2012

An Intergenerational Study: Mirrors as a Tool for Self-Reflection

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AN INTERGENERATIONAL STUDY

MIRRORS AS A TOOL FOR SELF-REFLECTION

A DISSERTATION

submitted by

SUSAN RIDLEY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

LESLEY UNIVERSITY
May 19, 2012

LESLEY

Lesley University
Graduate School of Arts & Social Sciences
Ph.D. in Expressive Therapies Program

DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

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Dissertation Title:

An Intergenerational Study: Mirrors as a Tool for Self-Reflection

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members for their encouragement and assistance in this dissertation process: Dr. Michele Forinash for her invaluable support and guidance throughout this doctoral journey; Dr. Julia Byers for sharing her extensive knowledge of expressive arts therapy and other disciplines; and Dr. Kim Buxenbaum for her insights in psychology, and developmental theories and concepts.

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ABSTRACT

Globalization and advances in technology have resulted in a loss of cultural, community, and individual identity. Having a strong sense of self can be a protective factor in resisting peer pressure and involvement in negative behaviors, and a determining factor in the formation of one's coping skills, and resiliency to life's challenges. This was especially important for adolescents who are negotiating the developmental growth from childhood to adulthood, and older adults who are transitioning from the independence of adulthood to the dependence of old age.

This was a qualitative intergenerational study on the process of self-reflection on identity. Mirrors have a rich cultural heritage but there have been no studies on their use as a therapeutic tool for self-reflection. Participants in this two-part study included pre-adolescent and adolescent students, and residents of an assisted living facility. Participants decorated mirrors around the question, "Who Am I?" These mirrors were exhibited in a senior community center. A comparison was also made to existing data collected in a pilot study to compare and contrast responses of those viewing the self-reflections on identity.

Results indicated that mirrors aid in self reflection not only during the process of making the mirrors, but also for those viewing the exhibition. The data indicated three core themes that included (a) introspection and self concern, (b) connection and attachment to others, and (c) taking action to help others. These core themes encompassed the works of Erikson, Maslow, and Frankl. The results from this study postulated fluid, transitional phases in the process of self-reflection on identity which

require further study.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The dissertation research was a qualitative intergenerational study investigating the use of mirrors as a therapeutic tool for self-reflection on identity. This study had two assumptions: (a) that mirrors can connect one to ones inner thoughts and feelings on identity, not only for those who created the mirrors, but also for those viewing the mirrors in an art exhibition; and (b) that creating these mirrors provided an opportunity to clarify or (re)discover one's sense of identity.

The literature review focused on the process of self-reflection about identity and encompassed the fundamental question, *Who am I?* The literature review begins with the historical context of the human relationship with the mirror in what Melchior-Bonnet (2001) believed to be a quest for identity through self-reflection. Links between self-reflection and identity formation are examined in philosophy and psychology from a historical context to post-modern thoughts including developmental theories and concepts.

A strong foundation and belief in one's identity, meaning and purpose in life, as well as spiritual convictions may help turn negative experiences into opportunities for growth (Ryś, 2009). Adolescents who have a strong sense of self can be a protective factor in resisting peer pressure and involvement in unwanted behaviors such as bullying, vandalism, or self harm (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008). The addictive pleasures of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are less likely to attract those with a clear idea of who they are (Griffin et al., 2001). Helping older adults to evaluate their life's journey and come to terms with the frailty of old age is equally important in achieving what Erikson

(1959/1980) believed to be the final task of human development; an understanding of all one's achievements and experiences resulting in integrity of the self.

Globalization and advances in technology have resulted in a loss of cultural identities, the break-down of communities, and family structures (Kinnvall, 2004; Sánchez, 2010). Buhler (1964) postulated "the self image is related to a world image" (p. 90), which supported Erikson's (1958/1993) assertion that a search for identity was an ideological need. The destabilizing of both individual and societal identities has led to existential anxiety (Kinnvall, 2004); creating a vacuum and a meaningless existence which may manifest itself in boredom and apathy (Frankl, 1969/1988). Benson (2006) and Scales (1999) agreed that having a sense of purpose and meaning in one's life was a critical asset in identity development.

This study adds to the body of expressive arts therapy literature by providing a description of mirrors as a therapeutic tool for self-reflection on identity. The results from this study postulated fluid, transitional phases in the process of self-reflection on identity. These phases included (a) introspection and self concern (e.g., physical appearance, talents), (b) connection and attachment to something or someone other than self (e.g., nature, animals, people), and (c) taking action to help others (e.g., volunteering, championing a worthy cause). In the process of self-reflection on identity these phases encompassed the works of Erikson, Maslow, and Frankl. Further study was indicated.

My personal experience and conviction that expressive arts therapy has the power to heal is clearly a bias in this paper, although this point of view is supported by others (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005; Malchiodi, 2002; McNiff, 1989, 1992, 1997, 2004, 2007, 2009; Rogers, 1982, 1993, 2004). The impact of identity on values and decision making

is well documented in developmental theories and concepts (Bendle, 2002; Erikson,

1959/1980, 1968, 1997/1998; Frankl, 1959/2006, 1967, 1969/1988, 1978; Fromm, 1947;

Goffman, 1963; Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1968/1999; May, 1969; Ryś, 2009; Stevenson &

Haberman, 1998; Waterman, 1993, 2004), although there may be some dispute that

identity is the first step in the formation of values which leads to setting life goals and

objectives.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This literature review focused on the process of self-reflection on identity. The question of identity was fundamental in the formation of values, decision making, and quality of life as well as in the development of resiliency skills to help change negative life experiences into opportunities for growth (Ryś, 2009; Yang, Staps, & Hijamans, 2010). The literature review included historical as well as post-modern theory and studies on:

- The history of mirrors detailed the myriad usages of mirrors in different cultures including their role in mysticism, as a therapeutic tool, in expressive arts, and as a philosophical meditation.

- Self-reflection in philosophy and psychology, from the concepts of Aristotle (trans. 1999) and self-realization of Spinoza and the existentialists (Stevenson & Haberman, 1998), to the works of Horney (1950), Fromm (1947), May (1969), and Piaget (1967).

- Theories of identity formation detailed in the work of Erikson (1959/1980, 1968, 1997/1998), Frankl (1959/2006, 1967, 1969/1988, 1978), and Maslow (1943, 1954, 1968/1999) among others.

- Intergenerational studies related to attitudes between older adults and adolescents as well as the impact of expressive activities on adolescent identity development (Coatsworth, Palen, & Sharp, 2006; Waterman, 2004).

A History of Mirrors

From primitive beliefs and customs to complex societies, mirrors have reflected a

world-view of individual and group identities. Mirrors have evolved through time from polished stones, to precious metals, to the modern-day mirrors made from glass. According to Pendergrast (2008), the earliest man-made mirror was discovered at Çatal Hüyük, in Turkey, and was believed to be from around 6200 BCE. Various cultures have created mirrors from copper, bronze, gold, and silver (e.g., Egyptians and Sumerians), or from anthracite, slat, pyrite, and obsidian (e.g., Olmecs, Moche). Glass blown convex mirrors coated with molten lead were pioneered by the ancient Romans, and in the 15th century, flat glass mirrors coated with an amalgam of tin-mercury were perfected in Europe (Pendergrast, 2008).

With advances in technology, mirrors lost their magical and sacred status as treasured possessions that symbolized wealth and power, and became commonplace glass products that reflected everyday reality and vanity (Chalupa, 2006; Pendergrast, 2008). Mirrors have been featured in folklore, religion, magic, science, art, and literature throughout history and across cultures. Melchior-Bonnet (2001) believed that:

> There are many ways to look at oneself in the mirror: with fear, modesty, joy, complacency, or defiance. One can look for resemblance or difference, kinship or foreignness. The mirror image can be remarkably accurate but can also be distorted and imperfect (p. 5).

Mirrors have appeared in a myriad of forms and usage that have included revealing, hiding, or distorting reality, as a communication device, weapons of war, to search the stars, to ward off evil spirits, for divination, or as a treasured possession in the after-life (Giles & Joy, 2008; Melchior-Bonnet, 2001; Pendergrast, 2003). The ability to recognize oneself in the mirror correlates with self-awareness and the development of

other human traits such as "logic, creativity, curiosity, the appreciation of beauty, and empathy, leading directly to tool use, scientific experiments, story-telling, poetry, art, theatre, law-making, philosophy, religion, and a sense of humor" (Pendergrast, 2008, p. 10). In *The Mirror: A History* (2001), Melchior-Bonnet believed that "the mirror, 'matrix of the symbolic,' accompanies the human quest for identity" (p. 4). Although mirrors are deceptive because they fool the eye and mind with image reversal, without a mirror one is unable to see ones face (Gregory, 2008). Pendergrast (2003) wrote:

> A history of the mirror is really the history of looking, and what we perceive in these magical surfaces can tell us a great deal about ourselves – whence we have come, what we imagine, how we think, and what we yearn for. The mirror appears throughout the human drama as a means of self-knowledge or self-delusion (p. ix).

Mirrors and mysticism. Mirrors have evoked fear in many communities around the world; from primitive tribes viewing their reflection in a pool of water to modern-day civilizations. "The mirror is one of our earliest known artifacts and the metaphor of the mirror has been used for centuries to represent the relationship of man and his thinking to nature and to the divine" (Shipton, 1999/2004, p. 181). According to Goldberg (1985), the "reflection-death superstitions" were held by diverse cultures such as the "Aztecs, the Finno-Ugric people, the Zulus, and ancient Greeks" (p. 4). The Aztecs used a bowl of water containing a knife to ward off thieves and sorcerers. The Finno-Ugric people believed that the mirror had the power to take away the soul. A belief similar to the Zulus conviction that a creature lurked below the water ready to swallow their reflection (soul) causing death, and the ancient Greek's superstition that dreaming of seeing one's

reflection in a pool was a sign of death (Goldberg, 1985).

Covering mirrors or turning the mirror to face the wall after a death in the house was a custom practiced in many countries, and among Mohammedans and Jewish sects. This custom was based on the belief that "the soul projected out of the living person in the form of his reflection in the mirror, may be carried off by the ghost of the deceased, which hovers around the house until burial" (Goldberg, 1985, p. 1). The link between the mirror reflection and soul can be found in the folklore and mythology of diverse cultures throughout the world (Ziolkowki, 1977). According to Pendergrast (2003) and Lilyquist (1979) the Egyptians believed that each person had a double, called a Ka, which was preserved in a mirror. A person's Ka represented their "genius, energy, and identity" while the Ba, was "the soul or consciousness, usually shown as a bird" (p. 5). Mirrors adorned ancient tombs preserving the Ka and helping the transition to the after-life.

And for anyone who broke a mirror, seven years of bad luck was sure to follow. This well-known superstition was also related to the belief that the mirror captured ones soul. A belief shared by many cultures including the Japanese who valued mirrors as heirlooms that held ancestral spirits. The Chinese also treasured mirrors as conduits of ancestral wisdom as well as tools for grooming, protection against supernatural powers, and to redirect energy (Chi). According to Pendergrast (2003), unlike the Egyptians and Etruscans who tried to recreate life conditions so that the dead would have all their possessions in the afterlife, Chinese mirrors were interned with the dead to provide light to the soul as it wandered the earth after death.

Mirrors were believed by many cultures to have mystic power and were used for scrying (Catoptromancy), a form of divination that foretold the future, or were used to

discover hidden knowledge (Addey, 2008; Goldberg, 1985; Pendergrast, 2003). One of

the most famous scryers of all time was Michel de Nostredame, known also as

Nostradamus, who commenced scrying in 1547. He reportedly wore ceremonial robes

and held a magic wand while gazing into a bowl of water supported by a tripod

(Pendergrast, 2003). *The Prophecies of Nostradamus* (Nostradamus, n.d.) was first

printed in 1555, it has been translated into multiple languages and is still in print today.

Other forms of scrying have included a crystal ball (Crystallomancy), a cup filled

with water or other liquids (Cyclicomancy), a body of water such as a river, lake, stream

or well (Hydromancy), or oil or soot-covered finger nails (Onychomancy) (Goldberg,

1985, p. 8). According to Pendergrast (2003), the art of scrying was practiced by

Mongolians, Siberians, Japanese, Tahitians, Gypsies, Australian Aborigines, Zulus,

Congolese, Ethiopians, and Papuans among others, and was prevalent in occult religious

traditions such as neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Kabbalism, and alchemy as

well as in early Christian religion (p. 34 - 35).

The mirror as a therapeutic tool. Mirrors have been used to calm, to groom, for

self-care, to teach, and to foster self-acceptance (Freysteinson, 2009). They have also

been used to improve balance and postural alignment (Galeazzi et al., 2006; Watson &

Peck, 2008). Mirror therapy and the use of parasaggital mirrors are effective therapeutic

tools in retraining the mind and body to respond to visual impulses in paralysis and

reduce phantom pain in amputees (Altschuler & Hu, 2008; Fukumura et al., 2007; Giraux

& Sirigu, 2003; Hunter, Katz, & Davis, 2003; MacLachlan, McDonald & Waloch, 2004).

It is believed that the reflection of the intact or good limb normalizes the perception of

the affected limb, replacing or driving proprioception movement (Rosén & Lundborg,

2005). Proprioception is the stimuli, sensation or feedback that is activated with the movement of the body (Merriam-Webster, 2009, p. 997).

In a case study of a 32 year old male with a lower limb amputation (MacLachlan, McDonald, & Waloch, 2004), mirror sessions were used as an intervention to treat phantom limb pain (PLP). Therapy sessions were held over a period of 19 weeks and consisted of physical exercises in front of a full length mirror. The intervention resulted in a significant reduction in PLP and an increase in a sense of motor control over the phantom limb. The treatment was conducted under routine clinical conditions and may offer a possible intervention for amputees with severe PLP. Further research into the use of mirror sessions was indicated.

In Altschuler and Hu's (2008) case study of a 39 year old female with a fractured wrist and no active wrist extension, a combination of mirror therapy and electrical stimulation was used to improve wrist function. During a course of 15 minute mirror therapy sessions, two to three times a week over a five-week period, electrical stimulation was applied to the injured wrist while watching the reflection of the functional hand extending in a parasaggital mirror. While the treatment was successful in restoring the normal function of the wrist, the researchers recommended larger studies and continued research into the effectiveness of mirrors as a therapeutic intervention.

Giraux and Sirigu (2003) also used a parasaggital mirror to investigate the effects of visumotor training on the motor cortex of three patients actively observing the movements of an uninjured limb in a mirror. Pre and post functional magnetic resonance imaging scans were completed in an eight week training program in which participants learned to match voluntary "movements" of the phantom limb with prerecorded

movements of the virtual limb. The data indicated that pre-scans of phantom limb movements activated the contralateral premotor cortex, and post-scans of two participants, resulted in increased activity of the contralateral primary motor area and significant reduction of PLP. There was no increase in motor cortex activity or reduction of PLP in the third participant. While more research was indicated, it was concluded that various "pathological conditions could benefit from this visuomotor technique, for the purpose of either pain relief (e.g., neuropathic pain, reflex sympathetic dystrophy) or motor rehabilitation (e.g., stroke, nerve lesions, orthopedic immobilization)" (p. 110).

The use of mirrors in the study of treatment for eating disorders has been controversial. Some researchers (Delinsky & Wilson, 2006; Vocks et al., 2008) have found the use of mirror therapy beneficial, while others (Key et al, 2001) have found them to be counter-productive. Key et al. (2001) cautioned that the use of a mirror may be contraindicated for those suffering from eating disorders and have experienced sexual abuse because "The mirror exercise can create an intolerable anxiety for some people, and how it is implemented is particularly important" (p. 189). Researchers recommended (a) the integration of a healthy control group that had a randomized assignment between experimental and controlled conditions, (b) investigation into the effect of variables that may impact research results, and (c) comparison with other approaches to body image disturbances (Delinsky & Wilson, 2006; Vocks et al., 2008). Body image disturbance is a core diagnostic feature of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

In one study, Delinsky and Wilson (2006) randomly assigned 45 female participants reporting extreme weight and shape concerns into two study groups; mirror

exposure and nondirective body image treatment. Mirror exposure therapy (in a three session format) included a systematic, non-judgmental, holistic, and mindful observation of ones image, and its associated anxiety and body avoidance. Nondirective body image treatment included a daily journal and observations and attitudes to body image. The results of this study indicated that mirror exposure therapy "decreased body checking and avoidance, body dissatisfaction, weight and shape concerns, dieting, depression, and increased self-esteem among women without clinical eating disorders" (p. 115).

In a study of eating disorders and body image therapy, Vocks, Wächter, Wucherer, and Kosfelder (2008) found "that the extent of negative emotions and cognitions evoked by looking into a mirror can be reduced by cognitive-behavioral interventions aiming at an improvement of body image" (p. 153). This study included 17 female participants diagnosed with an eating disorder and a healthy control group of 24 female participants. Cognitive therapy was used to identify and then modify dysfunctional body-related thoughts with positive interventions, and behavioral therapy utilized body-exposure techniques coupled with regular self-management exercises. Vocks et al. (2008) concluded that these interventions influenced the positive result in cognitive and emotional reactions to looking in the mirror.

Mirrors in expressive arts. The creative expression of music, song, dance, theater, or performance was conceptualized as an emotional experience of enabling and fulfillment (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005). Jung (1933/1955) believed that the creation of something new was not accomplished by the intellect, but was an instinctual act borne out of inner necessity. The process of creating was healing and life enhancing, providing a safe haven for those struggling with life challenges and illnesses. Art and healing are

intimately connected because it was through imagination and image making that one

can witness the process of becoming whole again (Malchiodi, 2002). According to

Hoffman (1996), Maslow believed that every individual needed to feel a sense of creative

fulfillment in daily life, and recommended dancing to release bodily and emotional

tension, and art or music for its uplifting and calming qualities. Utley and Garza (2011)

believed that, "in expressive therapies, the symbolic metaphor is viewed as a key, lead, or

guide to understanding the internal ambiguities of one's true self" (p. 33).

In *Trust the Process,* McNiff (1998) wrote that there was no single and absolute

way of explaining the bonds between an artist and their creation (p. 206). Instead, the

healing qualities of art are revealed through the different phases of creation and reflection

(McNiff, 1992), and that the healing process transformed conflicting forces into a new

and more productive relationships (McNiff, 1997). As one becomes immersed in the

object of contemplation one becomes present in the process of reflection, and it is this

meditation that brings new and vital energy into one's life (McNiff, 2004).

A view shared by Farrelly-Hansen (2001) and Rogers (1982, 2004) who added

that when one discovers one's essence or wholeness, one also discovers one's relatedness

to the outer world. Moon (1990/2009) believed "all art has an existential quality, for its

aim is to depict what is real and authentic in life. Art is intended to get below the surface

and unmask hidden depths of life" (p. 223). For Rogers (1993), empathy was essential for

the therapeutic process to work because empathy and acceptance gave the individual an

opportunity to discover their unique potential.

Visual arts. Evans (1998) felt that "The therapeutic mirror in group

psychotherapy may be beneficial in the treatment of resistant depression" (p. 94). And

the therapeutic use of mirrors in contour drawing was illustrated in *The Life & Art of Elizabeth "Grandma" Layton* (Lambert, 1995) who used this technique to recover from mental illness. Layton started drawing at 68 years of age after going through 30 years of unsuccessful modern psychiatry, "a 35-year depression, a failed marriage, single motherhood, shock treatments, and finally, the death of one of her children the year before, had crushed her will to live" (Lambert, 1995, p. 8).

