbol for herself but that they both have commonalities: “a sense of curiosity, that need to . . . that wanting to understand . . . wanting to understand . . . of noticing and wanting to know more.” Mary speculated that perhaps the bird is a symbol; although “It’s hard . . . it’s hard to let go of knowing, planning, at certain times, one needs to be able to let go of certainty and just allow what is meant to happen happen.”

Austin was the only participant who did not have any involved interaction with an animal during his guided visualization. Austin said that, “As I imagined myself . . . I was in the woods and some creature came up to me but I didn’t really form an image of what kind of animal . . . because I like all animals so it is hard for me to choose amongst one.” When discussing his mask and how he decorated both the interior (current self) and

exterior (future self), Austin was very cognitively focused: “I chose blue, I think blue because it’s my favorite color. Um, well, blue and orange are my favorite colors but I really like blue . . . I tend to wear a lot of blue.” He talked about the triangle he made, thinking the glue sticks “were, um, you know, like textiles for art use.” Austin said that his use of the glue sticks “was actually pretty telling . . . I know it’s not the wrong thing but I . . . what ended up being something different than what I thought it was and it, um, turned out to be, you know, how you feel.” Austin went on to say that he made the triangle with the idea that triangles “are strong shapes . . . like spews that are the metal in the shape of triangles holding up bridges.” For Austin, his glue stick triangle is a metaphor for the “strong foundation” of learning, experiences, internships, and supervision he has received as a doctoral psychology student: “a strong foundation going forward . . . a tremendous amount to keep building upon for many decades to come.” He said that, looking at his triangle, he realized that he never had any doubt about finishing but thinks it was serendipitous that the glue sticks were available; the glue sticks symbolize his putting everything together. He feels strong and optimistic moving forward.

Appreciation for the experience. All seven participants expressed having benefited from participating in this research study. For several participants, the process helped remind them of the reason they wanted to become psychologists. For other participants, it helped organize and clarify their thoughts in a visual form. Other participants found that, simply participating in the guided visualization and mask-making experience, helped them feel more grounded and helped relieve stress.

When asked about whether Julie learned anything specific from the experience that she thinks will benefit her in the present or near future, Julie mentioned that, by looking at or thinking about her mask imagery; “I felt like I could just lie down and the animal could just put its head on my . . . stomach and talk to me, tell me all these things about . . . who I am and what’s happening with me now and where I am going . . . like a friend who is helping me see myself.” She said that she thought that the learning from the guided visualization, art-making process, and narrative interview has “reinforced what is really important . . . it’s reminded me . . . I love the now and future [aspects of the process] because I know this but this is more of a reminder that what I’m going through is temporary . . . and the things that are important to me will still be there.” She also said, “I do feel it was a really important . . . reinforcement and reminder of where I am now and where I am going and why it’s important to get there.”

Molly thought the process helped remind her of what is important to her. Molly expressed appreciation for the experience: “It was a really big perspective change”:

I was struck with the feeling of, um, just that . . . I was rather blessed to be having a conversation with something you wouldn’t normally have a chance to have a conversation with. So, it’s this feeling that you are getting a chance at some sort of insight that you wouldn’t normally get and you feel some sort of connection . . . and the thing I got most in touch with was just remembering what it’s like to feel more grounded and confident . . . and keeping the big picture in mind.

Molly said that she planned to keep her mask near her as she finishes her final studies to remind her that “there’s a small voice that I will hear if I can relax and be more

grounded” to remind her what is important and what she will bring to the field of psychology.

During our narrative interview, Jeffrey expressed surprise about “how much emotion can be evoked.” He remarked that “there’s a lot rattling around and this is kind of a solidifying process.” When I asked Jeffrey whether he had discovered any new insights that will help him on his path to become a clinical psychologist, he responded;

You know, one thing that I noticed when I was doing this was...I was surprised at how, um, how a drawing . . . you now . . . even just putting some lines up somewhere can help kind of formulate some things and help bring something new more concrete that isn’t concrete . . . I noticed that it kind of puts me in a more reflective and receptive mode.

As our interview neared its end, Jeffrey stated that one thing he will take away from the experience is “how doing something, you know, relatively small can be very healing and rewarding.”

For Marissa, this process helped her organize her thoughts in a totally different way. When asked if she had any new insights or thoughts through this process, she too said:

I think I organized my thoughts through this process in a way that I had not heretofore done. Um, I hadn’t really thought a lot about looking at where I am now and where I hope to be, ah, in the same breath . . . so in a way I kind of gathered these sort of disparate thought bubbles that have occurred to me over the past few years and put them in a narrative structure that’s contained . . . It’s a new way of looking at that that I hadn’t done before. And, in doing that, there’s a bit of

acceptance, of realizing . . . just feeling like I actually do have a leg to stand on, something to contribute.

For Marissa, this process appears to have helped her feel more grounded at a time in her program when she had been feeling scattered and overwhelmed.

At the end of our interview, when I asked Mark if there was anything else he would take away from this experience, he said “Ya, and just thank you. This has felt vulnerable [laughter] . . . ah exciting. This is fun. This is fun to do, so kind of exciting to . . . to not have to have a name to your feeling but to actually have an image that captures a feeling you really can’t fully put a name to . . . so thank you.” Mary also said she found it extremely helpful to find time to process her thoughts and feelings in an enjoyable way, after all these year of attending graduate school:

I can’t believe how much I have changed . . . yeah. So it’s good . . . it’s good to sort of process this . . . and the world is so busy that it’s hard to find space to go there. It’s so easy to avoid things . . . so, ya, I just find it helpful, I’ll probably percolate [the mask] in my mind. Yeah, sweet. It’s funny. It’s like I didn’t know what I wanted it to look like but that’s what I wanted it to look like . . . and it turned out the way it got there . . . kind of like my program.

Austin said that his appreciation of participating in this research process was twofold: first, he experienced the guided visualization as pleasant and soothing: “It’s nice to do that after a day of working.” Secondly, he also appreciated his exploration of the art materials and his accidental use of the glue sticks as construction material because it led him to think further about his learning experiences while in the doctoral program and

reinforced, for him, his confidence in moving forward and becoming a clinical psychologist.

Chapter V: Discussion

Introduction

Seven doctoral psychology students nearing graduation participated, individually, in a guided visualization and mask-making experience and a semi-structured interview in which each explored their current understanding of themselves as clinical doctoral students and their hoped-for future identities as clinical psychologists. The narrative interview data was then analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Two primary domains were identified: (a) Doctoral student as future psychologist (with three super-ordinate primary themes and sub-themes), and (b) Guided visualization and art-making as catalysts (with two super-ordinate themes and sub-themes). Each super-ordinate theme and sub-themes will now be discussed in greater detail.

Conversations With the Literature

Many of the results from this study are not surprising and are well-documented in the literature about professional identity development, research in the areas of graduate-level education in the social sciences and in literature about arts-based learning and art therapy. A summary review of relevant literature that applies to the major interpretative themes follows.

Domain 1—doctoral student as future psychologist.

Finding one's own path—the personal self in the professional context.

Doctoral education as overwhelming and demanding. Four out of the seven participants discussed ways in which their mask imagery helped them illustrate the degree to which their doctoral program has been demanding and exhausting. Participants

also described feeling overwhelmed by their doctoral experience. Participants mentioned feeling exhausted almost all the time, as well as feeling unbalanced and overwhelmed with trying to juggle multiple school/work/home/internship obligations; these experiences can lead to their losing perspective about their goals. Researchers in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy state, the academic and personal process of becoming a psychologist is “lengthy, arduous and complex” and involves transformation on both the personal and professional level (Bruss & Kopala, 1993, p. 685). Research has indicated that individuals pursuing doctoral degrees often experience increased levels of stress and somatic symptoms, as compared to the general population (Rummell, 2015), difficulties in time management (West, Gokalp, Pena, Fischer, & Gupton, 2011), difficulties balancing work-school-life responsibilities (Rummell, 2015) and competing obligations (McElhinney, 2008; West et al., 2011). The length of time needed to obtain a doctoral psychology degree means that many students are juggling work, school, and family life for five or more years, leaving them feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, and unbalanced. In addition, as doctoral psychology candidates near graduation, they may also experience an increasing sense of isolation due to loss of contact with their peers as they focus on completing their dissertation (Cheshire, 2002; McElhinney, 2008). This loss of support can also lead to increased difficulties maintaining perspective and focus on goals.

Valuing the process and the people. Doctoral students’ professional identity is a “complex and multiple (covering a wide range of professional roles) mechanism, which can be explained by the person’s internal (psychological) and external (social and environmental) factors and interactions between them” (Kovalcikiene, 2014, p. 9). The professional development of mental health clinician, including psychologists, can be an

extended and, at times, erratic and difficult process (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992). Five of the seven participants talked, during their narrative interview, about how much they experienced, learned, changed, and grew during their doctoral education and how much they valued their educational experience while in the program. Several participants specifically mentioned not only the “book learning” but also the supervision and mentoring they received; challenging life experiences, emerging sense of expertness; the developing resonance between their personal and professional selves as aspects of their doctoral education that has helped advance their sense of professional identities and provided them with a strong foundation from which to approach their future profession. This data is confirmed in the research literature (Gazzola, DeStafano, Audet, & Theriault, 2011; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003). However, one participant, although valuing the academic learning and internship experiences she had while in the doctoral program, thought she learned “a little bit” about many different areas of expertise. She also thought she continues to be still “unfinished,” that she was never encouraged to find out the area she could excel in during her years in the program.

Goedeke and Gibson (2011) examined psychology students’ understanding of the importance of self-knowledge and awareness as a prerequisite to becoming a psychologist. Researchers in the counseling fields have stressed the importance of an authenticity to self—a sense of self in which both life experiences and professional experiences are valued—as an integral aspect of the development of professional identity in the mental health professions (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992). Yet one of the participants in this study said she believed that, during her years in the doctoral program, she had to “hide” significant parts of her own history —primarily, her past issues with mental illness

because of fear of being stigmatized and/or judged. Because of that experience, the participant was somewhat disappointed about her experiences while in the doctoral program. Unfortunately, bringing one's personal self (such as disclosing one's history of mental health issues) into an academic and/or professional situation, even when it might be useful for educating others, is not always seen as permissible or appropriate (Woodward, 2014). This issue will be discussed further under an upcoming theme.