Art changed her life and cured her depression, and in the process inspired many people during her 15 ½ year art career. Layton died from a stroke in 1993 at the age of 83. She was a prolific artist whose work encompassed nearly 1200 self-portraits while looking at her reflection in a mirror. The self-portraits depicted numerous topics including aging, depression, dieting, relationships, grand-mothering, death, hunger, nuclear holocaust, and capital punishment. The narrative captions that accompanied her drawings captured the artist's thoughts about her work and life. Layton decided not to accept money for her drawings but instead chose to give them away to friends, museums, and charity auctions because "You don't sell a miracle" (Lambert, 1995, p. 140). Nearly half a million dollars was raised for the arts and a variety of organizations dedicated to mental health, the visually impaired, civil liberties, and women's organizations. Lambert (1995) wrote that "Learning to draw had been a wonderful gift to her, she explained many times, that she didn't feel right about profiting from that gift" (p. 140).

Literature. The proliferation of mirrors as metaphors abound in therapeutic literature, philosophy, and psychoanalytical texts implying that the reflected image, either real or imaginary, provided insight into the subconscious mind (Gormley, 2008; Weinberg & Toder, 2004). For Haglund (1996), "part of the power of the mirror

metaphor is that the single image captures many aspects of human development and human experience" (p. 226). Shengold (1974) believed that the mirror was a metaphor for the mind which reflected the image of self and others. And in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* Rorty (1979) used the mirror to describe the power of metaphor in the history of foundationalist epistemology. According to Shipton (1999/2004) and Grabes (1982/2009), the mirror functions in four different ways (a) by reflecting reality, (b) by reflecting fantasy (i.e., the way that things should or shouldn't be), (c) foretelling the future, and (d) showing what existed only in the mirror or in the imagination.

Mirrors appear in a variety of forms in literature; as a warning against self-obsession, as a weapon against an enemy, a metaphysical door to an alternate reality, or revealing a soul's desire. Ovid (trans. 1986) warned of the danger of exclusive preoccupation of oneself at the expense of others in the Greek myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection. The tale of Perseus illustrated the power of the reflected image when he killed the Gorgon Medusa as she looked at her image in his mirrored shield. The mirror's metaphysical qualities were explored in Lewis Carroll's (1982/2008) alternate reality in *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There.* In the story of Snow White (Grimm & Grimm, 1987/2003) the magic talking mirror saw all that was happening in the kingdom, and the Mirror of Erised (Rowling, 2008) reflected the image of what the heart desired most. For Harry Potter, it was the sight of his deceased family.

According to Anderson (2008a, 2008b) and Grabes (1982/2009), Chaucer's (n.d.) use of mirror metaphors in *The Merchant's Tale, The Romaunt of the Rose,* and *Troilus and Criseyde* was an exploration of introspection and perception in the internal process

reflected through an external phenomenon. Anderson explained:

> The complexity of the mirror as a literary motif arises from the liminal space which it inhabits, being neither entirely subject nor entirely object: the mirror is potentially revelatory of the interior world of the self and yet conversely figures the objectified self within the external world (Anderson, 2008a, p. 70).

The image of the doppelgänger proliferates throughout literature usually in the form of a sinister shadow, mirror-image or a double (Holden, 2008): for example, Hans Christian Anderson's *The Shadow* (1997/2006) in which the main character's shadow usurps its owner and takes his place; De Maupassant's *The Horla* (1886/2005) in which the hero was prevented from seeing his reflection by the opaque figure of a ghost; and the dopplegängers of Hoffmann's *The Doubles* (1969) and Poe's *William Wilson* (1839/2006). In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Stevenson, 1886/2008) it was the mirror that reflected the images of good and evil. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde, 1890/2011) the mirror reflected the unchanged, eternally youthful looks of the protagonist while the hidden, aging, deformed portrait reflected the effects of his debauchery. And in *Lost in Translation* (Hoffman, 1989/1990), the mirror was used to construct the images of girls that reflected the male fantasy, effectively hiding their true identities.

Poetry. Poets have used the mirror metaphor to describe the maladies of human existence, from the vanities of the mirror gaze to the ravages of old age. For Kynaston (1921), the danger lay in "Thee (fair Narcissus like) to fall in love / With thine own beauty's shadow" (p. 162), but for Teft (1989/1990), the mirror provided comfort to those not blessed with beauty, "Since here defective, Heaven, be so kind / With never-fading

charms to dress my mind!" (p. 218). And for Haynes's *The Enchanted Mirror* (1882),

the poet warned against the folly of self-love, "…he's only wise / Who dupes the world

through flattery's mirrored lies; / But past all terms of scorn the insensate elf / Who holds

its glass therein to view – himself" (p. 293). Shirley (1946) extolled the virtue of using

the mirror not for pride "But to compare / The inward beauty with outward grace / And

make them fair in soul as well as face" (p. 418). For Stanford (2001) the mirror reflected

the passing of time and the decay of youth. In *Moments of Vision* (Hardy, 1925/1998) the

mirror reflected ones soul, "That mirror / Can test each mortal when unaware; / Yea, that

strange mirror / May catch his last thoughts, whole life foul or fair, / Glassing it –

where?" (p. 389).

In *Mirrors* (Plath, 1960/1998), the poet used the mirror as a reflection of reality

that was impartial, non-judgmental, and emotionless; "I am silver and exact. I have no

preconceptions. / Whatever I see I swallow immediately, / Just as it is, unmisted by love

or dislike" (p. 173). But for Agarwal (2009) the mirror reflection was an opportunity for

pleasure because when "All said and done, at fifty, / dear bini, you brighten up / the

day… / Each morning, I've something to look forward to in the mirror, / and a game to

play…" (p. 174). Paranjape (2009) believed that the mirror held a secret love because "At

the heart of every looking glass / is an image. A solitary mirror also / dwells inside each

heart, hiding in it / the likeness of an unnamed beloved" (p. 73). But in *The Lament of the

Looking Glass* (Hardy, 1925/1998, p. 625) the mirror was a sad reminder of a lost love.

However, for Thomas (1926, p. 166), the mirror represented the grief expressed for the

loss of a mother seen in the reflection of the poet's aging face:

IT WAS the eve my mother died.

The bowl with water had been set;

The candle shone, the bier beside –

The room, I see it yet!

Above the bowl I chanced to lean;

The water like a mirror lay –

My mother's face therein was seen!

Half-wild I turned away.

And long my tears flowed unassuaged…

But now I know, since years are gone,

It was my face I saw – but aged,

With lines of sorrow drawn!

Dance. Mirrors proliferate in dance studios and exercise centers around the world, providing participants with a stark view of their body and posture that may initiate feelings of body dissatisfaction and heighten self-consciousness (Carver & Scheier, 1978). Dancers commonly wear tight fitting clothing that gives the teacher a clear view of their body, posture, and technique. Green (1999) believed that "…the constant focus on an externalized view of the body, as reflected in the mirror, objectifies the dancer's body and requires students to strive to achieve a specific 'look' while being 'corrected' so that the students perform 'proper' dance technique" (p. 81). Mirrors may also contribute negatively to the perfectionism of ballerinas (Druss and Silverman, 1979).

In a study of the effect of teaching with mirrors on ballet dance performance, mirrors were found to have negatively affected classroom performances (Radell, Adame, & Cole, 2004). Using an evaluation methodology, 13 women enrolled in one ballet class

were taught using mirrors, and 14 students in a second ballet class were taught without mirrors. Both classes were taught with the same instructor. Participants in a 14-week term of classes were videotaped performing the same adagio and grand allegro phrase during week five and at the end of the term. The videotapes for both classes were reviewed by the instructor and another ballet teacher who was unaware which was the mirror class and which was the non-mirror class. High interrater reliability was noted between the scores for each dancer. The data indicated a significant increase in adagio scores in the non-mirror class, but no significant increases in adagio and allegro scores for the mirror class. The results from this study suggested that a mirrored dance environment may hinder the acquisition of skills.

According to Green (1999), this continued focus on the body as a mechanical entity may result in a disconnection with ones inner self and a reduction in awareness of internal body messages. A view supported by somatic theorists Behnke (1990) and Johnson (1992) who believed that Western culture created a mind/body split that disconnected us from internal body messages and sense of self. Johnson (1992) suggested that this external model of the ideal body perpetuated control by the dominant culture over others and in particular, exerted patriarchal control over female self-identity. A view shared by feminist theorists and a body of research that addresses issues of gender objectification and representation (see Bordo 1989, 1993; Malson & Swann, 2003; Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004; Swami et al., 2010).

Research indicated that the use of mirrors in dance studios also negatively contributed to the self-esteem of adolescent ballet dancers and increased body dissatisfaction. Radell, Adame, and Cole (2002) studied the effect of teaching with

mirrors on body image and locus of control in women college ballet dancers. Two beginning ballet classes were taught with the same instructor. Participants ($n = 8$) were taught using mirrors and 13 participants were taught in a non-mirror environment during a 14-week semester. Participants completed the Cash 69-item Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire and the 40-item Adult Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale during the first and last class. Results indicated an increase in Body-areas Satisfaction for the non-mirror class but a decrease for the class taught with mirrors. For the non-mirror class there was also significant increases in Appearance Orientation and Externality. The results suggested that the use of mirrors may contribute to low body-image scores of ballet dancers.

Bordo (1993) believed that this constant focus on the body produced devastating results. A view shared by Martin et al. (2003) in a study on the effects of exercising in a mirrored environment, and Pierce and Daleng (1998) in a study investigating the distortion of body image among elite female dancers. This over preoccupation and objectification of the female body was a precursor to body dissatisfaction which may lead to body image disturbance, a core diagnostic of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa (see Delinsky & Wilson, 2006; Key et al., 2001; Vocks et al., 2008).

In a cross-sectional survey on body-image and self-esteem (Bettle et al., 2001), 90 ballet school students and 156 controls completed two questionnaires assessing "my body right now" and "my personality right now." Using semantic differentials, female dancers (ages 13 to 17 years) scored higher than age-matched controls on Undesirability and Sensitivity for personality and Unattractiveness for body. The data indicated no difference between male dancers and age-matched controls except for lower body mass

measure scores. Female participants within the control group scored higher than male participants for Sensitivity. The results indicated that adolescent female dancers may have less favorable body image and self-esteem. The study also addressed possible interventions for the prevention of psychopathology in adolescent ballet dancers.

   Theatre. Mirror metaphors abound in theatre, most notably in Shakespeare's plays composed between 1589 and 1613 which "glitter with witty mirror references, many of them central to his concern with identity, illusion, and reality" (Pendergrast, 2003, p. 125). Mirror references included Dromio of Ephesus' comment to his newly discovered twin brother in Act V of the *The Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare, n.d./2002), "Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother: / I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth" (p. 53).

   In *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, 1892/1992), the mirror was used to force Hamlet's mother to face the reality of her situation when he demanded that she "Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge. / You go not till I set you up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you" (Act III, Scene IV, p. 72). And in *Richard II* (Shakespeare, n.d./2010) the mirror takes center stage near the end of Act 4, Scene 1 when the deposed king asks for a looking glass so that he may study his face and said, "No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck / So many blows upon this face of mine, / And made no deeper wounds? O flatt'ring glass, / Thou dost beguile me!" Disappointed by what he sees in the mirror, Richard shatters the glass by throwing it to the ground declaring that the shards were the "…shadows to the unseen grief / That swells with silence in a tortured soul. / There lies the substance" (p. 171).

   The mirror metaphor was also featured in the prologue of *Tambulaine the Great*,

where Marlowe (2005, p.9) declared:

> We'll lead you to a stately tent of war,
>
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tambulaine
>
> Threat'ning the world with high astounding terms
>
> And scouring kingdoms with his conquering sword.
>
> View but his picture in this tragic glass,
>
> And then applaud his fortune as you please."

Mirrors are rarely featured onstage because of the difficulties in lighting and safety issues. A notable exception was *A Chorus Line* (Papp & Bennett, 1975) which captured the dreams of aspiring dancers as they auditioned for a show. The show provided a glimpse into the lives of the choreographers and dancers as they talk about the events that shaped their lives and influenced their desire to become dancers. During the performance, each dancer takes a turn to practice their routines reflected in scenery of mirrors. The Broadway show, which was a box office and critical hit, was based on the shared stories about the personal experiences and professional aspirations of a group of dancers after rehearsals. The sessions were then tape-recorded and became the basis of a book by Kirkwood and Dante (1975/1995), which in turn, became a motion picture (Feur & Attenborough, 1985).

A similar story was enacted in Annie Baker's *Circle Mirror Transformation* (2009) which also explored the secret lives of a group of strangers through the reflection of mirrors in a replica of a dance studio. Each character stood in front of the mirror to act out a role in this creative drama class set in a local community group in a fictional small town. The actors were put through a series of creative movements, story-telling and

unusual acting exercises to reveal raw emotions in a play that was a powerful vehicle for self-expression.

 Film. Popular culture has immortalized mirrors as a reflection of an existential crisis particularly in the genre of Film Noir. *The Dark Mirror* (Johnson & Siodmark, 1946) used a smashed mirror to reflect the dark side of a psychopath at the beginning and ending sequence of a film about identical twins, played by Olivia de Havilland, who were implicated in a murder. In *The Woman in the Window* (Johnson & Lang, 1944), based on the novel *Once Off Guard* (Wallis, 1942), mirrors were used to suggest duplicity, ulterior motives, divided loyalties, and a double life in a film starring Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett, and Raymond Massey. In *The Lady from Shanghai* (Welles & Welles, 1948), a film based on the novel *If I Die Before I Wake* by Sherwood King (1938/2010), a Magic Mirror Fun House was used to reflect multiple and distorted images symbolic of the shattered relationships and destructive love triangle between Michael O'Hara, an Irish seaman played by Welles, a manipulative platinum blonde *femme fatale* Elsa (or Rosalie) played by Rita Hayworth, and her husband Arthur Bannister played by Everett Sloane.

 The noir-style psychological drama *The Servant* (Losey, Priggen, & Losey, 1963) used a convex mirror to visually represent the manservant, played by Dirk Bogarde, dominating the life of his master, played by James Fox, who was seen as a small figure in the background. In the *Black Swan* (Handel et al., 2010), fragmented and multiple mirrors were used to reflect a terrifying journey through the fragile psyche of a New York City ballet dancer, played by Natalie Portman, as she descended into madness transforming from the perfect white swan into an evil seductive black swan. In *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (Jackson et al., 2003) epic fantasy based on the stories of J. R. R.

Tolkien (1954/1991, 1955/1991), a reflection of the alter-ego Gollum in a stream was used to illustrate the internal struggle of Sméagol between maintaining the friendship (and love) of his master, Frodo Baggins, and murdering him out of a desire to possess the ring of power. In *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Jackson et al., 2001) the reflective surface of water was used for divination by the Lady Galadriel.

In other movie genres, an evil presence such as the *Candyman* (Barker, Golin, & Rose, 1992) could be summoned by chanting his name five times while looking in the mirror. The ghostly serial killer returned from the dead to wreak vengeance on all those who called him. The film was based on the short story *The Forbidden* (Barker, 1986/2001), and spawned a trilogy including *Candyman 2: Farewell to the Flesh* (Fienberg, Sighvatsson, & Condon, 1995), and *Candyman 3: Day of the Dead* (Golov & Meyer, 1999). This story was similar to the thriller-horror movie *Bloody Mary* (Miller, Tyler, & Valentine, 2006), that was based on the folklore of a girl who appeared in the mirror when her name was called three times.

In *Poltergeist 3: We're Back* (Bernardi, Sherman, & Sherman, 1988), the spirit of Kane took possession of all the mirrors in the house, causing the reflections of people to act independently of their physical counterparts. The vampire, a soulless creature without a mirror reflection, was originally based on the book *Dracula* (Stoker, 1897/2011). The vampire stories have spawned countless books (see *Twilight Saga,* Meyer, 2005/2009) and movies (see *Underworld Series,* Bernacchi et al., 2003; Wiseman et al., 2003; Wiseman et al., 2009), and have inspired a gothic sub-culture within some communities (Keyworth, 2002).

Self-Reflection in Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion

Who am I? This fundamental question of identity has been pondered through the centuries. Through the ages, philosophers have questioned their existence and connection to a creator, spawning a multitude of religions and spiritual beliefs. The search for identity is bound in philosophical, religious, and spiritual concepts that include discussion and debate on the existence of a universal consciousness, a Higher Spirit (God), the soul, and afterlife. Many cultures revered the mirror as a religious symbol and a bridge to a supreme deity, or God.

Mirror Image. Plato believed that the mirror image invited a spiritual reflection that provided clarity of understanding which Melchior-Bonnet (1994/2001) described as "an enigmatic and transfigured knowledge" of oneself (p. 105) that "allows the individual to understand himself through the mastering of his consciousness" (p. 156). This sentiment was echoed in *The Book of Wisdom* (Reider, 1957) which defined wisdom as "…a spotless mirror of the working of / God, / And an image of his goodness" (p. 117). The introspective potential of mirrors "relates to the Augustinian or Socratic traditions of self-knowledge, wisdom and prudence" (Anderson, 2008a, p. 110). According to Plato (n.d.), in a discussion with Alchibiades, Socrates urged his followers to study their external reflections so that they would act honorably proclaiming that "in that mirror you will see and know yourselves and your own good" (location 50671). Others had similar views:

> The mirror, a tool by which to 'know thyself,' invited man to *not* mistake himself for God, to avoid pride by knowing his limits, and to improve himself. His was thus not a passive mirror of imitation but an active mirror of transformation (Melchior-Bonnet, 1994/2001, p. 106).

Pendergrast (2003) and Kauntze (2008) wrote that early Christian theologians including Saint Augustine perceived the mirror as a vessel for divine wisdom. According to Goldberg (1985) this mirror metaphor lent itself to Christianity because of the belief "that all existence is understood as a relation between paragon and image, between a reality and its innumerable reflections" (p. 116). The mirror metaphor was used by many Christian theologians including Saint Bonaventura, a Franciscan mystic, who wrote "the *speculum inferius,* the mirror of creation, and the *speculum superius,* the mirror of God" (Pendergrast, 2003, p. 121).

Ancient Chinese philosophers also believed that mirrors were a metaphysical reflection and the path of true wisdom. Chuang Tzu, a Taoist philosopher in 350 B.C. was quoted as saying "when the mind of the sage is tranquil, it becomes the mirror of the universe and reflection of all things" (Chan, 1963, p. 208). In Western philosophies, the psyche is seen as a mirror of reality, while in Buddhism, it is the world that mirrors back who we are in all aspects of our lives (Bolen, 1982/2004; Nhat Hanh, 2006). "The modern mirror, looking outward, contributes to the broadening of scientific and technological horizons. But it remains, as well, a powerful tool of introspection, a guiding metaphor for distinguishing between outward appearance and inner truth" (Goldberg, 1985, p. 250).

Rochat and Zahavi (2011) believed that "The unsettling experience of mirrors, particularly mirror self-experience appears to prevail across cultures, it is universal" (p. 205). A view shared by Goscilo (2010) and Lowrie (2008), who felt that it was the multidimensional aspect of mirrors that evoked fascination as well as fear. "A mirror extends the range of the eye ('I') by shifting the locus of observation outside of the

observer," providing an "external vertex from which to observe ongoing events" (Schermer, 2010, p. 217). Merleau-Ponty (1964) wrote that "At the same time that the image makes possible the knowledge of oneself, it makes possible a sort of alienation" (p. 136). Mirrors, Lowrie (2008) explained:

> Reflect the self, which can be, but is not always a pleasant experience; they reflect others, who can be both like one's self and different; and they reflect the world, an agreeable garden of delight at times, a frightful and hostile forest at others (p. 1).

Self-reflection. The *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2009) contained many definitions of the word "reflection" including: (a) the action of bending or folding back; (b) a thought, idea, or opinion formed or a remark made as a result of meditation; and (c) consideration of some subject matter, idea, or purpose (p. 1046). Thorpe and Barsky (2001) described self-reflection as "an event that occurs in the present moment, promotes health, provides valuable insights, and is instrumental in precipitating a new perspective" (p. 766-767). For Lauterbach and Becker (1996), the process of reflection was the act of looking deeply within then pulling back for a wider perspective. Freshwater (2002) agreed, and added that reflection then became contemplation with the purpose of discovering knowledge that had the potential for transformation. Dewy (1933) emphasized validity in his definition of reflection as an "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that it supports it and the further conclusion to which it tends" (p. 9).

Self-reflection or self-examination then becomes "a reflective examination (as of one's beliefs or motives)," leading to a self-concept "the mental image one has of

oneself" (Merriam-Webster, 2009, p. 1127). "Simply, self-consciousness is enacted through self-reflexivity, and in this process of self-awareness, identity, formulated as *a self,* emerges" (Tauber, 2005, p. 50). Furman, Coyne, and Negi (2008) felt that self-reflection was "the mechanism that leads to epiphany; moments of clarity and existential realizations that can lead to life altering change" (p. 73).

For Bar-On (2007) the process of self-reflection was an exploration into ones thoughts, feelings, and/or behavior which when evaluated "can lead to a cycle of self-regulation or to the ability to use feedback and monitor progress" (p. 225). This viewpoint was in accordance with Schön (1983) in that reflecting and understanding embodied further action. This reflective action may result in the development of skills in learning in and from practice (Johns & Freshwater, 1998/2005; Perry, 2000), and encourage critical and innovative thinking (Pierson, 1998). According to Grant, Franklin, and Langford (2002) this would require consideration of different options and alternative courses of action, flexibility and the ability to adapt to new situations, and self-efficacy (p. 835). But Thorpe and Barsky (2001) disagreed and described the process of self-reflection as the ability to be aware of a situation in one's life, to critically analyze a situation, and to develop a new perspective and action for change (p. 767). Perry (2000) believed that "Learning reflective practice and acquiring new insights implies a certain willingness to take risks as we confront the paradox and contradiction between desired outcome, personal and professional values and beliefs, and the everyday constraints…" (p. 137-138).

Levine (2002) believed that "…self-knowledge obtained through self-reflection, whether assisted, observed, or self-mediated, serves as an important scaffold on which

experience and sense of self are integrated or constructed and gives continuity,

coherence, and meaning to life" (p. 305). La Torre (2005) felt that "understanding the

concept of reflection is perhaps the first step in the use of this process for self-awareness"

(p. 85). But Mezirow (1978, 1981, 1991) and Brookfield (2001, 2005) went further in

their assertions by arguing that reflection was a necessary component in individual and

societal transformation. Mezirow (1991) believed "This individual and collective

awareness of the influence of our own history and biography on the way we make and

validate meaning also celebrates the emergence in our culture of an age of reflection" (p.

99).

According to Freshwater (2002), the concept of self is perceived as a "by-product

of the relationship between power and knowledge; it is inseparable from language games,

from mass media and ideologies" (p. 3). Rogers (1961/1995) and Freshwater &

Robertson (2002) believed that self-concept was influenced by life experiences, and the

reflected attitudes in intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. Harter (1999/2001) felt

that self-concept was also influenced by cultural and societal views; for example, the

Western view of self emphasized "separateness, autonomy, independence, individualism,

and distinctness" (p. 283); In most non-Western societies the self was defined as a

"socio-centric or collectivist ideal in which the self-definition is deeply embedded in the

matrix of social relationships and obligations" (p. 283).

Self-realization. For the purpose of this study, self-realization was defined as the

"fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality" (Merriam-

Webster, 2009, p. 1128). In philosophy, the concept of self-realization extends back to

the Hellenic tradition of eudaimonism, most notably presented in *Nichomachean Ethics*

by Aristotle (trans. 1999). In eudaemonist philosophy, the daimon or *true self* refers to the unique potentialities of each person, the realization of which represented the fulfillment of one's destiny (Norton, 1976). Nietzsche (1883/1933) insisted that one should always reconsider ones values and consider what a good life consisted of, a concept that was linked to the Hellenistic philosophy of eudaimonia or living a well lived life. Eudaimonia was based on Aristotle's (trans. 1999) teachings that happiness may be attained by following certain virtues which was characterized as psychological well-being (Harrington & Loffredo, 2011; Ryff, 1989). For Fave et al. (2011), "Happiness usually arises as a by-product of cultivating activities that individuals consider as important and meaningful" (p. 187).

For Waterman (1993), a search for identity was an effort to identify those potentials that corresponded to their true self, or daimon. Vallacher et al. (2002) believed that self "encompasses virtually every facet of one's experience, from the nuances of physical appearance to personal aspirations and self-perceived traits" (p. 370). Self-realization was also central to the work of Spinoza and the existentialists, such as Heidegger and Sartre (Waterman, 2004). Existentialists believed that general theories about human nature left out the most important aspect – the uniqueness of each individual, and their life experiences. Other theorists supported this view:

> There is a strong emphasis on the *freedom* of human beings, on each individual's ability to choose his or her attitudes, purpose, values, and actions. Existentialists not only maintained this as a truth but try to persuade people to act on it, to exercise their freedom and to be aware that they were doing so (Stevenson & Haberman, 1998, p. 169-170).

Self-realization was conceptualized by a number of personality theorists including Horney (1950) who wrote of the real self "as the central inner force… which is the deep source of growth" (p. 17). May (1969), continued this theory with the belief that one's character constituted the daimon, and that there was an ethical obligation to choose the purpose towards which one's life was to be directed, a statement that agreed with Fromm's (1947) and Frankl's (1959/2006, 1967, 1969/1988, 1978) view of life. Piaget (1967) believed that human beings were born with the need to resolve inner conflicts and restore equilibrium, either by making changes in their thinking or by assimilating new ideas into thoughts and beliefs.

According Côté and Levine (2002), pre-modern societies dictated culturally prescribed roles which created a narrow and limited view of one's sense of identity within a community. In modern times, the complexity of social organization "where choice has replaced obligation as the basis of self-definition, identity formation has become a more difficult, precarious, and solitary process for which many people are unprepared in terms of their phylogenetic backgrounds" (p. 1).

Crisis of identity. For Bendle (2002, p. 6) the current crisis of identity may be related to four characterizations of modern-day life including: (a) the exploration of self-knowledge; (b) the valorization of human potential and modern secularization's priority of achieving self-realization in this world, rather than being satisfied with waiting for the rewards of the next world; (c) the breakdown of hierarchies, rise of individualism and social mobility, and (d) a new flexibility of self-definition based on shifting and non-absolute foundations. Many researchers (see Carter, 2005; Delors, 1996; Himmelfarb, 1996; Jackson, Boostroom, & Hansen, 1998; Kenan, 2009; Wynee & Ryan, 1996), from

diverse ideological and philosophical backgrounds, believed that the 21st century was facing a serious social, moral, and environmental crisis; the erosion of family, community and personal values, globalization and global conflict, and devastating ecological changes across the world. Technological advances in this postmodern era have altered the very foundation of the world economy, and the meaning of community and individuality (see Gergen, 1991, 2001).

This may result in feelings of alienation, defined here as a reaction to the postmodern fragmentation of identity and loss of shared meaning (Geyer, 1996). Seeman (1959) articulated five aspects of alienation including (a) powerlessness, (b) normlessness, (c) social isolation, (d) self-estrangement, and (e) meaninglessness (p.783-791). According to Geyer (1996), this feeling of powerlessness was symptomatic of postmodernism "where the core problem is no longer being unfree but rather being unable to select from among an overchoice of alternatives for action, whose consequences one often cannot even fathom" (p. xxiii).

Normlessness, according to Seeman (1959) "denotes the situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior" (p. 787). Estrangement from societal norms may lead to social isolation and "the feeling of being segregated from one's community" (Kalekin-Fishman, 1996, p. 97). Feelings of self-estrangement may be generated by "denying one's own interests – of seeking out extrinsically satisfying, rather than intrinsically satisfying activities" (Kalekin-Fishman, 1996, p. 97). This may be defined as an external vs. internal locus of control. The theory of self-awareness postulated that ones attention can be directed outward to one's environment, or inward towards oneself (Durval, Silvia, &

Lalwani, 1944/2001; Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Self-focusing on negative aspects of oneself increased negative affect, and focusing on positive aspects of self increased positive affect (Fejfar & Hoyle, 2000).

Frankl (1959/2006, 1967, 1969/1988, 1978) articulated the meaninglessness of life as an existential crisis. A view shared by Yang, Staps, and Hijamans (2010), who believed that working through an existential crisis entailed finding meaning in the negative experience and transforming it into an opportunity for growth. Jacobsen (2006, p. 43-47), identified three dimensions in any crisis:

1. Crisis as a loss either direct and physical loss (e.g., death, accident, house), a psychological loss (e.g., illness, change in mental status, friends), or loss of meaning and world view (e.g., faith, basic assumptions about the world).

2. Crisis as an adversity and negative life experiences (e.g., disability, shortcomings, barriers to success).

3. Crisis as an opening of existence and a turning point in life (e.g., opportunity for growth).

For Van Deurzen (1999/2004) "Anxiety or Angst is a core concept in existential philosophy, which sees it as the basic ingredient of vitality" (p. 221). Having a crisis of meaning was described by Kierkegaard (1844/2000) as an essential element in living a reflective life because "Whoever is educated by anxiety is educated by possibility, and only he who is educated by possibility is educated according to his infinitude" (p. 154).

Goffman (1963) explored modern-day attitudes of victimization and identified three ways in which a stigmatized person may confront their situation. These included (a) making a direct attempt to correct the perceived problem (e.g., surgery, treatment,

psychotherapy), (b) an indirect attempt to master areas of perceived deficiency (e.g., learning new skills), and/or (c) transforming one's hidden injury into the grounds for a claim of valued identity (e.g., secondary gains) (p. 9-10). Secondary gains may be seen as using the perceived problem or deficiency as an excuse for life's failures or as a badge of honor and triumph over adversity. Palmer (1998) believed "identity and integrity have as much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials" (p. 13). Rose (1999) felt that identity can be claimed "only to the extent that it can be represented as denied, repressed, injured, or excluded by others" (p. 268).

Collective forms of identity have a central position in Griffiths (1995) feminist social theory, in the study of masculinities (Connell, 1995), and in youth and adolescence (Baumeister, 1986). Josselson (1987/1990) defined identity as "a dynamic fitting together of parts of the personality with the realities of the social world so that a person had a sense both of internal coherence and meaningful relatedness to the real world" (p. 11). A view shared by McKnight and Kashdan (2009) and Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003), who added that identity and purpose may be interwoven, providing guidance in accomplishing goals, and in promoting and maintaining a sense of well-being. This view was extended by research indicating that having a purpose in life increased well-being and/or life satisfaction for youth (Benson, 2006; Damon, 2008; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003; Lerner, Theokas, & Jelicic, 2005; Scales, 1999), and adults (DeWitz, Woosley, & Walsh, 2009; Heisel & Flett, 2004; King et al., 2006; Masten et al., 2009/2011; Scannell, Allen, & Burton, 2002).

Spiritual Identity. Barnes, Plotnikoff, Fox, and Pendleton (2000) felt that spiritual and religious beliefs played a key role in a child's life by providing inner

resources, contributing to the formation of morality, socialization, and inclusion in a sacred worldview. A view shared by King and Benson (2005) who believed, "youth need contexts in which to grapple with spiritual issues of understanding their purpose in life, what they believe, and their place in the world" (p. 385). Which Lerner et al. (2005) maintained was a "healthy, positive development of a person's sense of self" (p. 61). MacDonald (2000) articulated five traits of spirituality which included (a) cognitive orientation and the belief in a transcendent being that impacted ones sense of identity and day-to-day activities, (b) experiential phenomena of spiritual experience, (c) existential well-being of a sense of purpose and meaning in life, (d) belief in the paranormal phenomena, and (e) religiousness and belief in a higher power or intelligence. Kirmani and Kirmani (2009) believed that "spiritual identity cuts across religious affiliations," and that it "can be expressed in multiple and interconnected ways" (p. 378).

Smith and Denton (2006) felt the formation of spiritual and/or religious identity was an integral part of adolescent development, King (2003) agreed and added that this formation helped to promote identity cohesion and positive self-concept. Adolescents are able to explore multiple perspectives, values and beliefs as they experience a marked improvement in cognitive abilities, deductive reasoning, and critical thinking skills (Byrnes, 2003). "As spiritual/religious beliefs are called into question and considered from different perspectives, adolescents begin to form their own unique spiritual, religious, atheist, or agnostic identity" (Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2010).

King (2003) and McPhillips, Mudge, and Johnston (2007), believed that spirituality and religion provided a sense of belonging and connection to others which increased resiliency for adolescents as they moved into adulthood. A view shared by the

Fetzer Institute (1999/2003) and Koenig et al. (2001), who felt that spirituality and religion were vitally important in improving mental and physical health. Several mechanisms were identified including social networking, changes in daily living that promoted a healthy lifestyle, and an increase in coping strategies that facilitated beneficial resolutions to negative life events (Seybold & Hill, 2001). But Horovitz-Darby (1994) and Weaver et al. (2006) cautioned that spirituality also had the potential to enhance or hinder one's health and well-being. Templeton and Eccles (2005) proposed that spiritual beliefs were intrinsically motivated by a need to feel connected. For Crawford, Wright, and Masten (2005), "spirituality and religions appear to provide a unique form of social support, strengthen family relationships, improve personal growth and development, and encourage a framework of meaning through which youth can make sense of their adversity or trauma (p. 366).

Ryś (2009) felt that the spiritual dimension manifests itself in one's ability and capacity to define and accomplish one's purpose in life, but for Benner (1989) it was a yearning to find meaning and a place in the world. The need for self-actualization is thought to be fundamental to human motivation (Maslow, 1943), and the quest for meaning creates the intimate interplay between one's personal inner development and professional growth (Robins, 1994). Barnes et al. (2000) felt that finding a purpose in one's life is a reflection of the need to make life meaningful; to make sense of seemingly random events, tragic circumstances, and the inevitable experience of death, a view shared by Ryś (2009). Cait (2004) agreed that spirituality "can provide a sense of continuity for self and identity at a time when our sense of permanence and connection can be shattered" (p. 176). For Serlin and Cannon (2004) "trauma is experienced

subjectively as the confrontation with nothingness, death, and terror" (p. 315).

Spirituality comes from the Latin root *spiritus,* meaning breath or life, and religion comes from the Latin root *religio*, signifying a bond between humanity and a greater power. There have been considerable variations in definitions between these words; from being similar in nature and interchangeable (Hill et al., 2000; Juang & Syad, 2008; Pargament & Saunders, 2007), to being related but different (Cardin, 2003; Eisenhandler, 2005; Geppert, Bogenschutz, & Miller, 2007; Koenigh, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Meyerstein, 2005; Nelson-Becker & Canda, 2008; Sinnott, 2001; Yount, 2009; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

Merriam-Webster's (2009) definition of religion and spirituality are very similar. Religion included: (a) the service and worship of God or the supernatural; (b) a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices; (c) scrupulous conformity; and (d) a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith (p. 1051-1052). Spirituality was defined as (a) something that in ecclesiastical law belongs to the church or to a cleric as such; (b) clergy, (c) sensitivity or attachment to religious values, and (d) the quality or state of being spiritual (Merriam-Webster, 2009, p. 1204).

For Cardin (2003), Meyerstein (2005), and Geppert, Bogenschutz, and Miller (2007), religion and spirituality were related but different; spirituality being the human need to find meaning in one's life, and religion as the formal language. Yount (2009) agreed but added that "religion connotes doctrines and institutions, and is more objective and external, whereas spirituality connotes personal experiences and individual practices, and is more subjective and internal" (p. 74). Nelson-Becker and Canda's (2008) definitions of religion and spirituality encompassed these views but added that

"spirituality manifests in perspectives that are theistic, atheistic, nontheistic, polytheistic, animistic, mystical and other forms" (p. 179). These viewpoints supported the *Handbook of Religion and Health's* (2001) definition:

Religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals and symbols designed (a) to facilitate closeness to the sacred or transcendent (God, higher power, or ultimate truth/reality), and (b) to foster an understanding of one's relationship and responsibility to others in living together in a community.

Spirituality is the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community (Koenigh, McCullough, & Larson, 2001, p. 18).

King and Benson (2005) agreed with this definition and added that "spirituality is often described in personal or experiential forms, whereas religiousness includes personal beliefs as well as institutional beliefs and practice" (p. 384). But for Eisenhandler (2005) although the two concepts were distinct, they were fused together and inseparable in the social fabric of life. Fowler (1981/1995) believed that faith was not always religious in content or context, but a relationship of shared meaning and purpose. For Wink and Dillon (2002), spirituality was an individual's understanding of the sacred through an existential search for the ultimate meaning of life. Hill et al. (2000) felt that "central to the experience of both religion and spirituality is a sense of the sacred" (p. 66). A view shared by Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005). Pargament and Saunders (2007) believed that because the search for the sacred referred to "a higher power, God, or transcendent

reality, spirituality and religiousness are often synonymous expressions" (p. 904).

Galanter (2008) felt that "although spirituality can be embodied in a religious orientation,

it can also be understood as commitment to broader ideals or to the welfare of others" (p.

1514). Others had similar views:

> Spirituality is one's personal relation to the sacred or transcendent, a relation that
>
> then informs other relationships and the meaning of one's own life. Spirituality
>
> may or may not include world views, dogmas, and practices shared by any
>
> subculture. Religion, on the other hand, refers to practices and beliefs related to a
>
> particular dogma system. Religion may be the external sign of a spiritual
>
> orientation, or simply a set of culturally cohesive practices, beliefs, and habits
>
> (Sinnott, 2001, p. 199).

For the purpose of this study spiritual identity was defined "as a persistent sense

of self that addresses ultimate questions about the nature, purpose, and meaning of life,

resulting in behaviors that are consonant with the individual's core values" (Kiesling et

al., 2006, p. 1269). This definition encompassed Webster's (2005) view that "existential

spirituality is to be understood as involving the *whole* person, the values, beliefs,

understandings, emotions, motivations *and actions"* (p. 13).