Integration of the personal and professional. Four of the seven study participants acknowledged recognizing the importance of their own personal histories, beliefs, and past experiences in understanding who they are becoming and in forming and defining their identities as clinical psychologists. This finding is consistent with research in the fields of psychology and mental health counseling (Brott & Meyers, 1999; Dollarhide, Gibson, & Moss, 2013; Hughes, 2009; Moss, Gibson, & Dollarhide, 2014). McAlpine and Lucas (2011) describe identity as a “dynamic biographical process grounded in history and memory with pre-existing personal understandings and affect influencing how we interpret the present and future” (p. 695). In the fields of psychology, social work and mental health counseling, professional identity can provide a framework for clinicians to make sense of their professional lives (Heck, 1990), contributes to one's self-confidence and one's potential (Reybold, 2003), and contributes to both a sense of belonging and a sense of uniqueness (Heck, 1990). In addition, because a majority of participants in this study can attest to and, as discussed in the literature review section, professional identity development involves integration of doctoral psychology students' multiple identities: their personal self (history, background, past experiences, beliefs, and values) with their professional self (Moss et al., 2014). Intense personal experiences can

strongly affect and influence one's professional development (Skovhalt & Ronnestad, 1992). Past research has suggested that people decide to become counselors, social workers, or psychologists because of a history of past family of origin or abuse, in order to fulfill their own unmet needs for intimacy. Farber, Manevich, Metzger, and Saybol (2005) argued, instead, that factors such as a curiosity and search for self-understanding and understanding of others, being psychologically-minded and a desire to assist others in a personally satisfying way are reasons people enter the mental health and psychology fields. When discussing their mask images four participants spoke about the importance of their own personal histories, in differing measures, on their choice to become clinical psychologists, their learning experiences as doctoral students and who they hope to become as future clinical psychologists. Their descriptions illustrated an awareness of the impact of their personal histories on their professional identities, on the choices they will make and the career routes they will follow, and on their definitions of themselves as clinical psychologists. All four of these participants recognized the importance having explored their personal histories through self-reflection and through dialogue with other students and instructors and clinical supervisors. One of the participants thought it would have been unsafe to fully disclose her past mental health history and, perhaps, she had reason to be reticent. While research around cautious disclosure of past history of mental health issues with colleagues and other students suggest that this can help decrease a sense of anxiety about the issues, can promote self-healing and also may facilitate greater understanding among other students (Jost, 2014), opening up and bringing personal self and past history into the professional realm is not always seen as acceptable (Woodward, 2014). Unfortunately, recent campaigns have helped educate the public about mental

health issues and destigmatize mental illness (Jost, 2014) and clinicians have openly discussed and written about their experiences with mental illness (Jamison, 1995), “a veil of secrecy and even shame keeps individuals from sharing history of mental illness. Perhaps nowhere is this veil heavier or more opaque than in psychiatry, psychology, social work, and other mental health fields” (Jost, 2014, p.1).

Sense of personal authority and self-agency. According to Brott and Meyers (1999), although professional identity development continues throughout a mental health clinician’s career, this development begins during academic education. As doctoral psychology students near graduation, a primary task is to integrate different identities — moving from being an intern and doctoral student to the that of being a clinical psychologist, thereby developing their own sense of personal authority and self-agency (Cheshire, 2000; Dollarhide et al., 2013; Woodward, 2014). Research into psychology graduate student identity development has described, as they progress through their program, that students are (ideally) encouraged to trust their own knowledge, instinct, and skills and develop a sense of mastery (Cheshire, 2000); developed an increased sense of competency and expertness, relying on their own knowledge, understanding, judgement and sense of mastery rather than to continue relying on the expertise of others (Brott & Meyers, 1999; Bruss & Kopala, 1993). However, as four of the participants of this study acknowledged, many doctoral psychology candidates and newly-graduated clinical psychologists are so focused on remaining tasks still to be completed or on worries around licensing and credentialing issues (Parham, 1992), they experience a sense of being unprepared for the realities and responsibilities of work as a clinical psychologist and a lack of self-agency (Cheshire, 2002; Clare & Porter, 2000;

McElhinney, 2008). Only one participant, Jeffrey, expressed believing that he has learned all he needs to have learned from his instructors, the course-work and doctoral program and Jeffrey recognizes his own sense of internal expertise and acknowledges his own sense of personal authority and self-agency.

Looking forward—hope for a more balanced, holistic self. According to Kovalcikiene (2014), doctoral students' professional identity is a "complex and multiple (covering a wide range of professional roles) mechanism, which can be explained by the person's internal (psychological) and external (social and environmental) factors and [the] interactions between them" (p. 9). Key developmental tasks include continuous evolution of self-acceptance and acknowledgement of internal expertise—moving from looking to others for external validation to recognizing one's own value internally (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992; Woodward, 2014), and continued integration of their personal identities and life experiences with their professional selves (Hughes, 2009). In addition (as mentioned previously), doctoral psychology students experience high levels of academic and workload stress and anxiety about the future, feel exhausted, and have a poor work/life balance (El-Ghoroiry, Galper, Sawaqdeh, & Bufka, 2013). Consistent with this literature, five of the seven participants spoke of looking forward to the near future when they will have greater autonomy and more control of the professional choices, increased responsibility for these choices. Participants also look forward to having a better balance regarding their self-care, schedules, and obligations. Recent research by Wise, Hersh, and Gibson (2012) stressed the importance for graduate psychology students, interns, and early career psychologists of focusing on developing a workable and sustainable work-life balance and appropriate self-care activities. These

tasks are crucial in order to flourish in their careers as psychologists. Effective self-care activities and coping strategies for dealing with the stresses encountered while working as a psychologist include spending time with family and friends, maintaining a more reasonable schedule, maintaining a sense of humor, and managing to create a greater balance in one's life (Stenanovic & Rupert, 2004). Five participants discussed the importance of self-care activities and coping strategies.

Domain 2—guided visualization and art-making as catalysts.

Process facilitating reflexive stance.

Apprehension, artistic angst and the intimidation of “art-making.” Four of seven participants expressed initial and/or momentary anxiety around the idea of their making “art” during this research process, even in spite of my assurances that whatever they produced would be exactly what needed to be made and that I had no expectation that anyone would be skilled in use of the materials, let alone be an artist. I also assured them that, after taking their masks home with them, they alone could decide what to do with them. This kind of a reaction is a common response from people who do not consider themselves artists; rarely in our current society do “non-artists” have opportunities to explore personal expression through the use of creative art materials. People often feel self-conscious and can be doubtful or skeptical about their ability to even use the art materials in front of them, let alone create anything that is meaningful to them. According to McNiff (2011), a well-known art therapist who worked with mental health clients using creative arts techniques as well as worked with art therapy students on their own processes:

The majority of people tend to doubt their artistic abilities based on past experience, cultural assumptions about who can and cannot make art, and the way the arts are taught and separated in most educational settings. The making of art is thus a source of insecurity and trepidation for many, realities to be addressed in efforts to apply artistic expression to change and understanding. (p. 393)

Molly initially felt overwhelmed by the art materials, but as she began working with the materials, she found relaxed and realized that “it’s OK to be creative.” Artists and art-therapists have known for years that, when they allowed themselves, by starting to feel, look at, work with the materials, individuals usually begin to relax and start getting in touch with their kinesthetic, visual, and sensory modes of experiencing and understanding. The specific process of engaging with the materials simultaneously connects cognitive and affective ways of learning (Camic, 2008; Simons & Hicks, 2006). A wide variety of materials provided the participants with opportunities to experience various visceral and kinesthetic sensory experiences. For instance, “Paint, with its fluidity and ability to create layers of color, hues, transparent light and building of depth, utilizing the liquid medium to transport one into the aqueous fluidity of unconsciousness” (Dean, 2016, p. 98) and its mutability allows the artist to shift and change imagery with even a few short strokes of the paintbrush.

For other participants, concerns about their art-making was connected with fear of negative interpretation on the part of the researcher—myself. One participant expressed concerns about possible projective interpretation of his mask. He felt reassured when I explained that, for this research study, I would be analyzing participants’ understanding their creations; that, based on this type of creative arts research methodology, the process

participants experience in making their masks is as important as the finished product, as well as their understanding around what they created. According to Dean (2016), “through the creative process, the artwork is not an object but instead an experience—an experience that changes both the creator and the viewer” (p. 2). When engaging in creative art-making activities, some people experience apprehension of self-revelation or fear exposure of ones “shadow self” (McNiff, 1998b) or fear making “mistakes” with either the materials or their art-work. Dean (2016) refers to these kind of mistakes as “fortuitous accidents” and believes they are “akin to synchronistic events or unconscious manifestations of the psyche” (p. 86). This kind of fortuitous accident was illustrated by Austin’s mistakenly using glue sticks, believing they were construction material. By accident, Austin ended up created a strong, triangular base that symbolized his strong foundation of learning he believes he will apply go forth as a clinical psychologist. Mistakes while art-making offer opportunities for increased self-knowledge and learning in the creative process.

Moving into a more reflective state. During their narrative interview, six of the seven participants felt calm and relaxed listening to the guided visualization and working with the art materials; the experience put them into a more reflective mode, which allowed them to more deeply explore their thoughts and feelings about who they are as doctoral psychology students nearing graduation and the type of clinical psychologist they hope to become. As mentioned in the previous literature review, the creative process through art-making can provide a powerful medium for exploring, self-reflecting, and processing thoughts, feelings and emotions, creative art activities can be useful to help clinicians-in-training, such as social work graduate students (Walton, 2012), master’s in

mental health counseling students (Keller-Dupree & Perriman, 2013; Shepard & Brew, 2013), and nursing students (Rieger & Chernomas, 2013) to become more reflexive and introspective, leading to increased personal growth and professional learning (Thompson, et al., 2010). Research into professional identities of psychologists and other mental health practitioners have stressed the critical importance of personal self-reflection (Aponte, 1992) not only for students training in their specific fields of study and for their initial identity development (Gillmer & Marcus, 2003) but also for their on-going work in these professions (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003).

Reflections of meaningful experiences captured through imagery.

Enabling development of self-knowledge and gained insight. As discussed in the previous literature review, for thousands of years humans have used the creative process of art and art-making within their cultures to explore the unknown, transform the ordinary into something unique and experience their emotions and experience transformative insights (Camic, 2008). According to Dean (2016), “From the dawn of humanity and our earliest cave paintings to the contemporary use of art in the psychotherapy office, art has possessed intrinsic transformational and spiritual aspects that reflect the human condition” (p. 173). In recent years, active use of the arts and of creativity within the learning process has been explored as a means to allow students, practitioners, and educators in the social sciences to explore and learn through different modes of understanding, allow students to acknowledge shared goals (Hafford-Letchfield & Leonard, 2012) and to discover new and unique insights about themselves (Phillips, MacGiollari, & Callaghan, 2012); all seven participants endorsed similar experiences to those listed. As stated by Dean (2016), “Art uses the language of symbols, metaphors and

relationship to best express itself” (p. 2) and symbols used in art-making hold unique, familial, cultural, and idiosyncratic meanings for the art-maker. In addition, the use of mask imagery has the ability to provide the maker/wearer with opportunities for exploring the face we present to the world and for exploring our inner experience and to take on and explore different personas. Historically, masks have been used for communion with nature and spiritual realms by Native American cultures; masks have both anthropomorphic (human features) and theriomorphic (animal features) qualities (Dean, 2016). Animal imagery, such as in spirit images in Native American culture, provides a means for individuals to connect with their spiritual selves and participate in mythic and metaphoric journeys. Animals connect us with our origins in nature; have historically been symbols for the human psyche; and have been longtime companions, protectors, and mythical guides. As reported by Dean (2016), incorporating animal images in artwork allows to artist to explore attributes, strengths and vulnerabilities of that animal and of themselves. Five of the seven participants incorporated animal symbolism and imagery from their guided visualization in their mask images. For some participants, the animal image was a metaphor for themselves; such as a raccoon being resilient and, like her, a “survivor”; or a means to communicate wisdom and/or knowledge, whether the participant’s own voice talking back to her, a “friend helping her to see herself” or the wisdom of her elders. For other participants, the mask images and animal imagery and symbolism they saw and made in their masks helped them recognize strengths and attributes in themselves they had forgotten or reminded them of “what is important.” These examples describe ways in which the process of creating artful imagery, in this case through guided visualization and mask-making, helped facilitate

growth and learning: “the process of making art . . . awakens an innate desire to create and make sense of personal images and symbols” (Bien, 2005, p. 292).

Five of seven participants expressed surprise about what their learning about themselves and their experiences during their participation in this study. For Jeffrey, “just putting some lines up somewhere” helped him to organize and consolidate his thoughts; he was surprised how much emotion he felt during the process. Marissa was surprised that the art-making process helped her organize her thoughts by gathering “sort of disparate thought bubbles . . . into a narrative structure.” Mark said he was surprised he was able to create an image to capture a feeling he could not put a name. Mary was surprised that, without any intention, she was able to create an image that signified her experiences while in the doctoral program. For Austin, a mistaken use of the materials allowed him to inadvertently create a symbolic foundation of the learning, experience, knowledge and wisdom he has to move forward in his career as a clinical psychologist: “a strong foundation to grow upon.” By creating and using symbols in art-making, participants were “provided a psychic bridge for expression and self-reflection” (Dean, 2016, p. 22.) and the art images provided a medium to give voice or form to thoughts, feelings, and emotions in an organized form (Dean, 2016).

Appreciation for the experience. According to Gadamer (2012), “art is knowledge and experiencing an artwork means sharing that knowledge” (p. 84). All seven participants expressed appreciation for the experience of participating in this research study. All participants benefitted from participating in this process through stress relief and relaxation, being reminded of what is important, having a visual form to organize and

solidify their thoughts, and having the opportunity to discover new insights. According to Rogers (2001),

All art created from an emotional depth provides a process of self-discovery and insight. We express inner feelings by creating outer forms. When we express these feelings in visual forms, we are using art as a language to communicate our inner truths. (p. 163)

Through the creative process of art-making, we are more able to identify and be in touch with feelings and emotions, can discover and explore our intuitive processes (Rogers, 2001), explore our changing identities and perspectives (Dean, 2016), provide a means for growth, transformation, and change (Edson, 2005), and give voice to previously unknown or unarticulated thoughts (Lark, 1998). McNiff (2011) argues that artistic creation itself is a collaborative process: between the artist/art-maker and his or her materials and, in this case, between the art-maker, his/her materials and the researcher. Through this collaboration, participants not only transformed their materials but were also transformed by the experience, as was I.

Researcher's Process

One of the experiences I had doing this research study was concern about and misgivings around my analysis and interpretations of the verbal data from the participant interviews. Because I shared the common experience of being a doctoral psychology student nearing graduation, I had initial concerns that my own thoughts, feelings, and emotions might color my analysis of the meaning of the participants' words. Because the process of IPA analysis involves the researcher in drawing upon her own interpretative resources in order to make sense of participant describe and experience as they attempt to

make sense of their own stories and experiences (Smith, 2004), the end result is always a culmination of the researcher's interpretations of the participant's thinking. As such, the interpretation is therefore subjective and tentative and only one of many possible interpretations, not the only "true" interpretation. In IPA research, an interviewer's thoughts and feelings when interacting with the narrative data are considered legitimate components of inquiry (Smith & Osborn, 2003). However, researchers also need to maintain a level of personal and professional awareness and a sense of reflexivity toward the data in order to ensure that bias not contaminate the interpretation.

As I developed initial themes, my analysis consisted of constant checking and rechecking of the original transcript. I attempted to remain focused on the individual meaning of each participant's experience and on my inductive interpretation: exploring the life-world of the participant and understanding it from the participant's perspective and point of view to get as close as possible to their lived experiences by immersing myself in the data. As I progressed further in the analysis process, assigning meaning to and naming of emergent themes, a higher and more complex level of abstraction, provided my most recurrent moments of hesitation as I sought to make sense of the participants' trying to make sense of their experiences. I struggled to keep in mind Kvale's (1996) recommendations that researchers approach the narrative data of qualitative research as a living discussion; a dialogue between the words of the participants and the researcher in order to obtain information that would intensify and enhance the meaning of a participant's words; to give words to experiences that might otherwise have remained dormant, while remembering and acknowledging that the participants are the experts. Although my own assumptions and ideas, as well as my

experiences as a graduate psychology student nearing graduation have certainly had an impact on my interpretations, I have attempted to ensure that the super-ordinate themes and sub-themes came from the data and from my participants' voices rather than from my own.

One issue I wish to address is my decision to not include member-checking: the process of returning themes and/or analyses back to my participants as part of the process of confirming accuracy. Although member-checking has been accepted as a primary way in qualitative studies to ensure accuracy (Creswell, 1998), discussions among researchers about using interpretative methods about possible drawbacks and problems associated with member-checking (Larkin & Thompson, 2011; McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). Angen (2000) states that "since there is no universal fixed reality and because understanding is co-created through dialogue and experience" (p. 383), member checking can lead to confusion because study participants might have had different experiences since the initial study or have different thoughts or feelings at a later time about what they created and said, which can lead to conflicted feelings about the interpretations (Morse, 1994). Sandelowski (1993) has argued against member-checking for establishing validity in qualitative interpretative research because member-checking relies on the foundational assumption that a positivist, objective, fixed truth, or reality exists against which the participant's account can be measured, which is in conflict with an interpretive perspective. When examining key features of interpretative phenomenological analysis, Larkin and Thompson (2011) argue that member-checking might be appropriate for a single case study; for study designs with multiple participants, the combined effects of interpretation across cases, the interpretations by the researcher

and the passage of time can make member-checking counter-productive. In addition, Smith (2011) also argues that “it’s up to the analyst, the researcher to unravel the full implication of what is being” (p. 14). A key feature of IPA research is the hermeneutic circle that involves the narrative data from the participants, the researcher, and the interpretative process that is “dynamic, involving constant moving between part and whole, with a mutual illumination that goes on between those two” (Smith, 2011, p. 9). Dr. Huff, a member of the London Regional IPA Research Group, University of London at Birkbeck (and who is in communication with Jonathon Smith, the creator of IPA), also stated his belief that member-checking is not generally a useful technique for establishing reliability in an IPA study. Huff suggested that, in fact, bringing either the initial themes or super-ordinate themes back to the participants for confirmation can lead to confusion and can impede the quality of findings (J. Huff, personal communication via email, August 8, 2015). The results of this study are in the form of my interpretations of my participants’ experiences at that one specific moment in time, interpreted through my own theoretical understandings, and my results offer one of many possible interpretations of participants’ experiences.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

Included within this next section will be a discussion of possible limitations of this study. I will explore of appropriate measures used within this study for ensuring validity and reliability, as seen through the lens of phenomenological methodologies. In addition, I will explore possible directions for future research.

Limitations

Research using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is guided by a set of flexible guidelines. Researchers using IPA are encouraged to be flexible and creative in their thinking (Pietkiewics & Smith, 2014). As stated by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014),

IPA researchers attempt to understand what it is like to stand in the shoes of the subject (although recognizing this is never completely possible) and, through interpretative activity, make meaning comprehensible by translating it (just like the mythological Hermes translated the gods' messages to humans. (p. 8)

The findings of this exploratory study can best be described as a co-construction between the participants and myself. My own views, experiences, values, and the literature contributed to the study's final results, and the conclusions reached are only one of many possible interpretations of the experiences of a specific number of doctoral psychology students nearing graduation. In addition, this study does not relate to all doctoral psychology students nearing graduation. This study explores the experiences of seven specific participants from one doctoral psychology program in one specific city. These participants generously agreed to participate in a creative arts exploration of their current experiences of professional identity as clinical psychology student nearing graduation. As such, although some of their experiences and the super-ordinate and sub-themes can

exhibit commonalities to the experiences of other doctoral psychology students, the specific results of this study cannot be generalizable to students at other schools or even to other doctoral psychology students within the same program.