Theories of Identity Formation

This dissertation topic covered the process of self-reflection on identity, so a brief

overview of theories of identity formation is warranted. Singer (2004) believed that

understanding the identity formation process was also "to understand how individuals

craft narratives from experiences, tell these stories internally and to others, and ultimately

apply these stories to knowledge of self, other and the world in general" (p. 438).

Throughout the years, diverse theories and concepts have proliferated from Freud's

(1960) personality system identified as the *id*, *ego*, and *super ego*, to James' (1890/2007)

three components of self (i.e., material self, social self, and spiritual self), which was

expanded by Allport's (1963) concept of seven developmental selves, collectively called

propria. Amongst all the postulations three concepts have stood the test of time; namely

Erikson's (1959/1980, 1968) *Psychosocial Theory*, Frankl's (1959/2006, 1967,

1969/1988, 1978) *Logotherapy*, and Maslow's (1943; 1954; 1968/1999) *Hierarchy of*

Needs.

   Psychosocial Theory. Homans (1995) believed that Erikson's psychosocial

theory evolved out of the inner conflicts of modern man in dealing with the rapid social

change of industrialization. According to Slater (2003), Erikson was "grounded in

psychoanalytic theory, but he rejects the Freudian notion that personality is fixed by early

childhood experiences alone" acknowledging the influences of culture and history,

Erikson "takes a holistic approach, expresses optimism about human potential, and is

more concerned with psychological health than with illness" (p. 53). Skinner (1994/1996)

agreed and added that Erikson's theory "are all stages in the development not an ego but

of the world" (p. 160). Also each stage may be revisited more than once throughout a

lifetime, continually evolving and integrating into life experiences (Erikson, 1991; Sneed

Whitbourne, & Culang, 2006; Whitbourne & Whitbourne, 2001/2011); or one may

regress into an earlier psychosocial stage of development (Bilsker & Marcia, 1990).

   Sneed, Whitbourne, and Culang's (2006) study investigated Erikson's core stages

(trust, identity, and ego integrity) over a 34 year period among 175 men and women

college-age students. Two measures were used to track the core stages; Rochester Adult

Longitudinal Study (RALS) and an 80-item inventory covering Psychosocial

Development (IPD). Multilevel modeling was utilized to track data collected during

initial participation (1966 – 1968) and subsequent follow-up surveys (approx. 11 year

intervals). Stage 1 (trust vs. basic mistrust) followed a positive linear trajectory and Stage

5 (identity vs. identity diffusion) followed a curvilinear trajectory that leveled off in

middle adulthood. Stage 8 (integrity vs. despair and disgust) followed a curvilinear

trajectory with an increasing trend in middle adulthood. Individual differentials were

detected in either the mean or slope of each psychosocial stage and each stage indicated

unique trajectories that primarily supported Erikson's psychosocial theory of

development.

Erikson's psychosocial theory was expanded by the work of Marcia's (1966,

1987, 2002) identity status paradigm of: (a) identity achievement (i.e., successful

integration of crisis and construction of identity); (b) moratorium (i.e., a person in

transition); (c) foreclosure (i.e., no crisis but an acceptance of identity conferred by

others); and (d) identity diffusion (i.e., continued state of confusion). Unlike Erikson's

polar opposites, Marcia (2002) believed that each psychosocial stage also contained

"intermediate resolution possibilities" (p. 9). For Erikson (1959/1980), identity had a

number of connotations including:

> It will appear to refer to conscious *sense of individual* identity; at another to an
>
> unconscious striving for a *continuity of personal character*; at a third, as a
>
> criterion for the silent doings of *ego synthesis*; and finally, as a maintenance of an
>
> inner *solidarity* with a group's ideals and identity (p. 109).
>
> In *Identity and the Life Cycle* (1959/1980), Erikson postulated eight psychosocial

stages of an individual's life cycle; hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom (p. 57-105):

Childhood. Hope was articulated in the basic trust vs. basic mistrust of infancy when babies (up to the age of two years old) are reliant on others to meet their basic needs, characterized by "I am what I am given" (Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 87). This stage was often referred to as the oral stage of development. For Erikson the "*amount of trust* derived from earliest infantile experience does not seem to depend on absolute *quantities of food or demonstrations of love* but rather on the *quality* of the maternal relationship" (p. 65). These feelings of trust form the basis of a child's sense of identity and the degree of trust in one's own abilities as well as in trusting others (Erikson, 1950/1993).

The second stage covered early childhood (aged two and three years old) and the development of the will. The concept of autonomy versus shame and doubt referred to a child's effort to control bodily functions. This was characterized by "I am what I will" (Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 87). This stage included the contradictory nature of "two simultaneous sets of social modalities – *holding on* and *letting go"* that can lead to either "hostile or to benign expectations and attitudes" (p. 72). Erikson believed that this stage of a child's life was decisive "for the ratio between love and hate… cooperation and willfulness, and… between freedom of self-expression and its suppression" (p. 70). For Erikson, the danger of this stage of development was an obsessive desire for power and control as well as testing the rigidity of boundaries, but success at self-control would enable a child to strive for autonomy without the loss of basic trust achieved in the first stage (Erikson, 1950, 1959/1980).

For Erikson, the next step in a child's development covered the play-stage and the

initiative versus guilt of pre-school age (aged four and five years old). This stage was

seen as an extension of a child's struggle for autonomy in the second stage, and was

characterized by "I am what I can imagine I will be" (Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 87). Three

developmental phases occur at this stage (a) freedom of movement which garners the

perception of "unlimited radius of goals," (b) increased language skills, and (c) expansion

of imagination (p. 78). Success at this stage of development was "*unbroken initiative* as a

basis for a high and yet realistic sense of ambition and independence" (p. 78). This stage

was challenged by the emergence of a sense of guilt.

 Pre-adolescent. The next stage of development covered competence (i.e., industry

vs. inferiority) of school age children (aged six to eleven years old), and was

characterized by "I am what I learn." For Erikson, this stage was defined by social

interactions, "since industry involves doing things beside and with others, a first sense of

division of labor and of *equality of opportunity* develop at this time" (Erikson,

1959/1980, p. 93). The danger at this stage was the development of "a sense of

inadequacy and inferiority" (p. 91). In addition, if a child focused on work as "the only

criterion of worthwhileness, sacrificing imagination and playfulness too readily" the child

would be in danger of becoming "what Marx called 'craft-idiocy,' (i.e., become a slave of

his technology and of its dominant role typology)" (Erikson, 1968, p. 127).

 Adolescent. The fifth stage of psychosocial development encompassed fidelity

(i.e., identity vs. identity diffusion) of adolescence (12 to 18 years of age). Erikson

believed that the drive to develop "a sense of inner identity" was to experience a sense of

wholeness "between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives

others to see in him and to expect of him" (Erikson, 1964, p.91; Also see Erikson,

1950/1993, p. 261; Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 94). Utley and Garza (2011) agreed, adding that "from a developmental focus, adolescents think abstractly and reflect on how they feel, what they think, and how they are perceived by others" (p. 33).

In *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968), Erikson wrote that "adolescent love is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one's identity by projecting one's diffused self-image on another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually clarified" (p. 132). This transitional stage into adulthood is characterized by emotional instability, autonomy seeking, and identity exploration (Erikson, 1968; Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002; Larson et al., 2002; Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). Offering adolescents the opportunity to actively explore their identity and discover a sense of purpose or meaning in their life may help resolve this identity crisis (Erikson, 1964, 1968; Marcia, 1966, 2002; Waterman, 1993, 2004). The danger of this stage is identity diffusion and a failure to establish one's identity and place in the world.

Adulthood. Young adulthood (18 to 30 years old), according to Erikson, introduced the concept of love (i.e., intimacy and distantiation vs. self-absorption). Successful integration of at this stage would indicate a willingness to interact intimately with others. However, a lack of self confidence would result in isolation, "the youth who is not sure of his identity shies away from interpersonal intimacy; but the surer he becomes of himself, the more he seeks it in the form of friendship, combat, leadership, love, and inspiration" (Erikson, 1959/1980, p. 101).

The second stage of adulthood covered middle age (30 to 65 years of age), and the concept of care (i.e., generativity vs. stagnation) which denoted integration into society and the fulfillment of societal responsibilities. For Erikson, this did not mean just wanting

or having children, but generativity in the sense of guiding and teaching the next

generation:

> There are people who, from misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in
>
> other directions, do not apply this drive to offspring but to other forms of altruistic
>
> concern and of creativity, which may absorb their kind of parental responsibility
>
> (Erikson, 1959/1980, p.103).

The final stage of adulthood covered old age (65 years and older) and the concept

of wisdom (i.e., integrity vs. despair and disgust). Erikson (1968) characterized this stage

by "I am what survives me" (p. 141). Erikson (1959/1980) believed that successful

completion of the previous stages of psychosocial development ensured ego integrity and

an acceptance of the "triumphs and disappointments of being" (p. 104). But the

incompletion of any of the previous stages stagnates ego integrity and instead creates

"…despair and an often unconscious fear of death; the one and only life cycle is not

accepted as the ultimate of life" (p. 104). Sneed, Whitbourne, and Culang (2006) felt that

"Ego integrity involves a sense of wholeness, integration, and a deep sense of acceptance

of life as it has been lived" (p. 150). Butler (1968) believed that this life review was a

critical part of the aging process. Savishinsky (2001) agreed and added that older adults

also faced "major contradictions in their own culture, especially the tensions between

self-fulfillment and social responsibility, duty and creativity, and personal meaning and

reciprocity" (p. 44).

After Erikson's death in 1994, his wife Joan revised the stages of psychosocial

theory with *The Life Cycle Completed* (Erikson & Erikson, 1997/1998), devoting a

chapter to a ninth stage of psychosocial development, gerotranscendence based on the

work of Lars Tornstam and colleagues at Uppsala Universitet in Sweden.

Gerotranscendence was defined as "a shift in meta-perspective, from a material and

rational vision to a more cosmic and transcendent one, normally followed by an increase

in life satisfaction" (Tornstam, 1989, p. 60). Tornstam (1994) believed that

gerotranscendence involved three levels of age-related ontological change including (a) a

feeling of being part of or one with the universe, (b) a change in perception of self in

relation to the world, and (c) an increased sense of connection with others (p. 203-226).

For Tornstam (2005) gerotranscendence expanded Erikson's psychosocial theory in that:

> According to Erikson's theory, ego-integrity primarily refers to the integration
>
> and possible reconstruction of the life that has passed. The individual reaches a
>
> fundamental acceptance of the life lived, regardless of how it might be viewed
>
> from the outside. In this way, the ego-integrity described by Erikson is more a
>
> process of backward integration taking place within the same world-view,
>
> whereas the process of gerotranscendence implies a more forward or outwardly
>
> directed process, including a redefinition of reality (Tornstam, 2005, p. 145).

Identity Crisis. Erikson (1959/1980) believed that "each successive step, then, is a

potential crisis because of a radical change in perspective" (p. 57), and that "a new life

task presents a crisis whose outcome can be a successful graduation, or alternatively, an

impairment of the life cycle which will aggravate future crises" (Erikson 1958/1993, p.

254). The word crisis implied a negative connotation but according to Atalay (2007)

crisis, for Erikson, simply meant a turning point in an individual's life when a new

problem was confronted and mastered. "For, indeed, in the social jungle of human

existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity" (Erikson, 1968, p.

130).

Erikson believed that failure at one stage of psychosocial development aggravated the next stage (crisis) and increased the challenge for resolution of the end stage of ego integration. However, Ermann (2004) disagreed with Erikson's developmental theory, which focused on the idea of a life-long identity process. Instead, Ermann believed that the fast-pace of modern-day life and continuously changing roles resulted in a constant development crisis which only ceases at end of life. Polkinghorne (1992) also disagreed with Erikson's concept of the process of identity in that "the real is not a single, integrated system… the self is not a unified whole, but a complex of unintegrated images and events" (p. 149). This postmodern "social constructionist perspective offers the possibility of a multiplicity of selves" instead of the concept of a single identity (Larsen & Larsen, 2004).

Waterman's (2004) perspective on identity formation was consistent with Erikson's (1959/1980) psychosocial theory in that an individual's sense of identity consisted of: (a) Soma which related to one's biological nature (i.e., inclination, aptitudes, and talents); (b) Ethos which referred to the cultural context (i.e., time and place, environment); and (c) Psyche which included the psychological responses of the individual (i.e., embracing or resisting change) (Waterman, 2004, p. 209-210). Waterman postulated that identity formation involved the clarification, evaluation, and commitment to goals, values, and beliefs. He felt that this formation gave one a sense of direction, meaning and purpose in life (p. 209). Waterman (2004) identified two values from self-realization theories that were integral to both identity formation and intrinsic motivation. These values included activities that: (a) afford opportunities for the development of

aptitudes, skills, and talents associated with one's best potentials; and (b) served to

further one's chosen purpose in living (p. 216).

Hierarchy of Needs. In *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943, p. 372-383),

Maslow posited that there were five hierarchies of human needs. Starting from basic

needs, Maslow believed that each level required fulfillment before one could move to the

next stage. These hierarchies included:

1. Physiological (survival) needs, for example, food, warmth, and shelter.

2. Safety needs including security, protection, health and wellbeing.

3. Love needs which "involve both giving *and* receiving love" (p. 381).

4. Esteem needs of achievement, approval, and recognition leading to "feelings
   of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful
   and necessary in the world" (p. 382).

5. Self-actualization as a desire for self-fulfillment which may be expressed as
   an ideal mother, an athlete, an artist, or inventor. "What a man *can* be, he *must*
   be" (p. 382).

Maslow (1968/1999) felt that "the study of self-fulfilling people can teach us

much about our own mistakes, our short comings, the proper direction in which to grow"

(p. 6). Maslow (1943) believed that there was a level above self-actualization on the

pyramid of Hierarchy of Needs. This level was called self-transcendence that few people

(2% of the population) ever attain and that it was impossible to reach this level of

consciousness if basic needs were not met. This sixth need was a motivational state in

which a person seeks something beyond personal benefit, for example, championing a

greater cause, service to others, and/or union with a greater power beyond self (Koltko-

Rivera, 2006).

Logotherapy. Slater (2003) felt that Frankl's process of self-transcendence was a search for meaning which supported Erikson's psychosocial theory and concept of identity. Frankl (1959/2006, 1969/1988, 1978) believed that one had the freedom to choose one's own meaning in life, even in situations that created suffering, and that "man's freedom is not freedom from conditions but rather freedom to take a stand on whatever conditions might confront him" (Frankl, 1969/1988, p. 16). Logotherapy, from the Greek word *Logos* which signified meaning, was a *will to meaning* that one could find in three different avenues: (a) achieving or accomplishing something (e.g., creating a work or doing a deed); (b) by experiencing something (e.g., goodness, truth, beauty, and nature) or the love of another; and (c) by the attitude one takes towards unavoidable suffering (Frankl, 1959/2006, p.111). Frankl believed that:

> Most important, however, is the third avenue to meaning in life: even the helpless victim of a hopeless situation, facing a fate he cannot change, may rise above himself, may grow beyond himself, and by doing so change himself. He may turn a personal tragedy into a triumph" (Frankl, 1959/2006, p. 146).

For Frankl (1969/1988), "the essentially self-transcendent quality of human existence renders man *a being reaching out beyond himself"* (p. 8), and that "…self-actualization is the unintentional effect of life's intentionality" (p. 38). Self-transcendence is akin to altruism, a motivational action, that was free of self-interest, to the benefit of others (Batson, 1991, 2011). From Debats (1999) point of view it was not enough just to have a framework of meaning in one's life; validation was also needed through fulfilling life experiences. Frankl (1959/2006) believed that self actualization was only possible

"…as a side-effect of self transcendence" (p.111).

Intergenerational studies

Interest in the field of intergenerational studies has increased significantly since it emerged in the1960s. The Centre for Intergenerational Practice (n.d.) classified programs into three initiatives: (a) members of one generation supporting another (e.g., mentors); (b) people from different generations working together to address community issues (e.g., environmental projects); and (c) people from different generations learning together (e.g., sharing talents). Intergenerational practice was defined as promoting respect and understanding between the generations and "building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them" (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2001).

Although findings in intergenerational studies that examine the impact on children's attitudes towards older people are mixed, most have shown positive results (Bales, Eklund, & Siffin, 2000; Cummings, Williams, & Ellis, 2002; Ivey, 2001; Kassab & Vance, 1999; Pinquart, Wenzel, & Sörensen, 2000). While other studies showed no change in the child's attitude towards older adults (Middlecamp & Gross, 2002). Ayala et al. (2007, p. 55-56) found several barriers to intergenerational programming including the cost of transportation, timing and scheduling of programs, language or cultural barriers, and safety issues for both older adults and youth program participants. But Grenier (2007), and Reisig and Fees (2006) believed that by breaking down generational boundaries there was a great potential for both older adults and youth to connect and learn from each other.

In a study entitled *Learning and Growing Together*, Bales, Eklund, and Siffin

(2000) looked at children's perceptions of older adults before and after a school-based intergenerational program. Participants included 22 second-grade students, 20 fourth-grade students, 21 fifth-grade students, and 23 older adults. The study was divided into different activities for each grade level. The second-grade students learned about World War II, fourth-grade students participated in a songfest, and fifth-grade students were assigned a careers class. Students exchanged pen pal letters with older adults before engaging in their respective activities in a class-room setting. Throughout the study, fourth and fifth-grade students were also directed to keep a journal. The researchers found that intergenerational programs "can be beneficial in promoting positive attitudes toward older adults, as well as fostering relationships that bridge the gap between children and elders" (p. 688). The value of journaling as a research tool was highlighted, and recommendations were made for further studies to ascertain whether journaling would be equally useful for other populations; children and older adults.

Cummings, Williams, and Ellis' (2002) study was an outdoor class-room project to investigate student's attitudes to older people. Eighty-one fourth-grade students participated in this study which included a control group and several measures; The Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly (CATE) Scale, behavioral grades assigned to students during normal grading procedures, a three-item survey of student's perception of older people, and pre-test measure of student's exposure to older adults. Using an independent t-test, the researchers found a significant difference in pre-test attitude scores and school behaviors scores in students participating in the intergenerational program compared to the control group. The researchers concluded "intergenerational programs can serve as a vehicle for the development of supportive relationships, and the fostering

of communication and learning between members of younger, and older generations"
(p. 57). The researchers recommended further study on the impact of intergenerational
programs on older adult participants with regards to life satisfaction and self-esteem, as
well as the older adult's perception of young people.

With the world faced with an aging population and a decline in birth rates, there
are an increasing number of studies devoted to identifying, improving, and developing
adaptive coping skills for older adults as they transition from the independence of an
older adult to the frailty of old age. Researchers stressed the importance of managing the
life-cycle decline from adolescent growth, to maintaining health and well-being in
adulthood, and preventing declining health in old age (Ebner, Freund, & Baltes, 2006;
Fillet & Butler, 2009; Heckhausen & Baltes, 1991). Fillet and Butler (2009) believed that
instead of focusing on the "frailty identity crisis" the perception of frailty needs to be
changed. "Realistic, positive role models of frail older adults should be developed and
promoted, recognizing their abiding value and dispelling stereotypes that proclaim that
the only life worth living in old age is one of robust physical health (Fillet & Butler,
2009, p. 352).