In addition, self-selection bias might have affected those students who chose to participate, the masks that were created, and the themes that emerged through the research process. Certainly, the intimidation and fear many adults experience in regards to the idea of “making art” may have dissuaded specific students from participating. This study was dependent on participants who were willing and able to take risks in relation to art-making and to reflect on their processes. I hoped that my own experiences as a doctoral psychology student in the same program as my participants was helpful in the research process, by allowing the participants to know they were disclosing their experiences to another fellow student rather than an outsider. My identity may also have affected who chose to participate, what they created, and what they disclosed during the interview process.

In addition, I am very aware that my own experiences as a doctoral psychology student might have affected data to which I was initially drawn. I had to continually examine my own assumptions and biases in order to ensure, to the maximum extent, that I heard my participants’ voices in my analysis. By continually referring back to the narrative data in order to determine the super-ordinate and sub-themes and by carefully documenting the data-trail, I hope that my own biases and assumptions did not overly affect the essence of my participants’ experiences.

Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research cannot be judged, in terms of reliability and validity, by the same criteria as quantitative research. However, researchers must evaluate qualitative research for reliability and validity using guidelines and a framework appropriate to this type of research. In addition, researchers need to illustrate ways in which reliability and validity are dealt with and/or addressed in their research (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). Yardley (2008) suggests that validity in qualitative research can be demonstrated by the researcher following four broad principles/key dimensions: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. In this study, I have demonstrated sensitivity to context by several means: my choice of IPA as my methodology, through purposeful sampling of my participants, by developing rapport with my participants, by showing sensitivity to the verbatim transcript material, and by grounding my interpretations in the actual data (as shown by verbatim accounts, allowing the voice of the participants to emerge through the data). IPA seemed especially suited to my research in that IPA is an integrative approach that attempts to examine a person's lived experience in one moment in time. The primary purpose of my study was to sensitively examine identity through an art-making experiential. I recruited, through purposeful sampling, a small number of individuals in one doctoral program with whom I had shared classes and who shared a particular lived experience as graduate doctoral psychology students nearing graduation. According to Yardley (2008), sensitivity to context can also refer to the relationship between the researcher and study participants, particularly regarding the relationship of any power differential between the two. Because my participants were fellow classmates and we shared a common experience as doctoral

psychology students, I was aware of the possible disadvantage of my participants' feeling obligated to take part in my dissertation research. I also initially worried that my participants might feel hesitant to disclose thoughts and feelings of a personal nature. However, I believe our shared experiences helped develop an increased sense of rapport; my participants to be generous with their time and energy. Throughout this entire process, I am repeatedly thankful for my participants' willingness to explore their lived (and, at times, painful) experiences.

During the initial guided visualization, mask-making experience, and interview, I maintained a close attentiveness to my participants and their comfort. I maintained care during the narrative interview and data collection process to ensure that my participants were able to freely explore and freely express what occurred for them during the study. I attempted to maintain a friendly, supportive, non-directive, and non-confrontational stance with all my participants in order for them to trust and feel secure in disclosing thoughts, feelings, and personal reactions. By developing rapport with my participants and insuring the confidentiality of their interviews and the masks they completed, I hope that they were able to safely explore new, unique, and, at times, difficult thoughts and experiences about their current and future identities.

Yardley's (2008) second set of broad principles illustrating quality in qualitative research studies are commitment and rigour. My attentiveness and care toward my participants' interviews and the transcribed narrative data, as well as my serious and prolonged engagement with the data and throughout the analysis process, illustrates my commitment to this research study. Rigour in my study has been demonstrated in several ways: the homogeneity of my research sample; the thorough and systematic analysis of

my research data; and my idiographic and interpretative analysis of the data. According to Smith and Osborn (2003), in IPA, data analysis requires the researcher to engage with the data in a close, sustained, and prolonged engagement in order to understand the complexities of meaning. Interpretation in IPA research is a form of “amplification or illumination of meaning” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 205). This process requires reflexivity, creativity, and clear and critical awareness of the researcher to go beyond simple description and take the data to the next interpretive level.

Transparency and coherence constitute Yardley’s (2008) third broad principle. In my research study, I attempted to illustrate transparency by carefully describing and documenting my participants’ recruitment and selection, my methodology in constructing my interview schedule, my data analysis collection process, and the exact stages/steps in my analysis process. Following Yin’s (1989) recommendations for documenting qualitative research validity, I attempted to file all my data in such a way that another researcher could follow the chain of evidence, from initial transcripts to noting, table of themes, and final report, referred to as a “virtual audit.” According to Yardley (2008), *coherence* refers to the “fit between the research question . . . the philosophical perspective adopted and the method of investigation and analysis undertaken” (p. 222). For instance, is the data integrated in such a way to make it easy and clear for the reader to see how themes have been obtained and organized? Have I presented a coherent argument of the emergent and super-ordinate themes and addressed the ambiguities and contradictions in a coherent way, applying phenomenological and hermeneutic sensitivity and interpretation as evidenced in my analysis and conclusions reached? I believe I have.

Yardley's (2008) fourth principle, impact and importance refers to whether the results of the study tell the reader "something interesting, important or useful" (p. 182). During my exploration of the type of research study I wished to design, I have always maintained a strong commitment to helping illustrate ways in which creative arts techniques and non-verbal means of communication can be used and combined with narrative means to help individuals explore their issues, concerns, thoughts or belief systems. In multiple classes and as I neared completing my coursework, I became tired of having to repeatedly write the obligatory "reflection papers": I sought out alternative ways for exploring and reflecting on my own personal process. During this initial search, I found evidence of the use of alternative creative mediums for exploration for students in the fields of nursing and medicine (i.e., Rabow, 2003; Spouse, 2000) and many examples in the field of art therapy and mental health counseling, but a dearth of examples for doctoral students in the field of psychology. According to Yardley (2008), impact and importance constitutes "the decisive criteria by which any piece of research must be judged" (p. 223). However, Yardley (2008) also contends that multiple ways exist that research can be deemed to be useful; the ultimate importance of a specific research study needs to be evaluated in relation to the objectives of the analysis and the audience it was intended for. The results of this study have practical implications for doctoral psychology students' education by illustrating not only the importance of recognizing and exploring the emotions, feelings, and struggles of doctoral psychology students nearing graduation and who they hope to become as clinicians, but also how creative arts techniques can be adapted and used for personal and professional exploration—both inside a class setting and on an individual basis. The results of this exploratory study will also make a

significant contribution to the field of psychology by raising awareness of doctoral students' professional identity issues, offering a creative arts approach to the analysis.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the exploratory nature of this study, the findings offer a number of possible future research directions. The creative art experiences of this exploratory study provided seven participants with an opportunity, for one moment in time, to step outside of their everyday reality; to explore their inner thoughts, feelings, and experiences about being doctoral psychology students nearing graduation; to review their thoughts and experiences about who they hope to become as clinical psychologists. Art and creativity can be transformative processes; this study has illustrated the value of art-making and creativity as a means of personal reflection and self-discovery within the academic environment of a doctoral psychology training program. I am fascinated with the idea of exploring professional identity development of doctoral psychology students along their journey of becoming a clinical psychologist. A longitudinal study (using IPA methodology) would be very interesting using the same creative arts techniques (guided imagery and mask-making) with the same students at several different points in their educational journey; for instance, during their first quarter in their doctoral program and again, nearing graduation. This longitudinal format could explore ways in which professional identity develops over time. The students could then explore and compare their initial masks and their experiences at the beginning with their experiences near the end of their training. In addition, another study might explore using this same creative arts research method and the mask-making experience with newly-licensed clinical psychologists and with seasoned clinicians. The possibilities are endless.

The results have practical implications for doctoral psychology students' education by illustrating the contribution of a relatively simple creative arts activity to each student's individual capacity for enhanced self-observation and reflection and to his or her personal and professional development. Considering the kind of developmental work that doctoral psychology students need to engage in to understand and make use of their own personal history, philosophical beliefs, and world views and inner experiences in order to be able to work sensitively, appropriately, and compassionately with clients, self-reflection is essential. Additional research is needed to explore ways in which to incorporate creative arts methodologies. For instance, I can imagine a research study using IPA methodologies to examine the lived experiences of students in a professional seminar class who have been using art journaling—combining written language and visual imagery—as a way to process emotionally-charged material and to express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. The study could explore ways in which the addition of the creative arts element affects the students' level of reflection. Additional research is needed to examine and explore ways that clinical psychology doctoral programs can incorporate non-verbal means of learning, exploration, and narrative (such as using creative arts methodologies) into their curriculum in order to allow their students enhanced opportunities for insight, self-reflection, and learning.

Concluding Remarks

Art-making and creativity have helped me through countless struggles and difficulties in life and have provided me with an outlet for expressing, at times, difficult feelings and emotions. Art-making has also allowed me to feel more deeply connected with myself and accepting of myself as well as nurtured my soul. The idea for the present

study came quite naturally to me because of my dual interest in the field of clinical psychology and the creative arts therapies process, my current on-going process as a doctoral psychology student, and my previous experience in a master's Art Therapy group research project. I initially designed this exploratory study of doctoral psychology students' professional identity development using a creative arts process because I saw a lack of research into ways in which creative arts processes can be used to help in the education and training of clinical psychologists. Camic (2008) published an article titled in which he argues the importance of incorporating creativity, art, visual/auditory and kinesthetic ways of learning into health psychology graduate and postdoctoral training. Although, during the last five years, numerous examples exist of the use of creative and/or expressive arts processes in the training of future social workers (Hafford-Letchfield et al., 2012; Phillips, et al., 2012; Walton, 2012) and nurses (Rieger & Chernomas, 2013), medical students (Courneya, 2011; De la Croix et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2010), and mental health counselors (Cox et al., 2010; Keller-Dupree & Perryman, 2013; Shepard & Brew, 2013), a lack of research into the use of creative arts methods in training clinical psychologists continues to exist. My hope is that this research study will not only provide a visual and interpretative snap-shot of the experiences of a group of clinical psychology students nearing graduation but also an example of the importance of expanding the ways we understand graduate psychology education and ways of teaching and reflexive learning.