The Communication Predicament of Aging Model (Ryan et al., 1986, Ryan,
Hummert, & Boich, 1995) indicated that prolonged exposure to negative stereotypical
communication towards older people (e.g., elderspeak) could lead to internalization of
stereotyped self image, lowered feeling of self-worth, and reduced quality-of-life
(Hummert, 1990; Kemper & Harden, 1999). McCann et al. (2005) found that although
conversational style was age-related, positive communication with older people helped to
re-shape negative stereotypes. Individualizing needs and attributes by younger people

towards older people, and vice versa, is essential for healthy intergenerational

exchanges (Ryan et al., 1995).

However, social identity theory suggests that in order to avoid stereotypical

behavior among participants in an intergenerational program it is important to focus less

on the age differential between participants (and thus, stereotypes), and more on the

individual qualities of the participants, regardless of their group differences (age)

(Kuehne, 2003, p. 149). Grenier (2007, p. 714) felt that stereotypical responses towards

older adults was a concern "within a Western youth-orientated society as well as in the

context of powerful organizational or institutional practices, (e.g., long-term care,

hospitals, home care)." Giles (1991) argued that it was not uncommon in Western society

for the youth to be associated with a more positive identity, and for the older adult a more

negative social identity. Smirnova (2010) believed that persistent negative stereotyping

was a hindrance to positive development, blocked the perception of a person's

individuality, and reinforced societal expectations about the person being stereotyped (p.

68).

Over-accommodation, by younger people towards older adults was often based on

a stereotypical image of the older person (Giles, 2008; Kemper, 1994; Kemper et al.,

1998; Williams & Giles, 1996). Giles and Ogay (2007) labeled this type of speech as

patronizing, elderspeak, and secondary baby talk, and described the speech as (a) simpler

vocabulary, (b) slower speech, (c) the use of endearing terms (e.g., sweetie, love), (d)

increased volume, (e) repetition of words, and (f) babyish terms. Negative attitudes

towards older people can be seen in the language used to describe them; incompetent,

pessimistic, complaining, not listening, and petulant (Giles et al., 2003; Hagestad &

Uhlenberg, 2005; Meshel & McGlynn, 2004; Williams & Giles, 1991).

While younger people's communications with the elderly are perceived as over-accommodation, older people are viewed as being under-accommodating. Giles and Williams' (1994) study was comprised of three phases designed to investigate whether young people felt patronized by older adults. Phase One of the study included 123 undergraduates with a mean age of 18.5 years who were asked to complete a questionnaire (with a seven-point Likert scale) designed to assess the prevalence of patronizing speech by older adults towards participants. The same participants were then asked to "describe *the ways* in which older people patronized them" (p. 35). Through content analysis by three trained coders working independently, eight categories emerged and included (a) general stereotypes (e.g., "Young people have it easy"), (b) party animal stereotypes (e.g., "You're just beer-drinking, dopeheads that don't know any better"), (c) parental treatment (e.g., "I'll take care of it for you"), (d) elder superiority (e.g., "Could you listen to someone who knows for once?"), (e) experience and knowledge denial (e.g., "When you get older, you will see that this was best"), (f) condescending pet names (e.g., "Isn't she cute?"), (g) Negative nonverbal (e.g., "They never smile"), and (h) non-listening (e.g., "The elderly don't listen to what I have to say") (p. 36).

Phase two of the study included 90 undergraduate participants (with a mean age of 19 years) from the same university. Two prototypic statements from each of the eight categories were randomly selected from responses in phase one. In order to confirm the representational validity of categories created by coders in phase one, participants were directed to sort, label, and describe each of the categories they created from the two prototypic statements (from each category type). A data matrix was used to conduct a

non-metric multidimensional scaling algorithm (MDS-ALSCAL) which revealed three new validating categories (a) non listening, (b) disapproving or disrespect for youth, and (c) over-protective or parental attitudes.

"Having established the psychological reality for young people of three generic forms of patronizing speech from older people," the researchers then investigated how young people would rate conversational vignettes between two females; a young college student and her older neighbor (p. 38). Phase three included 252 undergraduate student participants (with a mean age of 19.3 years) from the same university. A questionnaire was administer which asked participants to rate transcribed vignettes which were constructed from representational components of the new categories; non-listening, disapproving, and parental (patronizing). In addition, a fourth (neutral) vignette was also created using non-patronizing language. The researchers found that not only have older adults expressed negative stereotypes about the youth of today, but older adults are seen as uncaring and unconcerned about the needs of the young. Giles and Williams (1994) believed that "ageism is endemic at all phases of human development and much of this is manifest, sustained, and created via communicative strategies and processes" (p. 50).

Barker (2007) highlighted the contradictory nature of conversations with older people which focused on painful events of the past (e.g., illnesses, bereavement) and at the same time glorifying the good old days. "Those individuals with a stronger sense of self will face the onset of old age viewing themselves as they have always done, despite changes to their features, or negative media images of the elderly" (Evans, 1998, p. 98).

Identity-related activities. Waterman (2004) focused his theoretical study and research towards the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The first study of college

students involved rating five self-selected activities ($N = 330$) on the standard version

of the Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ), and the second study ($N =$

128) used a version of the PEAQ that rated 24 specified activities. After selecting the

activities, respondents were asked to rate their experience, and motivations associated

with each activity. The instrument contained separate measures for the subjective states

associated with intrinsic motivation (e.g., interest, flow, and personal expressiveness) and

separate measures for the predictor variables associated with such motivation (e.g., self-

determination, competence in the form of the balance of challenges and skills, and self-

realization values).

The research concluded that: (a) personal expressiveness can be used as a viable

subjective state criteria for distinguishing better identity options; (b) activities

experienced as personally expressive are likely to involve connections with others, a

substantial degree of effort, and feelings of competence; (c) the most frequently enacted,

day-to-day activities are seldom experienced as personally expressive; and (d) feelings of

personal expressiveness have particularly strong associations with perceptions that

activities serve to facilitate the development of one's potential and purpose in life

(Waterman, 2004, p. 225). The results of this research indicated that in addition to

exploration and commitment, "feelings of personal expressiveness" (p. 211) served as a

third defining dimension of identity. These findings provided an understanding of the

process of identity formation.

In a similar study, Coatsworth, Palen and Sharp (2006) studied the relationship

between activity participation, expressive identity, and wellness in a sample of high

school students ($N = 115$). Data were collected through questionnaires during group

sessions or through the mail. Two measures of adolescent activity involvement were used. The first was a checklist of 24 leisure activities adapted for high school students, and the second was a shortened version of the PEAQ which allowed adolescents to self-select up to four activities that they felt represented "who you really are as a person" (p. 161).

The data indicated that adolescents were typically engaged in a wide range of activities that are self-defining including socializing, and that most were able to facilitate the development of an expressive identity. Person-centered analyses showed that on average, youth who report more expressive activities were likely to report higher levels of wellness. The researchers suggested that programs should provide opportunities for youth to fully engage and participate in their communities so that they may learn important skills and develop to their full potential.

Limitations for both studies (Coatsworth, Palen, & Sharp, 2006; Waterman, 2004) included relatively small samples which were homogeneous, and not fully representative of the communities from which they were drawn. Despite the limitations of these studies, the data highlighted the importance of developmental learning experiences within activities, and provided support for the notion that identity is related to positive youth development. Guerra and Bradshaw (2008), and Griffin et al. (2001), believed that having a strong sense of identity can be a protective factor in resisting peer pressure and involvement in unwanted behaviors including substance abuse.

The fundamental questions of identity is an essential component of psychological well-being, and determining factors in the formation of one's coping skills, and resiliency to life's challenges. Revealing or clarifying one's identity is also linked to values,

decision-making, and the ability to make positive meaning out of negative experiences. This ability is important for everyone, but especially for adolescents who are negotiating the developmental growth from childhood to adulthood, and older adults who are transitioning from the independence of adulthood to the dependence of old age.

The desire for self-realization has its beginnings with Aristotle (trans. 1999), through the work of Spinoza and the existentialists (Waterman, 2004), to the developmental theories of Erikson (1959/1980, 1968), and Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1968/1999) self-transcendence. Ryś (2009) believed that it is within this spiritual dimension (looking beyond self) that one is able to define values that include a concept of justice, respect for human rights and caring for the wellness of others. It is only from a sense of continuing truths that we can draw the courage for change, even for the constant, day-to-day changes of growth and aging (Bateson, 1994). McNiff (2007) believed "that creative change within individual lives can lead to social transformation" (p. 393).

Mirrors have been used through the ages not only as looking glasses, but as a therapeutic tool in cognitive (Freysteinson, 2009; Vocks et al., 2008), emotional (Delinsky & Wilson, 2006; Evans, 1998; Galeazzi et al., 2006; Vocks et al., 2008), and physical therapies (Altschuler & Hu, 2008; Fukumura et al., 2007; Giraux & Sirigu, 2003; Hunter, Katz & Davis, 2003; MacLachlan, McDonald & Waloch, 2004; Rosén & Lundborg, 2005; Watson & Peck, 2008). The proliferation of mirrors as metaphors abound in therapeutic literature, philosophy and psychoanalytical texts implying that the reflected image, either real or imaginary, may provide insight into the subconscious mind (Gormley, 2008; Weinberg, 2004). For Haglund (1996), "part of the power of the mirror metaphor is that the single image captures many aspects of human development and

human experience" (p. 226). Shengold (1974) believed that the mirror was a metaphor for the mind which reflected the image of self and others. "The mirror appears throughout the human drama as a means of self-knowledge or self-delusion" (Pendergast, 2003, p. ix).

Although there is a wealth of knowledge on spirituality and religion (Fowler, 1981/1995; Hill et al., 2000; Juang & Syed, 2008; Koenigh, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Sinnott, 2001; Wink & Dillion, 2002), spiritual identity (Barnes et al., 2000; King, 2003; Kirmani & Kirmani, 2009; Smith & Denton, 2006), identity formation (Baumeister, 1986; Coatsworth, Palen, & Sharp, 2006; Griffiths, 1995; Josselson, 1987/1990; Rose, 1999), developmental theories (Bendle, 2002; Erikson, 1959/1980, 1968; Goffman, 1963; Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1968/1999; Waterman, 2004), and/or expressive arts therapy (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005; Malchiodi, 2002; McNiff, 1989, 1992, 1997, 2004, 2008, 2009; Rogers, 1982, 1993, 2004), there have been no studies on the therapeutic use of mirrors as a tool for self reflection, and limited intergenerational studies with pre-adolescent and adolescent students and older adults. Most intergenerational studies have been conducted between older adults and young children including preschool and elementary students (Ayala et al., 2007; Bales, Eklund, & Siffin, 2000; Cummings, Williams, & Ellis, 2002; Giles, 1991; Grenier, 2007; Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005; Ivey, 2001; Kassab & Vance, 1999; Kemper, 1994; Kemper et al., 1998; Meshel & McGlynn, 2004; Middlecamp & Gross, 2002; Pinquart, Wenzel, & Sörensen, 2000; Reisig & Fees, 2006; Williams & Giles, 1996).

CHAPTER 3

Method

This qualitative intergenerational study investigated the use of mirrors as a therapeutic tool for self-refection on identity. The purpose of this study was to see how mirrors could be used as a therapeutic tool and a meta-physical bridge to ones inner consciousness. This study was comprised of two stages and included (a) post session interviews with the expressive arts therapy group, and (b) surveys from an art exhibition to the general public. In addition, a comparison was also made to existing data collected in a pilot study to compare and contrast responses of those viewing the self-reflections on identity.

Participants

Participants from a community in Northern New Jersey were recruited through open-enrollment that included personal invitation by the researcher, self referrals, email blasts, and print and internet advertisements. Participation in this study was voluntary and an IRB application was completed and approved through Lesley University. The expressive arts therapy group (Appendix A) included older adult participants (aged between 71 and 101 years) and students (aged 11-18 years). The mean age for older adult participants was 91 years ($n = 7$), and for students the mean age was 13 years ($n = 5$). The group consisted of six female and one male older adult participant who were long-term residents at a nursing home, and three female and two male students. Eleven participants identified themselves as White (not Hispanic), and one participant identified as African American. All 12 participants in the group said they enjoyed the creative process, however, three female older adults and one male student declined to participate in the

post session video or audio interview. Those participating in the interviews were equally matched in gender; three female and one male participant in each group of older adults and students. Older adult participants with a diagnosis of depression were excluded from this study. The focus of this study was on the process of self-reflection on identity rather than the impact of the therapeutic use of mirrors on depression and identity.

Those viewing the art exhibition of self-reflections on identity (Appendix B) were asked to complete a short, anonymous survey ($N = 15$) which included demographic information on age, gender, race, and/or ethnicity. The youngest person participating in the exhibition survey was nine years of age, and the oldest was 86 years of age, with one person identifying themselves as "very old." The mean age for those viewing the mirrors was 58 years, with the majority of participants (69%) over the age of 64 years. The surveys were filled out by three male respondents, 11 female respondents, and one person who did not fill out the demographic information. Ninety-three per cent of respondents were White (not Hispanic) with one person identified as Asian. Completion and return of the survey signified agreement to participate in this study.

In a pilot study, members of the general public filled out a survey after viewing an exhibit of mirrors decorated by pre-adolescent and adolescent students, and parents in an expressive arts therapy group. Results from that study (Appendix C) were used to compare and contrast data from the intergenerational study ($N = 70$). The surveys included demographic information on age, gender, race, and/or ethnicity. The youngest person participating in the pilot exhibition survey was seven years of age and the oldest was 87 years of age. Participants included 40 female and 30 male respondents. The majority (81%) identified themselves as White (not Hispanic), with 9% identified as

African American, 7% Asian-Pacific Islander, and 3% Hispanic. In both the pilot and current study the same art therapy procedure was used.

In addition to the exhibition of products from the expressive arts group, a website was created to showcase this intergenerational study as well as the pilot study. Permission was obtained to publish and display individual products from the expressive arts therapy groups. [1]

Procedures

An intergenerational expressive arts therapy group was organized around the question of identity. At the beginning of the group, an open-discussion was facilitated around the topic of identity, and how culture and life experiences may impact identity. How the lens of the media (e.g., television, movies, fashion, advertising, and internet) may positively or negatively influence how individuals, groups, and/or communities perceive themselves was also discussed. A selection of mirrors of different shapes and sizes were used in the group (e.g., antique mirrors, modern mirrors, large and small mirrors, concave, convex, and hand mirrors). Participants were then directed to choose a mirror and decorate it with words, images, and/or symbols while reflecting on the question, "Who am I?"

Art supplies included acrylic paints, permanent marker pens, and glitter glue. These materials were chosen specifically because they were easy to use, readily available, and gave participants a sense of control over the materials. While the choice of art material is often revealing or is chosen for its therapeutic qualities, this study limited its use to practicalities and ease of assembly. This study focused on the choice of mirror and

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[1] The website can be viewed at www.themirrorproject.com.

the colors used to decorate the mirror as well as the meaning behind the words, images, and/or symbols chosen to express ones identity.

After the group finished their mirror, participants were asked to complete a post session interview regarding their experiences during the creative process. Prompting questions included:

- Tell me about the mirror you chose?

- How did the mirror impact your self-reflection?

- What is the meaning behind the decorations on the mirror?

- What did you like about the mirror project?

- Did you find it difficult to reflect on self identity?

- Did you discover (or re-discover) something new about yourself during the creative process?

The video or audio interviews were then transcribed and participants were each given the opportunity to review the transcripts for accuracy; to verify, to correct and/or to elaborate on their experience during the creative process. This type of feedback was essential in making sure that participant's experiences are accurate and faithfully represented (Arvay, 2003). This information was then integrated into a final narrative which summarized the participants' experiences, and was then transcribed into Atlas.ti software. The data was coded and analyzed for emerging categories and/or themes including choice of language and use of terms. After careful reflection through reading and re-reading the data, three core themes emerged which included (a) introspection and self concern (e.g., physical appearance, talents), (b) connection and attachment to something or someone other than self (e.g., nature, people), and (c) taking action to help

others (e.g., volunteering, championing a worthy cause).

Products from the expressive arts experience were then put on display at an intergenerational event celebrating Grandparent's Day at a senior community center. The researcher was interested in comparing and contrasting perceptions between the two groups; those in the expressive arts therapy group and those who viewed the exhibition. A guest book was made available for those viewing the exhibition to write down their thoughts and feelings about the mirrors on display. An arts-based interactive poster in the shape of a mirror which asked "What do you see when you look into the mirror?" was provided to give those attending the exhibition an opportunity to engage in the process of self-reflection. Colored markers were available for participants to respond to the question with words, images, and/or symbols. In addition, a four-question survey was also made available to those viewing the exhibition. The data was then coded and analyzed using Atlas.ti software.

The survey consisted of three qualitative questions and one quantitative question which utilized a 2-point Likert scale *yes or no.* The questions included:

1. Was this exhibition helpful to you? Yes / No. Please explain.

2. As you look at the mirrors in the exhibition, which one resonates with YOU, and why?

3. What do you value most in life? Please explain.

4. What do you see when you look in the mirror?

A comparison of data from a pilot study was made to compare and contrast responses of those viewing the self-reflections on identity. The exhibition survey consisted of four questions; two qualitative questions and two quantitative questions. The

quantitative questions utilized a 4-point Likert scale with 1 indicating *poor* and 4

indicating *excellent,* and a 2-point Likert scale *yes or no.* The questions included:

1. How would you rate this exhibition? (*poor, fair, good, or excellent*).

2. Was this exhibition helpful to you? (*yes or no*; please explain).

3. As you look at the mirrors in the exhibition, which one resonates with YOU,

and why?

4. What do you see when you look in the mirror?

By utilizing a two part study design and comparison of existing data which

investigated self-reflection on identity from the perspective of those decorating mirrors,

and those viewing the mirrors, a rich source of data was collected which gave this

research added scope and breadth of study.

CHAPTER 4

Results

For this study, participants were asked to relate their subjective experiences of decorating a mirror around the question, "Who am I?" after an open-ended discussion of what is identity. Identity can be formed around many aspects of self including physical appearance, spiritual belief, roles, and values in life. Reflecting on identity required the participant to look beyond the surface image in the mirror, and to articulate what was most important to them as a reflection of self. These mirrors were then put on display in an art exhibition, and those viewing the exhibit were asked to reflect on the self-reflections on identity. A comparison of existing data from a pilot study was used to compare and contrast exhibition responses.

Definitions

Understanding participant's use of key terms, for example, self-reflection on identity is essential in interpreting the meaning behind the words. For the purpose of this study, participants were told that self-reflection is "a reflective examination of one's beliefs or motives," leading to a self-concept "the mental image one has of oneself" (Merriam-Webster, 2009, p. 1127). Through "this process of self-awareness, identity, formulated as *a self,* emerges" (Tauber, 2005, p. 50), which "serves as an important scaffold on which experience and sense of self are integrated or constructed and gives continuity, coherence, and meaning to life" (Levine, 2002, p. 305). Identity was considered as an intrinsic quality that defined who they were, how they related to others, and how they viewed their role in their community.

Expressive Arts Therapy Group

Of the 12 participants in the expressive arts therapy group, eight consented to participate in the post session video or audio interview; four older adult participants and four students (see Appendix A). Of the four participants who refused consent, two older adults said they felt too tired to continue, and one older adult declined to be interviewed because she didn't have any comments about her mirror. One student also declined to be interviewed and stated "I don't know what to say (about the mirror)."

The participants who consented to be interviewed included:

- Sara, who was 94 years of age, chose a lavender framed hand mirror with roses painted on the back. Sara wrote the words "I love watching children in the park" when reflecting on who she was when she looked into the mirror. Sara stated that she chose this mirror because she liked the shape and color of it, and because she liked flowers.

- Barbara was 91 years of age and chose a large rectangle-shaped hand mirror with a white handle and wrote the words "I survived" in pink glitter. Barbara spent a considerable time looking at herself in the mirror as she related her experience as a child, stating that she survived against the odds.

- Ann was 90 years of age and chose a circular mirror with heart and flowery etchings around the edges. Ann wrote the words "I am a very considerate and loving person. I share my love with everyone!" on her mirror. Ann stated that she chose this mirror because it was very attractive and appealed to her.

- Jim was 71 years of age and chose an eight-sided beveled framed mirror to decorate with the names of his brothers and sisters on each angle with "Love"

underlined in the center. Jim chose the octagon mirror because he said he wanted to write as many names of his brothers and sisters that would fit on the mirror.

- Jennifer who was 17 years of age and chose a wooden mirror with ornate swirls that was painted white encircling a mirror with an oval-type shape. She decorated her mirror with the words "Helping Others," "TOMS," and a green heart motif. Jennifer said she chose this mirror because it was different and she really liked the vintage look, and the different shades and shadows of the frame.

- Eleanor was 12 years old and chose a long, thin, gold-colored metal mirror with heart swirls. Eleanor decorated her mirror with multi-colored motifs, swirls, heart design, and the words "Unique," and "Love." She said she chose this mirror because it was long and narrow and had heart shape swirls on the side.

- David was 12 years of age and chose an oval mirror in a rectangular wooden frame. David decorated his mirror with colors of blues and greens in the center, and oranges, reds, greens, and gold on the frame.

- Keena was 11 years old and chose a rectangle, silver framed ornate mirror and decorated it with silver swirls and flower motif in the corner and the words "Smile," "Me…" and "Beauty" on the frame. Keena stated that she chose this mirror because she liked the size and shape, and thought it looked pretty.

Creative process. Participants' experience of decorating the mirrors was characterized by positive feelings and attitudes. All eight participants stated that they enjoyed the creative process. For the pre-adolescent students, David, Keena, and Eleanor it was the painting that was most enjoyable. David, expressed a love of painting but

stated "that I'm a bad artist." Keena liked the experience because she said "you could go crazy and do whatever you want and express yourself." A view shared by Eleanor who said that "the process was a good opportunity to be creative." For Jennifer, an adolescent, the creative process and reflection enabled her to look more deeply into herself, solidifying her identity and revealing what she described as "not something totally new but a deeper conclusion."

For the four older adult participants, the discussion on identity and decorating the mirrors was a learning experience and a connection to others; to past life experiences and to the present moment. For Jim the self-reflection brought to mind his family and some regrets from the past. Jim stated "that one should appreciate ones friends and family while growing up because otherwise it's too late." Ann enjoyed being with people and said she enjoyed "everything I do." A sentiment shared by Barbara who said she tried her "best to be nice to everyone." For Sara, decorating the mirrors reminded her of her garden and her love of flowers. She stated that "when I was in my own home I always had flowers and plants, and I loved taking care of them."

Reflecting on identity. Six participants indicated that the choice of mirror was important in expressing who they were. The shape of the mirror, its color, whether it was hand-held, or had a metal, wood or ornate frame played a part in deciding how to express the participant's identity. Keena said she chose her mirror because of the metal frame made the mirror "shiny," while Eleanor said she chose her mirror because she liked the heart shape swirls on the side and because "I had a narrow and long space so I would have a lot of room to do what I wanted." Jennifer's choice of mirror reflected a need to stand out and be different. She said she was attracted to this mirror because "I am

different but I really like the vintage look and the white and the black put together, it creates different shades and what not. I think it looks really cool. The shape of it overall is interesting."

Sara, Ann, and Jim were older adult participants whose choice of mirrors reflected a need to connect. Both Sara and Ann connected to their love of flowers. For Sara, it was important to have a hand-held mirror with a printed design of roses on the back because it reminded her of her garden. She said she was also attracted by its shape and color, lavender, which was her favorite color. Ann said she chose the circular mirror because she liked the hearts and flowery etchings around the edges. Jim said he wanted to connect to his family and chose his mirror because he wanted each side to represent the name of one of his siblings. Jim stated that "unfortunately, since it's a family of ten it's still not all that I would have liked to have done."

Introspection and self concern. This theme encompassed words that reflected an examination of thoughts and feelings about oneself including physical appearance or talent. Of the eight participants, three students decorated mirrors that reflected their thoughts and feelings of self. David focused on experimentation of color when creating his mirror and was very industrious but without a clear sense of self-identity, except in expression of what he was not (i.e., a good artist). As seen in Figure 1, David's mirror was painted with blues and greens on the oval mirror in the center, and orange, red, green, and gold on the wooden frame. The colors were chosen because they were opposites, and David said that he randomly placed different colors on the mirror in an attempt to create something that he liked. Although he had fun expressing himself, David said he was not a good artist even though he liked to paint. David described his creative

process as:

First I just wanted to have my name, then I thought I'd put blue and that was blah.

So I put the green dots there so there was light blue with green. And then I

decided to put these yellow and red things around and I thought that was still blah,

so I put the orange dots and the green corners.

Figure 1. *"Random Colors"* mirror

Keena's creative process was different from David's. Keena had a clearer sense of

self which manifested itself as her external identity (i.e., her physical appearance). Keena

said she was drawn to the silver framed rectangle mirror because she thought it was

pretty (Figure 2). From the beginning, Keena said she knew what decorations she wanted

on her mirror; silver swirls in the center and flower motifs in the corner with the words

"Smile," "Me," and "Beauty." All these words expressed how she thought about herself.

Keena stated that she discovered during the process of self-reflection that she smiled a lot

Figure 2. *"Smile"* mirror

because she was happy. Keena said that she deliberately placed the words in different

places and at different angles on the frame and mirror, commenting that it was "just like how you could look at your life from different perspectives, not just one way."

Eleanor on the other hand, showed more self-assurance about her sense of identity with her "Unique" mirror, but did not reflect deeply about who she was except by her general comment that she was "crazy." Eleanor's mirror (Figure 3) expressed her unique qualities and love of life. The choice of mirror was central to her design with the colors representing her need to stand out from the crowd and not blend in. She said she did not find it difficult to reflect on her identity because she believed that "everyone has their own self expression and can explain themselves very easily." Eleanor took pride in her individuality and creative ability, acknowledging that she did not discover anything new about her reflection. Eleanor stated that "I already knew that I was crazy."

*Figure 3. "*Unique*" mirror*

Connection and attachment to others. This theme reflected words that expressed a connection and attachment to people, specific places, or nature. All four older adult participants reflected a connection and attachment to others. For Sara, her choice of mirror reflected her love of nature and children (Figure 4). The hand held mirror had painted roses on the back which Sara said reminded her of the flowers and the plants that she took care of when she was in her own house "because they brought the outside in." For Sara, the words on the mirror invoked her love of watching children in the park which she described as peaceful. While Sara was decorating the mirror she reflected on

the future of her grandchildren and great grandchildren. Sara stated a hope that the

children would "…grow up in a much better world."

Figure 4. "Watching Children in the Park" mirror

Family was also important to Jim. His mirror (Figure 5) displayed the names of

eight of his siblings with the word "Love" underlined in the center. Although Jim came

from a family of ten, he said he chose those particular siblings because of his desire to

have a closer relationship with them. He said that the process of self reflection revealed

his lack of appreciation for his family while he was young because of differences in life

styles and interests. Jim regretted the past and stated:

> I recall to mind the fact that I did have a relaxed family and didn't appreciate
>
> them as well as I should have while I was growing up. For example, I am a
>
> culture vulture so to speak because I love the arts, New York, museums, theatres,
>
> ballet, and they were not so inclined. So therefore we grew apart so to speak.

Figure 5. "Family" mirror

For Ann, reaching out and sharing with others was reflected in her mirror (Figure 6). She chose a circle mirror etched with hearts and swirls and wrote the words "I am a very considerate & loving person. I share my love with everyone!" Ann expressed her enjoyment in everything she did including meeting new people. The process of self reflection showed Ann how much she liked herself, and with some pride she said that "I see all of myself in the mirror. I find myself attractive, I didn't think I would say that, but that's all I can say right now."

*Figure 6. "*Sharing Love with Everyone" mirror
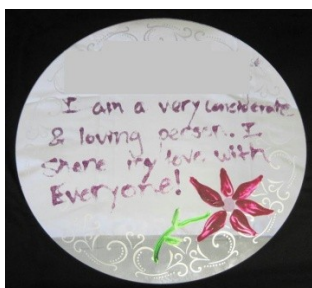
Barbara also expressed pride in her mirror (Figure 7) and the achievements of her life. The mirror described her survival against the odds as a premature baby that Barbara said affected her whole life; from the struggle to overcome physical and developmental hardship of childhood to dealing with the infirmities of old age. Barbara was thankful for her life and drew strength from her belief in God, and the love and support of her family.

*Figure 7. "*I Survived" mirror

The words "I Survived" exemplified her life's challenges. Barbara said:

I was born at seven months and I only weighed one pound which was

unbearable at times. It's unbelievable but I survived all that trouble and now I

praise God and thank him. I see myself as God would want me to be and try my

best to be nice to everybody, and kind to everybody. My parents, I love my

parents and my dear sisters, I had ten sisters and one brother and I am so happy

about that.

Taking action to help others. This theme reflected words that expressed a desire

to help others through volunteering or championing a worthy cause. Only one participant

expressed a desire to help others through volunteering and supporting organizations that

donated to those in need (see Figure 8). Jennifer chose her mirror because she said the

shape looked like it was "going outwards, helping, so mine says helping others, reaching

out." The mirror has a green heart motif and the words "Helping Others," and "TOMS."

Jennifer spent a considerable amount of time volunteering or fundraising for charity.

*Figure 8. "*Helping Others*" mirror*

Jennifer said her positive experience during the creative process of self-reflection came:

The moment when I finally decided what I was going to do because I was

thinking of doing different words but decided on helping others especially

because of volunteering here and TOMS which is a company that I am very

passionate about. TOMS is a company from which you can buy a pair of shoes or sunglasses and they will give a pair of shoes to a child in need, and sunglasses, they'll give someone's sight back.

All the participants in the expressive arts therapy group said that decorating the mirrors and reflecting on identity was an enjoyable experience. In the creative process, three students said the painting was most enjoyable; one student highlighted the reflective process as being insightful; and the four older adult participants enjoyed the discussion on identity and connection to others in the group. Six participants indicated that the choice of mirror was important in expressing who they were. Three core themes emerged from participant's self-reflection on identity which included (a) introspection and self concern (e.g., physical appearance, talents), (b) connection and attachment to something or someone other than self (e.g., nature, people), and (c) taking action to help others (e.g., volunteering, championing a worthy cause).

Art Exhibition

Products from the expressive arts therapy group were then put on display at an event celebrating Grandparents Day at a senior community center. Those viewing the mirrors were asked to complete a short survey ($N = 15$). Thirteen respondents indicated that the art exhibition on self-reflection on identity was helpful to them. One respondent said that the art exhibition showed her "that there was more to me than physical appearance." Another agreed and stated that it "makes you think of what's important to you." One wrote that he was very impressed by generations working together and another stated that the mirror project made her "think beyond the obvious. What's my purpose? Who do others see?" Two respondents said that they did not find the exhibition helpful to

them because it reminded them of what they could no longer do. One respondent stated that it was "because I can't drive now and my husband drives all the time," and another (who had difficulty seeing) said he preferred "things simple. These are too ornate."

Mirrors that resonate. Three respondents (21%) chose multiple mirrors that resonated with them (see Figure 9) with "I Survived" being the common theme, coupled with "Smile," "Helping Others," and "Who Am I?" mirrors. Survival was also important for one respondent who relayed her husband's childhood experience as a holocaust survivor. She said:

> When he was a baby, his parents fearing for his safety took him to a Catholic priest who sheltered him in the church orphanage. The priest gave the baby false documents and took care of him until he was reunited with his parents at the age of four. His parents brought him to the United States when he was six years of age. He loves this country but still suffers from separation anxiety and abandonment issues from his childhood.

Figure 9. Comparison between mirrors that resonate and number of respondents.
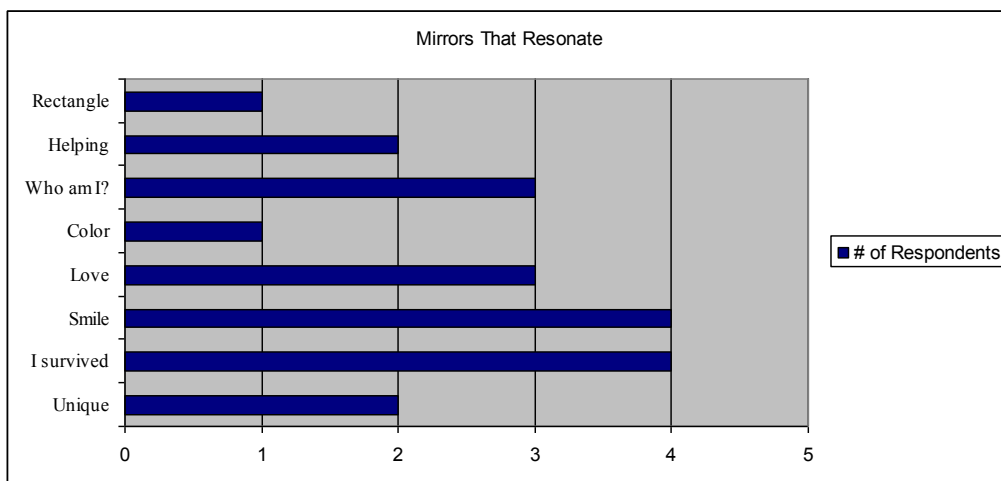
Four respondents wrote that smiling in the face of difficulty was important to them, while for three respondents it was "Love that Makes the World Go Round" which is illustrated in Figure 10. The ability to see oneself clearly in the mirror was important for two respondents. One wrote she chose "Who am I? because I can see myself the best," while another said he chose a "Rectangular one in which I can see the image clearly" because he said that the other mirrors had an obstructed view. Other mirrors that resonated with respondents included:

Respondent IN6: (Random) Color and laugh with people.

Respondent IN7: I am Unique. One of a kind. How I look now conforms to when I was younger.

Respondent IN9: I survived and helping others.

Respondent IN10: "Smile" - we need "smile" at this time of economy.

Figure 10. "Love Makes the World Go Round" mirror

Values in life. Those viewing the mirror exhibit were asked to identify what was most important to them. As seen in Figure 11, twelve respondents chose relationships as the thing that they valued most. Of the six respondents who made multiple choices, all cited their family and/or friends as being most important to them, coupled with

Figure 11. Comparison between values in life and number of respondents.
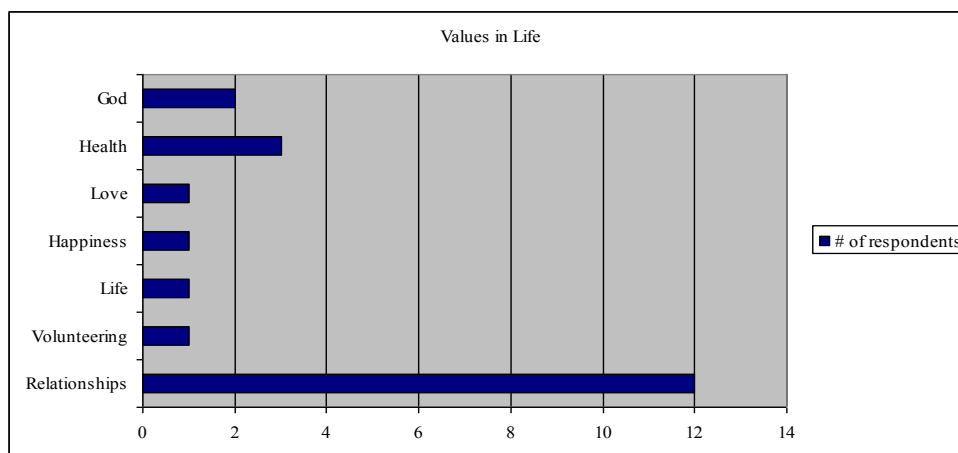
happiness, enjoying life, love, volunteering, health, and God. One respondent wrote "Self esteem. Self image is very important," but another said it was "Happiness. Being with my family and enjoying life" were things he valued most. Others noted that:

> *Respondent IN1:* I value my family. My sisters are the most important thing to me
>
>   and I hope they get this experience.
>
> *Respondent IN7:* My family. My volunteer work. My relationship with my
>
>   friends.
>
> *Respondent IN15:* How I interact w/ my community. Am I a help?? Am I
>
>   respectful? Do I set a good example.

Self-reflection on identity. Self-reflection was defined as a reflective examination of one's beliefs or motives which leads to self-concept. Respondents were asked to reflect on their identity and write down what they saw when they looked into a mirror. Of the fourteen respondents who answered this question, eight reflected introspection and self concern. Some saw only their reflections when they looked into the mirror, while others saw aging features or someone they did not recognize. One pre-

adolescent wrote that he saw himself as "A young man," while another respondent, a middle-aged woman, said she saw herself as "Me getting old. A strong woman." The rest of the respondents were older adults who described themselves as being "Myself," "Old and wrinkly," "An old lady," and "Physical appearance." It was interesting to note that one respondent, an older adult, who said he had difficulty seeing clearly in the mirror saw himself "as others see me," and that another older adult said she saw "Someone I do not know at times" and did not list anything that she valued on her survey.

Four respondents felt a connection and attachment to something or someone other than self. One pre-adolescent said she saw herself as "A soccer player," while one adolescent wrote she saw herself as "a beautiful girl with a lot to offer my family." One respondent, an older adult, said he saw himself as "A happy grandpa," while another who described herself as being "very old," stated that she saw a "A mom. A sister. A daughter. A nurse. A teacher."

Two respondents, who were both older adults, recognized how they had changed over the years and how much more they could do with their lives by helping others. One respondent, who was dedicated to volunteering her time, said that she noticed "How I have grown over the years. How I think now as a person looking forward to the years I have," and another wrote she enjoyed "Helping others."

When viewing the art exhibit, thirteen respondents said the self-reflection on identity was helpful to them, and two respondents were reminded of things that they could no longer do. Those viewing the mirrors resonated with the words, images, and symbols on display, with "I Survived" and "Smiling," followed by "Who am I" and "Love," as the top choices. Twelve respondents chose relationships as the thing that they

valued most in life. When asked to reflect on their identity, respondent's comments

supported the three core themes that emerged from the expressive arts therapy group;

eight respondents reflected introspection and self concern, four respondents felt a

connection and attachment to something or someone other than self, and two respondents

reflected on helping others.