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Appendix A
Demographic Questionnaire

Age _____

Gender _____ Male _____ Female _____ Transgender

Ethnicity _____ Caucasian _____ African- American

Hispanic _____ Native American _____ Asian/Pacific Islander

_____ Other _____ (Please specify)

Appendix B
Guided Imagery

The guided meditation is as follows, spoken with slow cadence:

Sit in your chair, with your feet touching the floor and feel free to close your eyes if you are comfortable. Take some slow, deep breaths. Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Begin to feel each part of your body. Begin to feel yourself relax, feel any tension or stress from your daily life draining out of your body. Now, envision yourself walking through a path in the forest; see the trees around you, feel the path under your feet. Now feel the breeze softly touching your face and smell the air, fresh and clean. As you walk down the path, you see the trees opening up in front of you and notice you are coming into a meadow with a nearby stream. You hear the water hit against the rocks, look around and, in the grass of the meadow you see an image/creature/animal coming up to you. Notice what this being looks like. The image begins talking to you about who you are now as a student and a clinician, as you near graduation and about the kind of psychologist you hope and want to become. Spend a few minutes listening to this image and what it has to say to you. When you feel like you are done, feel yourself walking back through the forest. Walk along the path going back to where you began. Center in on your body, feeling your legs, your arms. (Go through some more body parts). When you feel ready, open your eyes.

Appendix C
Interview Schedule

General Questions (and possible prompts):

- 1) Please describe your emotions and thoughts during this guided visualization and art-making experience.
 - a. *Possible Prompts:* Did any thoughts or emotions come up that surprised you?
 - b. How did you find the process of the guided visualization and art-making?
- 2) Tell me about your animal/creature/being that you interacted with during the visualization. How do you feel about this animal/creature/being? Did you discover anything that you feel is important to mention?
- 3) Do you identify with any characteristics of the animal/creature/being and/or the mask imagery you made?
 - a. *Possible Prompts:* How might these characteristics impact yourself as a current student nearing the end of graduate school? How might these characteristics impact yourself as future psychologist?
- 4) Tell me about your mask and what you think and feel about what you created.
 - a. *Possible Prompts:* What aspects of the mask represent your current self as student?
 - b. What aspects of this mask represent you as you were imagining yourself as the kind of psychologist you hope/want to be?
- 5) Are there any aspects of these similarities or differences that you think will be relevant to your transition from student to practicing clinical psychologist?
- 6) Did you discover anything through this process that might be useful in your future work as a clinical psychologist? Did you discover anything you think might be relevant to other mental health clinicians and educators?

7) Are there any other comments you'd like to make about your participation in this study or about your experiences today?

a) *Possible Prompts:* Did you find this experience helpful and/or beneficial? Do you have any suggestions about how this experience could have been better or more useful? Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix D

Audit Trail—Transcript

1 Julie

Focusing Self

CV + Art-making - a medium

Being open to experience - Reflective, exploratory

Illuminating self -

Animal talk = wisdom, strength, insight

Animal as self-talk

C0000004

1

1 I: Okay. So I've got some questions. Okay. Please describe your emotions and thoughts during this experience.

2
3
4 R: All of them? Well, um...part of it was feeling the pressure and getting into a thoughtful space, going from the day-to-day world and all the different, you know, getting lunch together, getting all my stuff to come in, finding a parking place, all that stuff. And then just needing to be in a really sort of meditative, peaceful thought - to allow what I wanted to happen, happen, which is, I wanted to just see where the experience would take me. Which is a little hard to do when like real life is...keeps entering your brain. So part of it is just, you know, the...the pressure of staying focused. But then there was a, like, um, sort of a peacefulness, when you think about the woods and their specific like the bit of my life that I always tend to go to for these things, because I find it easier to go there, because I've seen it.

difficultly expressing thoughts articulating thoughts

- minuscule of daily life - wanting to be fully part of the process/experience open-minded re: process

- difficultly staying focused

19 I: Um-hum.

20
21
22 R: But I change the details. And ...so the calm peacefulness of being there, and of walking through there. And then...I think there's a...there's...there's like a feeling I can't...I don't...it's...it's...it's like when you're trying to describe something there's not really words for, but where my stomach starts to relax, when, you know, the...the animal talks.

- peacefulness, calm process - pausing, trouble finding the words

- difficulty of putting into words - attempting to describe an indescribable experience - process of animal talking -

29 I: Um-hum.

30
31
32 R: Because it seems to be, you know, a voice of wisdom and strength, and insight. And so there's like this peacefulness thing that comes when you listening to it. But then my thoughts were also...because I wasn't a hundred percent in that space. Like... -holding back?

- repetitive

- hesitant - pausing, needing encouragement

37 I: Um-hum.

- internalizing animal - sense of self as wise, strong, insightful

38 R: ...okay, that's me talking to me, and some I'm like...but that's okay.

41 I: Um-hum.

42
43
44 R: Because it's me talking to me.

- animal speak as self-talk

C0000004

2

Accessing

Validating

1 I: Yeah.
 2
 3 R: And what I'm doing is focusing in on what I really think
 4 and believe.
 5
 6 I: Um-hum.
 7
 8 R: And telling it back to myself.
 9
 10 I: Um-hum.
 11
 12 R: And then feeling it, does that feel right or not. And...and
 13 finding that one message just sort of kept coming back over
 14 and over again. And I'm like, well, that's...that's (strange
 15 2:38).
 16
 17 I: Can you tell me about the pictures or...you created or the
 18 mask images you made?
 19
 20 R: Um-hum. Um, so the animal was some kind of weasel.
 21
 22 I: Okay.
 23
 24 R: Which is different than last time. But it's...it was some kind
 25 of just sort of long thin-ish thing with a little sort of face.
 26 And, um...and so, you wanted to know about the images or
 27 the messages or both?
 28
 29 I: Both.
 30
 31 R: Both. Okay. So...the message basically...there...there were
 32 different messages about where I am and where I'm going.
 33 But there was one common theme that stuck with both of
 34 them. And that was the focus on the person, the focus on
 35 the human. Like when you're a therapist, focusing on the
 36 human. Not on the science, not on the textbooks, not on
 37 what other people are saying, but on the individual sitting
 38 in front of you.
 39
 40 I: Um-hum. Um-hum.
 41
 42 R: And that that's...that's been something I think that's been
 43 increasingly strong throughout what I've been doing here
 44 the last...forever years. Is that the most important piece is
 45 that person that you're working with.
 46

- process as a way to access own thoughts, validate thoughts to self

self-identity as person-centered

- importance of focusing on the individual/person rather than book-learning or academic learning

- staying person-centered

self + identity
clinician →
client-centered

- imp of
focus on
client,
humanity

staying client
centered

(m)

C0000004

3

obligations as student vrs ownership as a fligist

1 I: Um-hum.
2
3 R: Um, and so it's like the present, the student one, was more
4 about, um...you know, there's all these things that I have to
5 do to get out. So it's...it's...like I don't have full ownership
6 of it yet.

- Student as obligations rather than ownership

- hesitant - trying to articulate thoughts
- still student - no full ownership of tasks, ideas, work

7 I: Um-hum.
8
9 R: It's still being dictated by other people.

- tasks, rules, obligations that she needs to complete, rules to follow, academic requirements

10 I: Um-hum.
11
12 R: You know, for good reasons, whatever. But that,
13 questioning?
14 um...there's a sense of sort of being...to find or having
15 to...I...that's...one friend of mine went through it, called it
16 jumping through hoops.

> hesitant, pausing, trying to find the words

17 I: Uh-huh.
18
19 R: Certain things you have to do in a certain way because...

jumping through hoops

20 I: Right.
21
22 R: ...other people want you to do it that way.

for good reasons or not?

- other people's expectations,

23 I: Right.
24
25 R: You know? Or certain things that you need to do because
26 certain things have to be done in order for someone to
27 know that you know what you're doing. Um, so I think
28 there's a lot of that sort of chaotic sort of stuff going on...

- obligations/tasks need to be done to prove ability

- chaos of being a graduate & student, interfering & clinical work

29 I: Um-hum.
30
31 R: ...that interferes with just the ability to just do therapy and
32 just work with people, and just really think about them and
33 be thoughtful. So like in the...in the mask, there's all this on
34 the top, like where the macro brain is, there's...you know,
35 the black and the...and the red and the...you know,
36 crunched up tissue paper thing, because it is just...it's not
37 simple, it's not easy, it's not smooth. And it's full of
38 setbacks and strife and things like that. But then there's
39 also like yellow, which is about excitement, because it's
40 not all bad. It's all about excitement and thrills and learning
41 things, and...and just when those moments come together,
42
43
44
45
46

- evidence of difficulty of studenthood "roller-coaster"

- excitement of learning/being a student

- roller-coaster of being a student
- obligations/tasks excitement learning

C0000004

4

1 and when that stuff they're making you do that's making
 2 you crazy makes sense. And you're like, "Wow! I'm really
 3 glad I did that." And so there's...there's that sense of, um,
 4 all of that coming together. And then the middle of the
 5 mask on both sides has the person, because whether it's
 6 now or whether it's in the future, that person needs to be
 7 the focus. But you can see on the inside of the mask the
 8 person gets a little bit covered up by the tissue paper,
 9 covered up by the textbook, covered up by...you know, it's
 10 not...it's not as much the focus, because...

- tasks of
 Studenthood do
 Make sense
 - gratitude for the
 learning
 both interior/exterior
 focus on person
 backtracks
 hesitant,
 difficulty articulating

11
 12 I: Um-hum.
 13
 14 R: .. there's too much else going on.

15
 16 I: Um-hum.
 17
 18 R: And so...but on the bottom is more the things that...that are
 19 there to support me, and to, um, to help me through the
 20 process. So there are the books that you can go to, to read,
 21 to understand and to, you know, deepen your own
 22 knowledge and...and learning. And then there's a couple
 23 tales, that, you know, pieces of fur that remind me of
 24 that...um, the creature in the woods...

tangible sources of
 support -
 - books to ↑
 knowledge, learning

25
 26 I: Um-hum.
 27
 28 R: ...that's out there and said, "Hey, this is what's important to
 29 you. This is who you are. This is where you're going."

- process of guided
 visualization of
 mask-making helps
 solidify/reinforce sense of
 self, identity

SV + mask-making =
 initial talk
 OS

30
 31 I: Um-hum.
 32
 33 R: And, um...and then so there's the blue that goes down into
 34 this little sort of puddle of peaceful calm in the bottom of
 35 her chin. So...And then...you know, the sense of where I'm
 36 going...