Comparison Data

Existing data from a pilot study was compared to these results. Although the

mirrors exhibited in the pilot study were different from the intergenerational study, the

mirrors were created and exhibited within the same community. A total of 70 surveys

were collected including eight surveys that were incomplete. As shown in Table 1, 35%

Table 1

Comparison of Individual Characteristics and Gender from Pilot Exhibition Survey

Characteristics	Female (*n* = 40)		Male (*n* = 30)	
	n	%	*n*	%
Age				
7 to 11	4	10	1	3
12 to 18	12	30	9	30
19 to 30	2	5	5	17
31 to 40	6	15		
41 to 54	14	35	5	17
55+	2	5	10	33
Race or Ethnicity				
African American	4	10	2	7
Asian-Pacific Islander	2	5	3	10
Hispanic			2	7
Native American				
White (not Hispanic)	34	85	23	76

of female respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age, and 30% were between 12 and 18 years of age. Thirty-three per cent of male respondents were 55 years and older, while 30% were between 12 and 18 years of age. The majority (85% female; 76% male) identified themselves as White (not Hispanic).

Response to exhibition. Those viewing the self-reflections on identity were asked to rate their experience of the exhibition on a five-point Likert scale. Most respondents (95%) rated the exhibition as excellent (64%), or good (31%). Three respondents rated the exhibition as fair (10%). When asked if reflecting on self-identity was helpful to them, 89% said yes. Eight respondents did not find the exhibition helpful. Of these, two respondents just didn't relate to the exhibition. One respondent wrote "I just looked at it as art." Another said "I felt I could relate to a lot of them, but none of them really touched me." Other comments included:

Respondent EX7: It caused me to "reflect" on my image – who I see and who
others see!

Respondent EX16: Yes, because it got to show me other people's views of
themselves and how I can connect to them.

Respondent EX30: It shows me that I do not show who I truly am.

Respondent EX44: Found it most interesting – how the kids really opened up
about themselves to the mirror. I saw those whose mirror's reflected
happiness and confidence, and sadly those that didn't.

Respondent EX58: I find this exhibit needs time to sink in. At first, it's merely
observation of other people's work but then I realized that there's
something common (humanity) in all of us. It's good to feel

connected.

Mirrors that resonate. Thirty-four per cent of respondents resonated with

mirrors that were decorated with words or images that defined what they do or feel

(Figure 12). Twelve respondents were drawn to mirrors that expressed the duality of

personalities and contrast between the inner and outer persona. Eleven respondents

resonated with mirrors that reflected hope for the future and the accomplishment of

Figure 12. Comparison between exhibition mirrors that resonate and gender.
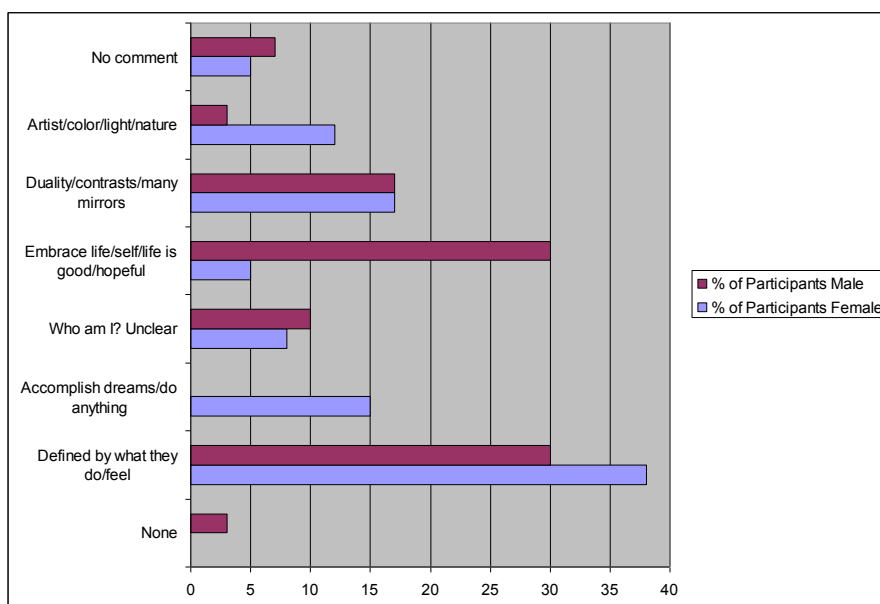
dreams. Comments included:

> *Respondent EX6:* Life is good. As a police officer you always hear and see
>
> > negative situations and realize how important and valuable life is to us.
>
> *Respondent EX7:* We shouldn't be so critical of ourselves that we hurt our
>
> > potential. Love yourself. So you can love others! Warts and all!
>
> *Respondent EX24:* Don't stop believing! It doesn't under-estimate the power of
>
> > one.

Respondent EX48: How children's thoughts are deeper than we think.

Respondent EX56: Contrasts of confidence vs. doubt and self-critical.

Self-reflection on identity. Sixty-three respondents answered the question "What do you see when you look into the mirror?" Of these, the majority (76%) of respondent's comments centered on introspection and self concern, and was supported by feelings, thoughts, and/or emotions about themselves reflected in the mirror. For some the reflection showed an image they did not like, for others it reinforced contentment with self. One respondent said his image revealed "A fake," but another said his reflection was "An open book with a cover that is sometimes in need of straightening." Other respondents reflected that they were:

Survey EX7: A work in progress.

Survey EX20: Funny, creative, happy.

Survey EX38: My own reflection. My insecurities. My emotions. My doubts. My

hopes. My appearance.

Survey EX44: Someone who laughs and smiles a lot.

For others the image reflected the march of time from youth to old age. One stated "my face in the mirror doesn't match in my mind's eye because I feel younger than my face shows. It's sort of a surprise." Another said:

Well, I don't see the good-looking man I used to be. I see a slowly aging man. Lot

of what could have been is gone but the man in the mirror still has some time for

good things to happen.

Twelve respondents (19%) saw themselves in relation to others and felt a connection and attachment to something or someone other than self. One respondent

related to the artists who created the mirrors by stating "I see the efforts, personalities, and interests of those who worked on the mirrors." Another said her image was "a mother, daughter, wife, sister, someone who loves to embrace family and life!" Others commented that:

Survey EX8: Life – Happiness – Enjoyment in being alive.

Survey EX15: When I look in the mirror, I see someone who appreciates life and all the good things in the world.

Survey EX62: A girl who can accomplish her dreams.

Three respondents (5%) reflected on helping others through volunteering. One respondent, an adolescent, stated that his reflection was "a self confident person eager to help others and get involved." One older adult said "I like doing things for others." Another older adult agreed and said that she saw "someone who can accomplish many positive things in this world to help my children and many other people, and doing my best to find the most productive, positive way to do this."

Most (95%) of respondents rated the pilot exhibition as good to excellent, and 89% said reflecting on self-identity was helpful to them. Thirty-four per cent of respondents resonated with mirrors that were decorated with words or images that defined what they do or feel. When respondents were asked to self-reflect on identity comments supported the three core themes that emerged from the expressive arts therapy group and those viewing the mirrors in the art exhibit. Forty-eight respondents (76%) reflected on introspection and self concern, twelve (19%) felt a connection and attachment to something or someone other than self and three (5%) reflected on helping others through volunteering.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This study was an exploration on the process of self-reflection on identity. The purpose was to see how mirrors could be used as a therapeutic tool and a meta-physical bridge to ones inner consciousness. Revealing or clarifying ones identity is linked to values, decision-making, and the ability to make positive meaning out of negative experiences (Griffin et al., 2001; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Ryś, 2009). The results indicated that mirrors may aid the process of self reflection, not only for those in the expressive arts therapy group, but also for those viewing the exhibition.

Expressive Arts Therapy Group

For six participants in the expressive arts therapy group, the choice of mirror was important to the formation of their self-reflection on identity. Keena and Eleanor were pre-adolescent students; the choice of mirrors reflected their developmental stage which was characterized by Erikson's (1959/1980, 1968) Psychosocial Theory as "I am what I learn." Keena's "shiny" mirror may have reflected a value of external beauty, while Eleanor possibly valued industry and the space the mirror afforded her. Jennifer's choice of mirror reflected a need to stand out and be different. Erikson viewed adolescence as a transitional phase of identity vs. identity confusion. Jennifer was a confident teenager with a strong integrated sense of identity; of who she was (i.e., her inner identity and values); and what she wanted to do with her life (i.e., her external identity and her place in the world). Sara, Ann, and Jim were older adult participants whose choice of mirrors reflected a need to connect to the past. This psychosocial stage was described by Erikson as wisdom, where one reflected on life experiences. This reflection produces either ego

integrity or despair and disgust, and was characterized by "I am what survives me."

Three core themes emerged from participant's self-reflection on identity which included (a) introspection and self concern (e.g., physical appearance, talents), (b) connection and attachment to something or someone other than self (e.g., nature, people), and (c) taking action to help others (e.g., volunteering, championing a worthy cause). Three students decorated mirrors that revealed their thoughts and feelings of self. These students were pre-adolescent and their reflection on identity was consistent with Erikson's (1959/1980, 1968) Psychosocial Theory on stages of development. This internalization of thoughts about self was also consistent with Frankl's (1959/2006, 1967, 1969/1988, 1978) Logotherapy expressed as a will to meaning, and Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1968/1999) Hierarchy of Needs reflected in esteem needs.

All four older adult participants expressed a desire to connect with others or reconnect with the past in accordance with Erikson's Psychosocial Theory for this stage of development. The need for connecting with others correlated to Frankl's love of another, and Maslow's love needs. Jennifer's self-reflection on identity was expressed in a desire to help others. Her adolescent identity development was consistent with Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, but she showed a maturity level that was higher than her age when compared to Frankl's achieving or accomplishing something, and Maslow's self actualization, which were the stages of development for older adults.

The intergenerational aspect of the expressive arts therapy group also provided an opportunity for shared life experiences which impacted at least one participant, Keena. The reflections of older participants had the potential to help adolescents clarify their identity or find a purpose in life. Keena wrote that she was inspired by Barbara's "I

Survived" mirror and the story behind her struggle to live "because no matter what happens, there was always something good to look forward to in life." She also mentioned Jim's mirror and his regret at not being closer to his family when he was younger. Keena wrote:

> Every time I think about him telling me that story, that just because I might not get something I want that I can't buy, doesn't mean I should not want what I already have that's priceless and irreplaceable.

Art Exhibition

For those viewing the self-reflections on identity in the art exhibit, the majority said that it aided them in their own reflections on identity. The majority of respondents also identified relationships as the most important thing in their lives. This desire to connect with others was also supported by the choice of mirrors that resonated with respondents. The art exhibition also provided an opportunity for those viewing the mirrors to connect with those who decorated the mirrors. These connections and reflections helped respondents to (re)discover their sense of identity.

The three core themes that emerged from the expressive arts therapy group was also supported by responses from those viewing the art exhibition. Eight respondents reflected on introspection and self concern consistent with Erikson's stages of development for respondents, but the older adults comments were consistent with Frankl's will for meaning and Maslow's esteem needs. Four respondents felt a connection and attachment to something or someone other than self. The self-reflections on identity for two pre-adolescent and two older adults were consistent with Erikson's Psychosocial Theory related to their stages of development, the expressed desire to

connect with others was in accordance with Frankl's love of something or love of another, and Maslow's love needs. Two older adults expressed a desire to help others which was reflective of the latter stages of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, Frankl's achieving and accomplishing, and Maslow's self actualization.

Comparison Data

The data from the pilot study supported the art exhibit responses that viewing the mirrors on display aided in the process of self-reflection. Comments on the process of self-reflection from the pilot also supported the three core themes that emerged from the expressive arts therapy group. Forty-eight respondents (76%) reflected on introspection and self concern, and saw their feelings, thoughts, and/or emotions about themselves reflected in the mirror. Seventeen of these respondents were adolescents and five were pre-adolescents who corresponded to their respective stages of development (see Erikson, Frankl, Maslow). Twenty-six respondents were older adults and although they were consistent with Erikson's stages of development, they revealed a self concern that was in accordance to Frankl's will to meaning, and Maslow's esteem needs.

Twelve respondents (19%) saw themselves in relation to others and felt a connection and attachment to something or someone other than self. Respondents corresponded to their respective stages of development (see Erikson) but the adolescent and older adults desire to connect with others reflected Frankl's experiencing something or love of another, and Maslow's love needs.

Three respondents (5%) reflected on helping others through volunteering. One respondent's self-reflection on identity was consistent with Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of adolescent identity development, but showed a maturity level comparable to

the stages of development for older adults (see Frankl; Maslow). The two older adults

were in accordance with the latter stages of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (i.e., Care),

Frankl's achieving or accomplishing something, and Maslow's self-actualization.

Process of Self-Reflection

The results from this two-part study and comparison of data indicated that the

three core themes may be seen as fluid, transitional phases in the process of self-

reflection on identity. As seen in Table 2, these phases correlate with Frankl's

(1959/2006, 1967, 1969/1988, 1978) *Logotherapy,* and encompassed Erikson's

(1959/1980, 1968, 1997/1998) *Psychosocial Theory*, and Maslow's (1943, 1954,

1968/1999) *Hierarchy of Needs.*

Table 2
Comparison of Phases in the Process of Self-Reflection on Identity and the Works of
Erikson, Frankl, and Maslow

	Introspection and Self Concern	Connection and Attachment to Others	Taking Action to Help Others
Erikson	Hope; Will; Purpose; Competence; Fidelity	Love	Care; Wisdom; Gerotranscendence
Frankl	Will to Meaning	Experiencing Something or Love of Another	Achieving; Accomplishing
Maslow	Survival Needs; Safety; Esteem Needs	Love Needs;	Self-Actualization; Self-Transcendence

Introspection and self concern. This phase was concerned with internalizing

thoughts and feelings about self, either wallowing in self hatred, adulation of self love, or

focused on oneself, for example, Keena's reflection on her physical appearance or

Eleanor's reflection on her uniqueness and individuality. This phase included

Maslow's physiological and safety needs, all of which deals with the needs of the self as

opposed to others. This phase also included Erikson's developmental theory of infancy

(i.e., Hope; basic trust vs. basic mistrust), early childhood (i.e., Will; autonomy vs.

shame), pre-school age (i.e., Purpose; initiative vs. guilt), school age children (i.e.,

Competence; industry vs. inferiority), and adolescence (i.e., Fidelity; identity vs. identity

confusion). All these stages are concerned with internalized thoughts and feelings. This

phase may also encompass Frankl's will to meaning and one's attitude towards

unavoidable suffering. Initially the focus may be on oneself, but may transition towards

externalization and connection to others by finding meaning through suffering. Frankl

(1959/2006) believed that "suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a

meaning, such as the meaning of sacrifice" (p. 113).

  Connection and attachment to others. This phase was about connecting with

others and/or connecting to something other than self: for example, Sara's connection to

her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren; and Jim's octagon-shaped mirror

which was a link to his brothers and sisters. This phase was identical to Frankl's

experiencing something or the love of another, Maslow's love and esteem needs, and

Erikson's love (i.e., intimacy vs. isolation of young adulthood).

  Taking action to help others. This phase was denoted by action to help others

without direct or indirect benefit to oneself through creating something or doing

something. This phase was exemplified by Jennifer's desire to help those in need. This

phase was identical to Frankl's achieving or accomplishing something, and Maslow's

self-actualization and self-transcendence. This phase also incorporated Erikson's stages

of middle age (i.e., Care; generativity vs. stagnation), and old age (i.e., Wisdom; ego integrity vs. despair) and a ninth stage, Gerotranscendence (see Erikson & Erikson, 1997/1998), which was based on the work of Lars Tornstam and colleagues at Uppsala Universitet in Sweden.

Similarities and Differences

What surprised me during this study was how the process of self-reflection on identity presented in this study naturally encompassed the works of leading personality and identity theorists; Erikson, Frankl, and Maslow. But the disparity between the theories and phases of self-reflection indicated the complexity of identity formation. The limited data suggested that the process of self-reflection on identity may be fluid and transitional as opposed to linear stages that must be completed before moving to the next stage.

There has been some debate amongst developmentalists about the linear aspects of the Psychosocial Theory. Erikson believed that failure at one stage of psychosocial development aggravated the next stage (crisis) and increased the challenge for resolution of the end stage of ego integration. Erikson also acknowledged that individual responses to environmental stimuli may result in differential development; earlier issues revisited later in life and/or ascendancy of later stages may be achieved at an earlier stage of development. Others disagreed with Erikson's view of development that focused on a life-long identity process: for example, Ermann's (2004) assertion of continuous changing roles in the fast-pace of modern-day life; Polkinghorne's (1992) belief that the self was "a complex of unintegrated images and events" (p. 149); or Larsen & Larsen's (2004) postmodern view of the multiplicity of selves.

Although these phases encompassed Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, further study is needed to validate or refute a correlation between the stages of development and the process of self-reflection on identity. This limited study indicated some disparity between the two, for example, all the participants in the Expressive Arts Therapy Group were within their respective psychosocial development stages with the pre-adolescent students correlating to introspection and self concern phase of self-reflection. However, the older adult participants related to connection and attachment to others which correlated to the young adult stage of psychosocial development, and the adolescent student reflected on helping others which correlated to the latter stage of psychosocial development. This disparity was repeated for those viewing the art exhibition and for those viewing the pilot study exhibition. Whether this represents a differential psychosocial development, is indicative of a multiplicity of selves, or suggests that there was no correlation between the two (namely, psychosocial development and the phases in the process of self-reflection on identity) is a question for future research.

The results from this limited study suggested fluid, transitional phases in the process of self-reflection on identity, which differed from Erikson's Psychosocial Theory that postulated a life-long identity process, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which required one to fulfill one stage before moving to the next. The word "phase" was used in acknowledgement of the fluidity in which one can be focused internally, externally, or beyond self at any given moment in time. These phases of self-reflection differ significantly with Frankl and Maslow's belief that self actualization and self transcendence were age-related and only attainable during the latter stages of life (middle age and old age). This assertion may be challenged by Jennifer, a participant in the

Expressive Arts Therapy Group, and a respondent viewing the art exhibition, both

adolescent in age but reflecting a maturity level which corresponded to the latter stages of

life in their desire to help others. Although developmentally these qualities may manifest

themselves in the older population these examples are consistent with other youth who go

beyond self to help others (see Weber, 2011; Kids Are Heroes, n.d.).

In addition, this researcher would disagree that self-transcendence was attained by

few people, for example, Gandhi, Sister Theresa, and Martin Luther King Jr. as Maslow

suggested. These individuals were able to create societal change, and devoted a

significant portion of their life to causes beyond self interests. But one does not need to

be larger than life to create societal change; this can be achieved at the individual level.

Like Batson (1991, 2011), this researcher would postulate that altruism is intrinsic to

human nature and within the realm of everyday people, and not just the purview of heroes

and saints. Batson (2011) believed that the motivational state of altruism is initiated "at

least in part in the nurturant impulse of human parents to care for their young. This

impulse has been strongly selected for within our evolutionary history. Without it, our

species would have vanished long ago" (p. 4).