- difficulty articulating
 - sense of calmness
 regarding future
 self as clinician
 ↓
 more control,
 less chaos,
 fewer demands

37
 38 I: Um-hum.
 39
 40 R: ...and who I'm trying to be, um, is someone where it's less
 41 chaotic, where it's...there's...there's fewer external
 42 demands. You know, I'm trying to create, um, a life as a
 43 therapist where I have more control over what I do and how
 44 I do it..
 45
 46 I: Um-hum.

C0000004

5

1
2 R: ...and where I can make more decisions about what I do and don't want to, or participate in, or, um, accomplish in...of my own goals as a therapist and...
3
4
5
6 I: Um-hum.
7
8 R: ...and...and it is very much about working with the person, whether it's a family or a couple or an adolescent, but it's about keeping that focus on them and not necessarily...I'm not out there to create a new theory of anything...
9
10
11
12
13 I: Um-hum.
14
15 R: ...or to make my name anyplace. Or to be president of this, or...or whatever. I'm just there to do good work with people. And so there is this blue on the top. The blue is on the top, the calm peacefulness. Still with this little...there's...there's the yellow, the excitement, the thrills, because I don't think that ever goes away when you work with people, and when you learn new things. Um, and then strangely, it was funny, because I was...I was doing this, and I realized that there was a mouth. And I was like, wow, you know. I feel more like in the future I'll have a voice.
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27 I: Um-hum.
28
29 R: Like I will have a voice, and my voice matters. And it's not that people don't listen to me here, because they do. And it's not that what I do isn't valued, because I feel like it is. But somehow, like it seems significant to me that in the future her mouth is painted in and she...
30
31
32
33
34
35 I: Um-hum.
36
37 R: ...has that...that voice. And then I put the, um...I still wanted the wisdom of the...of the animal, of...
38
39
40 I: Um-hum.
41
42 R: ...who represents, you know, like the professors and the other mentors that I have who...do all the things that they do...
43
44
45
46 I: Um-hum.

- more ability to make own decisions as a therapist

- multiple "and..."
- emphasis?

- focus on the person (whether family, couple or adolescent)

- not focused on professional advancement, theory, prestige but focus on individual/work w clients

- working w the individual/focusing on the person

→ peaceful, calm
- exciting
- learning
- emphasis

- future self-
↑ self-authenticity
- self-voice

- surprise, excitement re: knowledge

contradictory?

- voice of self-surprise

future clinician - having a voice

- voice of animal as
- wisdom of professors, mentors

incorporating voice of animal - wisdom of professors, mentors

Appendix E

Table 3
Master List of Themes With Key Words
and References to the Original Text

Participant 1 (Julie):

| Themes | Page/Line | Key Words |
|---|-----------|--|
| <u>Doctoral Student Experiences</u> | | |
| Minutiae of Tasks & Obligations | 1.8 | All that stuff |
| | 3.4 | Things I have to do to get out |
| | 2.42 | What I have been doing here the last...forever years |
| Competing Demands & Obligations | 3.36 | Interferes with the ability to just do therapy and just work with people |
| Lack of Self- Autonomy/Self-Agency | 3.6 | So, it's, it's like I don't have full ownership of it yet |
| | 3.1 | Certain things you have to do in a certain way because...other people want you to do it that way |
| | 3.10 | It's still being dictated by other people |
| Valuing the Process | 4.3 | Wow, I'm really glad I did that...A sense of all that coming together |
| | 2.45 | Excitement and thrills and learning |
| | 4.21 | Deepen your own knowledge and experiences |
| Remembering One's Goals | 3.41 | It's not simple, it's not easy, it's not smooth. And it's of setbacks and strife and things like that... |
| Gratitude for Knowledge of Others | 8.13 | What I'm going through is temporary |
| | 4.1 | When that stuff they're making you do that's making you crazy makes sense |
| Tangible Sources of Support/Learning | 4.18 | Things that are there to support me, help me through the process |
| Professors and Mentors As Anchors | 5.41 | The professors and all the other mentors who do all the things to keep you sane |
| <u>Guided Visualization/Art-making as Catalyst</u> | | |
| Difficulty Starting the Process | 1.10 | A little hard to do when, like, real life is...keeps entering your brain |
| | 1.4 | Feeling the pressure and getting into |

| | | |
|--|------|--|
| | | a thoughtful place, going from the day-to-day world...all that stuff |
| Emotions Evoked | 1.22 | So the calm peacefulness of being there, and walking through there |
| Process facilitating reflective stance | 1.24 | There's, there's like a feeling I can't, I don't...it's, it's, it's like when you're trying to describe something that there's not really words for... |
| Gained Insight | 1.45 | Because it's me talking to me and what I am doing is focusing in on what I really think and believe |
| | 2.31 | Different messages about where I am and where I am going... |
| | 2.3 | Focusing in on what I really think and believe and telling it back to myself |
| Accessing Unrecognized Wisdom | 7.23 | Like a friend who is helping me see myself |
| Animal as Metaphors | 5.41 | The wisdom of the animal... like the professors and mentors, all the things |
| | 6.22 | Our ancestors that we go to for wisdom |
| <u>Future Self</u> | | |
| Increased Sense of Self-Autonomy | 4.42 | Fewer external demands |
| | 8.28 | Fewer things to distract me from what I really want to do |
| Taking Ownership of Self | 5.1 | Where I can make more decisions about what I do and don't want to, or participate in, or... accomplish |
| | 4.43 | More control over what I do...how I do it |
| Increased Self-Agency | 5.29 | I will have a voice and my voice matters |
| | 8.23 | A stronger voice, a clearer presence |
| Personal/Professional Integration | 7.10 | Who I am and where I am going |
| Person-Centered Ideological Stance | 2.34 | Focus on the person, focus on the human, not on the science, not on the textbooks |
| | 7.37 | In my work as a therapist, I just want |

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|---|
| | | to be solid, human, approachable |
| Positive Emotional Self | 5.10 | Keeping the focus on them |
| | 5.18 | A calm peacefulness |
| | 5.19 | The excitement, the thrills because you don't ever get away when you work with people |

Participant 2 (Molly):

| | Page/Line | Key Words |
|---|-----------|---|
| <u>Doctoral Student Experiences</u> | | |
| Minutiae and Stress of Tasks /Obligations | 2.1 | So many different demands and so many ...loose ends I am trying to tie off |
| | 3.1 | It is easy to get bogged down |
| Feeling Overwhelmed | 4.34 | Lots of things in life...can feel paralyzing |
| Anxious Self | 2.21 | Anxiety |
| | 2.23 | Very much in the here and now but not in a ...mindful way |
| | 2.22 | Anxiety and a little bit more bogged down in the details |
| Lack of Validation of Self-Agency | 4.6 | It hasn't been discouraged but it hasn't been encouraged, either [Developing confidence] |
| Taking Ownership | 4.20 | Willing to look at the good in what I have accomplished and nurture it |
| Remembering True Self | 2.37 | Remain grounded throughout trials |
| | 1.34 | Remembering what it's like feeling more grounded and confident and keeping the big picture in mind |
| | 3.31 | Remember who I am and not let anxiety dictate what I'm in touch with |
| | 1.36 | Keeping the bigger picture in mind instead of being bogged down |
| <u>Guided Visualization/Art-making as Catalyst</u> | | |
| Initial Anxiety | 4.44 | Not being artistically inclined...seeing all these materials...and yet |
| Thankfulness for Experience | 1.19 | I was struck with the feeling of, um, just that, you know, I was rather blessed to be having a conversation |

| | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| Process facilitating reflective stance | 4.44 1.25 4.5 | with something you normally wouldn't have a conversation with A certain flow kicks in Getting a chance at some sort of insight Encouraged to find that which I can be confident about |
| Accessed Wisdom | 2.14 2.42 | To be able to keep to hold [open and warm] in my mind at once A small voice that I will hear if I can relax and be more grounded |
| Animal as metaphor of Struggle/Resilient Self | 2.13 2.32 | Very approachable...open and warm...yet still that confident survivor Aspects of myself that has been through a lot of trials |
| <u>Future Self</u> | | |
| Accepting Uncertainty | 4.4 4.45 | I'm not quite sure how it's supposed to work or how it's going to come together A reminder that the unknown isn't a bad thing |
| Personal/Professional Integration Resilient Self | 2.12 2.34 4.5 | Open and warm More trials to come and just the sort of way of being from having survived all that I feel encouraged to find that which I feel confident about... |
| Integrated and Holistic Self | 2.37 | Just knowing who you are in a more complete way |
| Professional Qualities | 2.11 | Very approachable and, um, open and warm |

Participant 3 (Jeffrey):

| Themes | Page/Line | Key Words |
|--|------------|---|
| <u>Doctoral Student Experiences</u> | | |
| Personal Deprivation | 2.1 2.7 | Too long without any type of tangible reward or any type of benefit A representation of living an aesthetic life...feeling denied, deprived and hm, needing more balance |

| | | |
|---|--------------|--|
| Weight and Pressure of Obligations | 1.29 1.34 | A lot of, ah, weight on me right now The pressure on even, just everywhere... |
| Searching for Meaning | 4.45 | Trying to integrate everybody what they're telling you...is not going to work |
| A Confluence of Emotions | 1.9 7.41 | Some sadness, exhaustion and some reflection on hope Creativity can be squelched when you're ...doing something like this |
| Feeling Unbalanced | 1.40 | Not being balanced, not feeling so strong |
| Shaken Foundation | 1.41 1.31 | All these cracks in the façade happening The black rings around the eyes is just the exhaustion |
| Transformative Process | 3.27 3.40 | I want to be able to take something away from it...remember it You don't get out of this without having to see wrinkles and crow's feet |
| Coalescing of Experiences | 1.25 | A culmination of a bunch of little things |
| <u>Guided Visualization/Art-making as Catalyst</u> | | |
| Art-making as Perspective-changing | 1.8 6.19 | A solidifying process Help bring something new more concrete that isn't concrete |
| Process facilitating reflective stance | 1.5 6.24 | Surprised at how much emotion can be evoked A more reflective and receptive mode |
| Gained Insight regarding art-making | 6.29 | Doing something relatively small can be very healing and rewards |
| <u>Future Self</u> | | |
| Acknowledging the Process | 3.27 | The frustrations that go with it...I don't want to forget that |
| Increased Self-Autonomy | 6.3 | A chance to try and find out what that is without influence from other people |
| Recognizing own Voice | 5.40 | Kill my heroes...just listen to myself |
| Defined Ideological Stance | 5.19 | I need to do is define myself as a |

| | | |
|---|------|--|
| Hope for a More Balanced, Holistic Self | 2.13 | therapist More kind of hope...will hopefully bubble up |
| | 2.20 | My sense of humor back |
| | 4.12 | A life that's one that has balance |
| | 3.9 | A balance, and in harmony and just kind of a positive vibe |
| | 3.8 | Kind of more of a freeness |

Participant 4 (Marissa):

| Themes | Page/Line | Key Words |
|--|-----------|--|
| <u>Doctoral Student Experiences</u> | | |
| Emotional Deprivation/Exhaustion | 1.46 | Everything feels kind of harried |
| | 3.4 | Harried...it is really kind of intense |
| | 1.31 | This exhaustion of student life |
| | 3.10 | A sense of urgency |
| Feeling Overwhelmed | 2.3 | One project at a time, one day at a time |
| | 2.3 | Can't think too far in the future, it gets a little overwhelming |
| Multiple Paths/Opportunities | 2.32 | So many interests, so many paths and they're just totally splintering off |
| | 5.2 | That really represents all the various paths that I have before me right now that I can follow |
| Sadness about Missed Opportunities | 3.9 | There's a bit of mourning...Any decision I make precluded these other decisions |
| | 5.10 | Mourning lost opportunities |
| Isolation/Silence | 5.32 | Not sharing a great deal of my past experiences |
| | 5.39 | I'm in the closet about that |
| | 8.9 | Fence...keeping things under wraps, and not sharing |
| Fear of Stigmatization | 5.37 | My own history with mental illness...not really acceptable in a lot of ways |
| | 7.5 | Feeling like people might not have as much respect for me, or just fear... |
| Stigma around Mental Illness | 5.43 | I hear so much judgment...both colleagues, students and |

| | | |
|---|-------|---|
| | | practitioners |
| | 6.4 | Is very negative and I don't want to deal with that |
| Hidden True Self | 5.34 | They don't really fit in with the professional and middle class sort of world I am in |
| | 4.31 | Feeling I'm moving between multiple worlds...multiple cultures |
| Conflicts between advocacy and Feeling Unsafe | 6.17 | Their knowledge of me...if they know I have this history, may actually benefit their clients |
| | 7.1 | There might be a professional threat |
| Protective Self | 5.31 | Protective...like I can come in and do with that what I need to survive and not draw attention to myself |
| Gained Self-Validation | 12.36 | I actually do have a leg to stand on, something to contribute to conversations |
| <u>Guided Visualization/Art-making as Catalyst</u> | | |
| Artistic Angst | 1.4 | A momentary internal battle...try making something, ah, I like...versus a quick and dirty representation |
| Art-making as Meditative | 2.7 | The medium of making something visual kind of calming |
| Process facilitating reflective stance | 2.8 | Focusing in and of itself |
| | 12.6 | I am surprised at how it all felt |
| Coalescing of thoughts and Emotions | 10.34 | I ...have gathered these sort of disparate thought bubbles...and put them in a narrative structure that's contained |
| | 12.7 | It's been a really interesting exercise in kind of organizing my thoughts, then visually represent... |
| Animal as metaphor of Resilient Self | 2.21 | Very complex...shy and cautious...yet also very ingenious and, um, fierce |
| | 2.28 | Very protective and win most battles they're in |
| | 2.30 | Representative as I oftentimes feel like I'm battling in life |

Future Self

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Difficulties looking forward | 1.24 | Maybe the blankness [front of mask], um, in part because I really don't know |
| Safety of Personal Voice | 10.14 9.14 | I'll be much more freely talking... There's subterranean stuff that will...always remain hidden...but not caged |
| Increased Personal Authority | 7.23 | It won't be as threatening [to disclose mental health history] |
| Sense of Self | 7.18 | I'm hoping that as I am no longer a student and I'm more credentialed |
| Professional Philosophy | 8.33 | I can contribute in multiple ways to people and society |
| Calmer Future Life | 9.34 | Environmentalism as a guiding factor |
| | 1.25 | I'm hoping that life will be calmer when I'm done being a student |
| | 7.39 | A lot less chaotic |

Participant 5 (Mark):

| Themes | Page/Line | Key Words |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
|--------|-----------|-----------|

Doctoral Student Experiences

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------|---|
| Still in Process | 4.22 | Right now I'm still waiting, stalking my prey, my future, my success in my pursuits |
| | 5.9 | Conscious of time...my professional development |
| Attributes | 5.1 | More youthful |
| Current Ideological Beliefs | 6.35 | We get our bread from unveiling the wound, the most vulnerable wound of other people...that's important to acknowledge |
| Gained Insight/Validation | | |

**Guided Visualization/Art-making
as Catalyst**

| | | |
|----------------|------|---|
| Artistic Angst | 1.4 | A little nervous 'cause I don't make art |
| | 1.16 | It was hard for me to imagine doing something in a medium note |
| | 1.11 | Curious and sort of apprehensive |

| | | |
|--|------|---|
| | | about it not coming out to represent something real for me |
| Art-making as Communicative | 5.38 | It doesn't carry the full power that it has in my mind but...it does communicate kind of what I was going for...I'm pleased |
| | 7.10 | Kind of exciting to...to not have to have a name for your feeling ...but to actually have an image that captures a feeling you can't fully put a name to. |
| Process facilitating reflective stance | 1.20 | Making it be real in terms of my experience, how I feel about things |
| | 5.6 | Even that thought helped me move into a more summer state of mind |
| | 6.17 | When there is something to grab onto, not to be afraid to do that |
| A Mix of Emotions | 1.10 | Curious sort of to see how it would come out |
| | 7.8 | This has felt vulnerable...ah, exciting |
| Animal Mask as Metaphor for Self | 1.38 | That's me sort of waiting to hunt |
| | 1.39 | What I'm hunting is my client's weakness, things that keep him from being...strong |
| | 1.42 | I'm ruthless in my pursuit |
| | 4.42 | The foundation is grass...that just symbolizes potential and freshness |
| | 1.37 | There's a wolf waiting with his tongue hanging out and that's me, sort of waiting to hunt |
| | 1.44 | The gentleness is represented by my mouth and the lotus flowers that blossom around it |
| Future Self | | |
| Personal/Professional Integration | 2.16 | There's all kind of history...so you can be cruel in my family |
| | 6.12 | To be less apologetic about the way I think about my work |
| | 2.30 | I want to do it through softness but to keep the ruthlessness of my father's intention |
| Ideological Stance | 2.5 | My radiance in the professional |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------|---|
| | | role...is interdependent with my client's pain |
| | 2.43 | A fearlessness in pursuit of my client's healing |
| | 2.10 | Hopefully I can help transform that cruelty into elegance |
| | 2.27 | Transforming cruel realities into gentleness and encouragement in a good way |
| Future Personal Impact of Work | 3.16 | There's blood on my face that I'm going to carry with me if I do my job right |
| | 6.22 | Not to shy away from suffering with my clients as well |
| | 4.4 | It doesn't contaminate the core of myself, which I don't see as self but as compassion...without identity |
| | 2.1 | When I hunt the memory down or the pain down and it bleeds, it feels the compassion of my tongue. |

Participant 6 (Mary):

| Themes | Page/Line | Key Words |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Doctoral Student Experiences | | |
| Mixed Emotions | 1.15 | Sort of grateful for really wonderful experiences in learning and growing and also frustrated |
| Lack of Self-Agency | 3.11 | A curiosity...what brought me into it |
| | 1.28 | One foot in and one foot out |
| | 1.27 | Still sort of tied to the program |
| | 2.19 | Being part of that place |
| | 3.16 | But I just let myself go where I wanted to |
| New Self-knowledge | 3.24 | I thought I knew myself but there were parts of me I didn't know about |
| Transformative Process | 1.23 | I've taken the experience and used it...it's made me so much better a clinician |
| Unrealized Expectations | 7.16 | I can't believe how much I've changed |
| | 6.32 | I wanted it to be more smoother |

| | | |
|---|------|--|
| | 6.32 | I had set these expectations, I couldn't reach them |
| Emotional Ambivalence | 1.27 | I feel kind of unfinished or like...could I have done it differently? |
| | 6.20 | I feel sad, oh I'm going to miss...I feel wonderful |
| | 6.26 | Disappointed in myself that it has taken so long |
| Unfinished Business | 4.16 | Coming out of the program with lots of various experiences but no real credentials to like go into |
| | 4.18 | Love assessments but I can't really go into...can't get board certified, APA |
| | 4.27 | No real business plan in terms of where I want to go |
| <u>Guided Visualization/Art-making as Catalyst</u> | | |
| Animal as Metaphor | 2.7 | It's like you're part of the environment |
| | 2.19 | It's more like a feeling of being part of that place |
| Process facilitating reflective stance | 6.15 | I do...like when I first was going into the program and where I am now and that kind of image |
| | 6.20 | It sort of helps me to be in touch with that kind of experience |
| | 7.37 | I'll probably percolate in my mind for awhile |
| | 7.17 | It's good. It's good to sort of process this. |
| Art-making as Communicative | 2.41 | Sharing this moment in this environment together |
| Gained Insight | 3.26 | That first image really resonates with my experience as a new student |
| | 4.36 | It's like a tree with like green, green growth |
| | 45 | It's more solid, it's definitely... all the stuff that needs to be done |
| | 5.8 | Those things are solidifying |
| Benefits of art-making | 7.27 | It's nice to make a space to...to go there |

| | | |
|---------------------------|------|--|
| | 7.37 | There are so many opportunities to avoid things...so I just find it helpful It's like I didn't know what I wanted it to look like, but that's what I wanted it to look like...kind of like my program |
| Mask as metaphor | | |
| <u>Future Self</u> | | |
| Tasks | 4.28 | Working towards licensure |
| | 5.6 | I'm working on my hours...going to take the test and get licensed |
| Ideological Stance | | I mean, I'm not even committed to any particular area |
| Developing Self-agency | 5.12 | But I still feel green and flexible in terms of which direction to go... |
| | 5.14 | If I get into this area, I'll go down that path |
| Emotional Self | 5.41 | Requires a tolerance for humiliation in the sense of being humble |
| | 8.20 | It's hard to let go of knowing, planning |
| Hopes | 6.9 | A sense of solidifying, but not becoming stagnant or not being rigid |

Participant 7 (Austin):

| Themes | Page/Line | Key Words |
|---|-----------|---|
| <u>Doctoral Student Experiences</u> | | |
| Secure Self-Confidence | 5.34 | There was never any doubt I'd get it done |
| Strong Basis for Future Self | 3.22 | I feel like I have a pretty good foundation |
| | 3.34 | I have a strong foundation going forward |
| | 3.39 | A good base to grow from |
| Attributes | 4.26 | I act pretty ethically...use a lot of good judgment |
| <u>Guided Visualization/Art-making as Catalyst</u> | | |
| Experience of Process | 1.18 | It was nice, nice to do after a, you know, a day of working |
| | 2.8 | I didn't really form an image of what kind of animal it would be...I like all |

| | | |
|--|------|--|
| | | animals |
| | 2.45 | I know it's the wrong thing but I...what ended up being something different |
| Process facilitating reflective stance | 6.9 | I think it just kind of fit with how I am sometimes...Yeah. |
| | 6.11 | It's really good to reflect it more and think about if it's always helpful or not to be that way |
| Interpretation Concerns | 1.33 | Kind of like projective assessment, like...what were they thinking, what does it say about them? |
| Symbolism | 3.34 | I guess I painted the whole thing blue because I want to become a clinical psychologist |
| | 2.45 | What ended up being something different than I thought it was...and it turned out to be what you feel |
| | 5.12 | Like kind of a minimalist thing, and simplicity and...disingenuous to make a mask that was too cluttered |
| | 3.16 | I made the sticks into triangles...like the metal in the shape of triangles holding up bridges |
| | 3.21 | Felt it was some type of representation there...how I feel like I have a pretty strong foundation |
| | 3.6 | It turned out, um, to how you feel, I guess, it probably speaks to like a little naiveté |
| <u>Future Self</u> | | |
| Secure Foundation to Build Upon | 4.1 | What I want to become...will be extended and built off what I already am as a student |
| | 3.35 | A tremendous amount to, ah, keep building on |
| | 3.37 | Many decades to come of...of work to build on it |
| | 4.2 | Build off what I already am as a student |
| Self-actualization as clinician | | I want to do more of it and do it better |

Appendix F

Individual Participants' Super-Ordinate Themes and Sub-themes

Table 4: Julie - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes

| Table 2 : Julie - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes |
|--|
| Domain 1: Doctoral Student Experiences |
| <p>Unfinished Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing demands and obligations • Minutiae of tasks and obligations <p>Impact on Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of self-autonomy • Lack of self-agency <p>Valuing the Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude for experiences • Gratitude for professors/mentors • Gratitude for learning <p>Emotional roller-coaster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering one's goals • Complexity of the experiences |
| Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making at Catalysts |
| <p>Thoughts & Emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty starting the process • Gratitude for the experience • Process as calm and meditative <p>Animal as Metaphor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For self • For professors and mentors • Wisdom of ancestors <p>Process as Transformative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing unrecognized wisdom • Gained insight |
| Domain 3: Thoughts about Future Self |
| <p>Personal and Professional Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining person-centered focus • Acknowledging accomplishments <p>Evolving sense of Expertness & Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased sense of self-authority and self-agency • Taking ownership • A stronger voice <p>Looking Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopes for calm peacefulness • Future excitement in role as psychologist |

Table 5: Molly - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes

| |
|---|
| <p>Domain 1: Doctoral Student Experiences</p> <p>Unfinished Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing demands and obligations • Minutiae of tasks and obligations <p>Impact on Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling overwhelmed • Feeling anxious • Lack of validation and encouragement • Lack of self-agency <p>Taking Ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering true self • Remembering one's goals • Nurturing accomplishments |
| <p>Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making at Catalysts</p> <p>Thoughts & Emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety around art-making • Thankfulness for the experience • Process as calm and meditative <p>Process Facilitating Reflective Stance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A certain flow • Encouraging new awareness <p>Animal as Metaphor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of resilient self • Of struggle • Blessed to be having the conversation <p>Process as Transformative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing unrecognized wisdom • Gained insight |
| <p>Domain 3: Thoughts about Future Self</p> <p>Personal and Professional Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering true self • Acknowledging accomplishments <p>Looking Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More balanced future self <p>Taking Ownership of identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient self • Encouragement for increasing sense of competence <p>Accepting Uncertainty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to take risks • Uncertain future path |

Table 6: Jeffrey - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes

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| Domain 1: Doctoral Student Experiences |
| <p>Impact on Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of deprivation without tangible reward • exhaustion • Weight and pressure of obligations • Feeling unbalanced <p>Impact on Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaken Foundation <p>Transformative Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for meaning • Mixed emotions |
| Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making at Catalysts |
| <p>Gratitude for the Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering how to play • Healing and rewarding <p>Art-making as Communicative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New means of expression <p>Process Facilitating Reflective Stance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating imagination • Encouraging new awareness • Becoming receptive <p>Process as Transformative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and solidifying |
| Domain 3: Thoughts about Future Self |
| <p>Impact on the Personal and the Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering the struggle <p>Increased Sense of Self-efficacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing sense of expertise • Increased self-authority • Increased freedom <p>Hope for More Balanced, Holistic Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of sense of humor • Symmetry and balance • Return of optimism and hope |

Table 7 : Marissa - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes

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| Domain 1: Doctoral Student Experiences |
| <p>Impact on Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of self-autonomy • Feeling the pressure and feeling overwhelmed • Emotional deprivation and exhaustion • Sense is isolation and Lack of belonging <p>Valuing the Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to explore multiple paths <p>Mourning missed opportunities</p> <p>Fear of Consequences — Personal & Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling unsafe to disclose history • Fear of stigmatization • Staying invisible <p>Conflicts between advocacy and feeling safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating others versus remaining silent and protecting self • Resilient self |
| Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making at Catalysts |
| <p>Artistic angst</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making appealing versus meaningful <p>Process facilitating reflective stance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing • Organizing thoughts <p>Art-making as meditative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making something visual as calming <p>Process as Transformative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalescing of thoughts and emotions • Validating self-identity <p>Animal as metaphor of Resilient self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective • Representative of life struggles • Complex and cautious <p>Grateful for Experience</p> |
| Domain 3: Thoughts about Future Self |
| <p>Personal and Professional Integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gained validation of past experiences and personal voice • Gained validation of self as psychologist <p>Increased sense of self-authority and self-agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking ownership • A stronger voice • Safety of personal voice |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value in breaking the silence about mental illness <p>Looking Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties seeing one's future • Hopes for a calmer and more balanced life • Feeling safer • Positive impact working with others who are struggling |
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Table 8: Mark - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes

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| Domain 1: Doctoral Student Experiences |
| <p>Unfinished Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still in process of being a student • Professional Development and Consciousness of time <p>Impact on Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More youthful in the beginning <p>Valuing the Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about and developing strong ideological beliefs |
| Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making at Catalysts |
| <p>Emotions around art-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curiosity versus nervousness • Letting go of anxiety and let the process proceed <p>Emotions Evoked during the Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of failing • Apprehensions about not making it real • Vulnerability versus excitement <p>Imagery as Communicative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new medium of expression <p>Process facilitating reflective stance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal mask as metaphor for self • Learning to trust self <p>Gratefulness for Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exciting and fun • Thankful for opportunity to create imagery that articulates feelings |
| Domain 3: Thoughts about Future Self |
| <p>Integration of Personal & Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined professional identity • Increased Self-acceptance <p>Future impact of work as psychologist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being impacted by clients' pain • Being fearless in pursuit of healing <p>Increased self-authority and personal voice</p> |

- Validation of ideological stance

Table 9 : Mary - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes

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| Domain 1: Doctoral Student Experiences |
| <p>Mixed emotions about academic experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regrets and unfulfilled expectations • Gratitude for experiences in learning and growing • Solid foundation to grow upon • Disappointments <p>Unfinished Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining tasks to accomplish • “one foot in, one foot out” of the program <p>Lack of current self-agency and professional authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet credentialed • No APA accreditation before time to graduate <p>Transformative process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New learning about self • Increased feelings of clinical efficacy and competence |
| Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making at Catalysts |
| <p>Process facilitating Reflexive stance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling part of the environment • Sharing the environment with image • Helping get in touch with feelings <p>Mask of Metaphor for School Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not knowing what it would look like initially <p>Gratitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful on processing student experience • Helpful to make the space to process experiences • For a tangible object that one can continue to explore |
| Domain 3: Thoughts about Future Self |
| <p>Unfinished tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undefined ideological and professional stance • Need to pursue licensure • Developing self-agency <p>Future opportunities and Hopes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Open to possibilities • Having faith in the future <p>Struggling with uncertainty</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty visualizing future path • No real plan for next step <p>Emotional Ambivalence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness with being done versus excitement to begin |
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Table 10: Austin - Super-Ordinate Themes & Sub-themes

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| Domain 1: Doctoral Student Experiences |
| <p>Strong basis for future self and professional identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure self-confidence • Acting ethically and responsibly <p>Valuing the Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to build foundation for future growth • Opportunity to develop new skills and learn new knowledge |
| Domain 2: Guided Visualization & Art-making at Catalysts |
| <p>Thoughts and Emotions around making art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projective Interpretation concerns • Imagery arising without conscious intention <p>Surprise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surprised by discoveries • Starting from logical stance and creating the unexpected <p>Thankfulness for the Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A chance to relax and reflect • Relaxing and meditative <p>Process facilitating reflective stance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism of strong foundation |
| Domain 3: Thoughts about Future Self |
| <p>Looking Forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to continue learning and growing • Building upon knowledge and expertise • Looking forward with optimism <p>Increased Sense of self-authority</p> <p>Increased Self-agency</p> |