Frankl believed that suffering was not necessary to find a will to meaning in one's

life. An argument could be made that life is suffering, either self-inflicted or beyond

one's control; from the tension between internal and external forces as represented by

individual needs, wants and/or desires vs. societal expectations; an existential crisis; lack

of meaning or purpose in life and/or thwarted fulfillment; to the horrors experienced by

Frankl and others during the Holocaust. A core concept in existential philosophy was

Anxiety or Angst which was seen as a "basic ingredient of vitality" (Van Deurzen,

1999/2004, p. 221). A view shared by Kierkegaard (1844/2000), who believed that

suffering was an essential element in living a reflective life. As Frankl (1967) once wrote,

"one can search only for the concrete meaning of personal existence, a meaning which

changes from man to man, from day to day, from hour to hour" (p.57). This sentiment

was echoed by Bolen who believed that:

> If this man could accept the possibility that the world he experiences is a mirror
>
> and that what he sees and condemns is a reflection of what must change in
>
> himself, then change would be possible. For most people, altering the pattern of
>
> the way things are in the outer world is impossible, while changing what one sees
>
> as a problem in one's own psyche, although difficult, can be done (Bolen,
>
> 1982/2004, p. 60).

Limitations

One limitation of this study may be that these phases in the process of self-

reflection related to an individualist society (America) and may be different for those

living in a collective society. Further study was indicated to evaluate whether these

phases of the process of self-reflection are universal or apply only to this limited sample.

This study was limited not only in size, but also in cultural diversity, and disparity of age

range. The study was focused on the process of self-reflection about identity rather than

the sociocultural aspects of self-reflection. Further research was indicated using a larger

and more diverse sample of participants. Although this study was limited, it provided a

useful indicator for identifying phases in the process of self-reflection on identity.

Investigating and utilizing new media tools for research may also be beneficial to

this study in reaching a larger and more diverse population. New media tools such as

VoiceThread, FaceBook, and Twitter could be used to showcase the products from

the Expressive Arts Therapy Group to a wider and more diverse audience. This may

provide an opportunity for those unable to attend a physical exhibition (with its limited

time and date) to reflect on the question of identity and participate in the survey process.

The data from new media tools may provide evidence and validation for the phases of a

universal ontological inquiry, or highlight differences in phases between individualistic

and collective societies in the process of self-reflection on identity.

Future Studies

The focus of this study was on the process of self-reflection on identity, but the

potential for studies on the therapeutic use of mirrors is limited only by the imagination.

Grandma Layton used contour drawing as a way through her depression so one potential

study may be the impact of the therapeutic use of mirrors on depression and identity. A

study on cultural identity and its impact on the process of self-reflection would provide

invaluable insight into diverse cultural identities, both globally, within specific

communities, and on an individual level. What an artist creates is not necessarily what is

seen, so a comparison study using mirrors as a tool for self-reflection would be an

interesting study in perception.

Knowing that you are not alone in your suffering and that other people

understand, and may have had the same experiences gives one a sense of belonging and

community support. A study on the potential of mirrors to create connections within

various communities and/or between those sharing different communal identities has

tremendous value: for example, connecting high school students who have similar

interests, concerns, and/or fears; breaking down perceived prejudices between

heterosexual, bisexual, and transgender individuals; or creating an understanding of war experiences between veterans and civilians.

The value placed on intergenerational programming has increased through the years but most studies involve young children and older adults. Further study of adolescent and older adult interactions may help to improve communications between two groups of people who are often misjudged and misunderstood. It would also be interesting to investigate the process of self-reflection on identity within specific professions; for example, expressive arts therapists, teachers, police officers, emergency responders, doctors, and other caring occupations. A comparison of these professions may give insight into core values and beliefs.

Conclusion

There is a wealth of information, though little research on the therapeutic use of mirrors in cognitive, emotional, and physical therapies as well as a proliferation of mirrors as metaphors in therapeutic literature, philosophy, and psychoanalytical texts. Although there is no research data on the specific use of mirrors as a self-reflection tool, the results from this limited study indicated that mirrors can be used to connect to ones inner thoughts and feelings on the topic of identity not only during the creation process, but also as a reflection for those viewing the mirror exhibition. This result is similar to Waterman's (2004) study that concluded that personal expressiveness had a strong association to identity formation, and the development of one's potential and purpose in life. Waterman also felt that these activities were likely to involve connection to others and lead to better identity options. Results from this study will add to the body of expressive arts literature by providing a new metaphor for mirrors as a therapeutic tool

for self-reflection on identity.

APPENDIX A

EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY GROUP DATA SUMMARY

Expressive Arts Therapy Group Total # of Participants 12

Total # of Interviews 8

	Male		Female	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Total # of Interviews	*2*	67	*6*	67
Declined Interview	*1*	33	*3*	33
	3	100	*9*	100

Demographics

Age

	# of Participants	
	n	*%*
11	*2*	17
12	*2*	17
17	*1*	8
71	*1*	8
90+	*5*	42
101	*1*	8
	12	100

Race/Ethnicity

	# of Participants	
	n	*%*
White (not Hispanic)	*11*	92
Hispanic	*0*	0
African American	*1*	8
Asian-Pacific Islander	*0*	0
Native American	*0*	0
	12	100

Expressive Arts Therapy Group Narratives

Sara was 94 years of age and chose a Lavender framed hand mirror with roses painted on the back. Sara wrote the words "I love watching children in the park" when reflecting on who she was when she looked into the mirror. Sara chose this mirror because she liked the shape and color of it, and because she loved flowers commenting that "when I was in my own home I always had flowers and plants, and I loved taking care of them." Lavender was Sara's favorite color, but she also liked African Violets because they are the color purple and similar colored plants. Sara related that she lived in an apartment and always liked flowers and plants "because that brought the outside in." She loved the whole idea of the expressive arts therapy group and found it interesting decorating the mirrors around the question of identity. The words on her mirror reflected her love of seeing the children in the park because it was very peaceful watching them play, and she hoped her own grandchildren and great grandchildren would be able to grow up in a much better world. Sara had a good time in the group and thanked everyone.

Barbara was 91 years of age and chose a large rectangle-shaped hand mirror with a white handle and wrote the words "I survived" in pink glitter. Barbara spent a considerable time looking at herself in the mirror as she related her experience as a baby. Barbara was proud of the fact that she survived against the odds and thanked God and her family for their support. She related her story as:

> I was born at seven months and I only weigh seven pounds which was unbearable at times. It's unbelievable but I survived all that trouble and now I praise God and thank him. I see myself as God would want me to be and try my best to be nice to everybody, and kind to everybody. My parents, I love my parents and my dear sisters, I had ten sisters and one brother and I am so happy about that.

Ann was 90 years of age and chose a circular mirror with heart and flowery etchings around the circumference. Ann wrote the words "I am a very considerate and loving person. I share my love with everyone!" on her mirror in answer to the question, Who am I? Ann chose this mirror because it was very attractive and appealed to her. Ann enjoyed being with people and enjoyed every moment of the expressive arts therapy group. She commented that "I see all myself in the mirror. I find myself attractive, I didn't think I would say that, but that's all I can say right now," and thanked everyone for the lovely time spent in the group.

Jim was 71 years of age and chose an eight-sided beveled framed mirror to decorate with the names of his brothers and sisters on each angle with "Love" underlined in the center. Jim chose the octagon mirror because he wanted to write as many names of his brothers and sisters that would fit on the mirror. Jim came from a family of ten. Jim related that he misses his family "because in my latter years I realized that we were not as close as we should have been. And unfortunately in my later years now I look at the situation with sad eyes. I regret that." The rift in family relationships occurred because of differences in life styles and choices; Jim loved the theatre and arts, while his family was not so inclined. These differences drew family members apart and Jim felt that he had

lost out on an opportunity to be close with his brothers and sisters while growing up, and now lived in regret. Jim enjoyed the process of decorating the mirrors because it was a learning experience for him and he discovered that "one should appreciate ones friends and family while growing up because otherwise it's too late." Jim also thanked group members for experience of the mirror project.

Jennifer was 17 years of age and chose a wooden mirror with ornate swirls that was painted white encircling a mirror with an oval-type shape. She decorated her mirror with the words "Helping Others," "TOMS," and a green heart motif. Jennifer chose this mirror because it was different and she really liked the vintage look, and the different shades and shadows of the frame. Jennifer thought the mirror looked really cool and she like the overall shape because it was interesting. During the expressive arts therapy group, Jennifer enjoyed "The moment when I finally decided what I was going to do because I was thinking of doing different words but decided on helping others especially because of volunteering here, and TOMS which is a company that I am very passionate about." Jennifer explained that TOMS was a company that donates items to those in need, for example, if one bought a pair of shoes the company will donate a pair of shoes to a child in need. During the creative process, Jennifer discovered a greater depth about herself and who she was in the world; someone who really liked to help others through volunteering.

Eleanor was 12 years old and chose a long, thin, gold-colored metal mirror with heart swirls. Eleanor decorated her mirror with multi-colored motifs, swirls, heart design, and the words "Unique," and "Love." She chose this mirror because it was long and narrow and had heart shape swirls on the side. The shape of the mirror gave her the opportunity to write whatever she wanted and that the expressive arts therapy group process was a good opportunity to be creative. Eleanor didn't learn anything new about herself as she reflected on her identity in the mirror "because I think that everyone has their own self expression and can explain themselves very easily." Eleanor described herself as "crazy" and a person who doesn't like to blend in which was reflected in the colors she chose to decorate her mirror.

David was 12 years of age and chose an oval mirror in a rectangular wooden frame. David decorated his mirror with random colors of blues and greens in the center, and oranges, reds, greens, and gold on the frame. David loved to paint but described himself as a "bad artist." He has fun expressing himself creatively and described his process as:

> First I just wanted to have my name, then I thought I'd put blue and that was blah. So I put the green dots there so there was light blue with green. And then I decided to put these yellow and red things around and I thought that was still blah, so I put the orange dots and the green corners.

Keena was 11 years old and chose a rectangle, silver framed ornate mirror and decorated it with silver swirls and flower motif in the corner and the words "Smile," "Me…" and "Beauty" on the frame. Keena chose this mirror because she liked the size

and shape, and thought it looked pretty, and that it was something about the size and shape that drew her towards it. Keena didn't find the process of self-reflection difficult but enjoyed the creative process of decorating the mirror because "you could be crazy and do whatever you want and express yourself!" However, Keena did discover that she smiled a lot because she was happy and chose to place the words in different places and at different angles because it was "just like how you could look at your life from different perspectives, not just one way."

  After the expressive arts therapy group, Keena (2011) sent an email to the researcher because she couldn't stop thinking about the experience. In the email Keena related how strongly she was affected by working with the older adults and how much she appreciated their life stories and the impact they had on her own attitudes towards life. In the email she related how Barbara's "I Survived" mirror and the story behind it had touched her heart, "she inspired me so, so much because of how no matter how something so bad happens you should always look after something good ahead in your life." Keena also mentioned Jim's "Family" mirror and that:

    Every time I think about him telling me that story, that just because I might not get something I want that I can't buy, doesn't mean I should not want what I already have that's priceless and irreplaceable.

APPENDIX B

ART EXHIBITION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC DATA SUMMARY

The Intergenerational Mirror Project Survey

The Intergenerational Mirror Project was based upon a wide range of responses to the question "Who Am I?" Identity is key for all ages, it informs values and decision-making. Those viewing the mirrors are encouraged to reflect on their identity as they look into the mirror. To go beyond your outward appearance and embrace the unique qualities that makes you who they are. Please write on the back of this survey if you need more space.

Your answers are anonymous and completion of this paper signifies agreement to participate in this survey.

1.   Was this exhibition helpful to you? Yes / No. Please explain.

        _____

        _____

2.   As you look at the mirrors in the exhibition, which one resonates with YOU, and why?

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

3.   What do you value most in life? Please explain.

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

4.   What do you see when you look in the mirror? _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

Demographic Information:
Gender: □ Male   *Age: _____*   *Race/Ethnicity*   *□ White (not Hispanic)*
                                                                          □ Hispanic
        □ Female   *□ African American*
                                                                          □ Asian – Pacific Islander
        □ Transgender   *□ Native American*
                                                                          □ Other _____

Exhibition Survey to the General Public: Total # of Surveys Collected 15

	Male		Female	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Total completed Surveys	*2*	67	*10*	91
Incomplete Surveys	*1*	33	*1*	9
	3	100	*11*	100

Note: 1 Survey no demographic information

Demographics

Age

	# of Participants	
	n	*%*
9	*1*	7
12	*1*	7
17	*1*	7
54	*1*	7
60+	*2*	14
70+	*4*	29
80+	*3*	22
Very Old	*1*	7
	14	100

Note: 1 Survey no demographic Information

Race/Ethnicity

	# of Participants	
	n	*%*
White (not Hispanic)	*13*	93
Hispanic	*0*	0
African American	*0*	0
Asian-Pacific Islander	*1*	7
Native American	*0*	0
	14	100

Note: 1 Survey no demographic Information

Question 1. Was this exhibition helpful to you? Yes / No. Please explain.

because it showed me that there is more to me than just physical appearance. *(Survey IN1)*
Very interesting. *(Survey IN2)*
It makes you think *(of)* what's important to you. *(Survey IN3)*
I love to smile and be happy. *(Survey IN4)*
Because I can't drive now and my husband drives all the time. *(Survey IN6)*
I am unique being a person of who I am. How I look. *(Survey IN7)*
Helped me reflect on self and other. *(Survey IN9)*
Very impressive – young & old generations work together. *(Survey IN7)*
Yes was very nice. *(Survey IN11)*
Yes a great idea. *(Survey IN12)*
Not really. I like things simple. These are too ornate. *(Survey IN13)*
It was fun! *(Survey IN14)*
Yes it made me think beyond the obvious. What's my purpose? Who do others see. *(Survey IN15)*

Question 2. As you look at the mirrors in the exhibition, which one resonates with YOU, and why?
Comment
...the one that says unique because I am. *(Survey IN1)*
For my husband a holocaust surviver (see note). *(Survey IN2)*
Love makes the world go round. *(Survey IN3)*
The mirror that said "smile". *(Survey IN4)*
Love makes the world go round. *(Survey IN5)*
Color and laugh with people. *(Survey IN6)*
I am Unique. One of a kind. How I look now conforms to when
   I was younger. *(Survey IN7)*
Who am I. Also smile. I survived. *(Survey IN8)*
I survived and helping others. *(Survey IN19)*
"Smile" - we need "smile" at this time of economy. *(Survey IN10)*
Love makes the world go round. Who am I. I survived. *(Survey IN11)*
Rectangular one in which I can see the image clearly. Others have an obstructed view. *(Survey IN13)*
Who am I? b/c I can see myself the best. *(Survey IN14)*
Helping others! *(Survey IN15)*

Question 3. What do you value most in life? Please explain.
Comment
I value my family. My sisters are the most important thing to me and I hope they get this experience *(Survey IN1)*
Grandchildren *(Survey IN2)*
Family *(Survey IN3)*
Happiness. Being with my family and enjoying life *(Survey IN4)*
Love, Family. *(Survey IN5)*
My husband. *(Survey IN6)*
My family. My volunteer work. My relationship with my friends. *(Survey IN7)*
Family and health. *(Survey IN9)*
Been*(Being)* alive. Having my mother alive. There is a God that care for us. *(Survey IN11)*
Family, God. *(Survey IN12)*
Self esteem. Self image is very important. *(Survey IN13)*
Mommy & daddy b/c they do so much for me. *(Survey IN14)*
How I interact w/ my community. Am I a help?? Am I respectful? Do I set a good example. *(Survey IN15)*

Question 4. What do you see when you look in the mirror?

	n	*%*
Thoughts, Feelings about Self	8	57
Connection to Others; People, Place, Things	4	29
Helping others	2	14
	14	100

<u>Comments</u>

I see a beautiful girl with a lot to offer my family. *(Survey IN1)*
An old lady. *(Survey IN2)*
Old and wrinkly. *(Survey IN3)*
A happy grandpa. *(Survey IN4)*
Myself. *(Survey IN5)*
Physical appearance. *(Survey IN6)*
How I have grown over the years. How I think now as a person looking forward to the years I have *(in helping others)*. *(Survey IN7)*
Someone I do not know at times. *(Survey IN9)*
Helping others. *(Survey IN10)*
No answer. *(Survey IN10)*
Me getting old. A strong woman. *(Survey IN11)*
A young man. *(Survey IN12)*
Myself as others see me. *(Survey IN13)*
A soccer player. A sister. A friend. *(Survey IN14)*
A mom. A sister. A daughter. A nurse. A teacher. *(Survey IN15)*

APPENDIX C

COMPARISON OF PILOT EXHIBITION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

DATA SUMMARY

The Mirror Project Survey

The Mirror Project was based upon a wide range of responses to the question "Who Am I?" The participant and viewers are encouraged to reflect on their identity as they look into the mirror. To go beyond their outward appearance and embrace the unique qualities that makes them who they are. Your answers are anonymous and completion of this paper signifies agreement to participate in this survey.

Rate the following questions by checking the answer that best represents your opinion.

4 = Excellent   3 = Good   2 = Fair   1 = Poor N/A = Not Applicable

1.   How would you rate this exhibition?

☐ Excellent   ☐ Good   ☐ Fair   ☐ Poor   ☐ N/A
         4   3   2   1

2.   Was this exhibition helpful to you? Yes / No
         Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.   As you look at the mirrors in the exhibition, which one resonates with YOU, and why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.   What do you see when you look in the mirror?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Demographic Information: Please Check

Gender: ☐ *Male*   *Age:*   ☐ *7-11*   *Race/Ethnicity*   ☐ *White (not Hispanic)*
              ☐ *Female*   ☐ *12-18*   ☐ *African American*
                                          ☐ *19-30*   ☐*Asian–Pacific Islander*
                                          ☐ *31-40*   ☐ *Native American*
                                          ☐ *41-54*   ☐ *Hispanic*
                                          ☐ *55+*   ☐ *Other* _____

Pilot Exhibition Survey to the General Public: Total # of Surveys Collected 70

	Male		Female	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Total completed Surveys	*26*	87	*36*	90
Incomplete Surveys	*4*	13	*4*	10
	30	100	*40*	100

Demographics

Age

	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
7 to 11	*1*	3	*4*	10
12 to 18	*9*	30	*12*	30
19 to 30	*5*	17	*2*	5
31 to 40	*0*	0	*6*	15
41 to 54	*5*	17	*14*	35
55 +	*10*	33	*2*	5
	30	100	*40*	100

Race/Ethnicity

	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
White (not Hispanic)	*23*	76	*34*	85
Hispanic	*2*	7	*0*	0
African American	*2*	7	*4*	10
Asian-Pacific Islander	*3*	10	*2*	5
Native American	*0*	0	*0*	0
	30	100	*40*	100

Question 1. How would you rate this exhibition?

	n	*%*
Excellent	46	66
Good	21	30
Fair	3	4
Poor	0	0
N/A	0	0
	70	100

Question 2. Was this exhibition helpful to you?

	n	%
Yes	62	89
No	8	11
	70	100

<u>Comments</u>

It made me a bit more introspect by looking at others attempts at introspection. *(Survey EX29)*

Made me think about myself again. *(Survey EX27)*

It fortifies my hope that some young people realize they are on the edge of a great stage. *(Survey EX26)*

It shows me that I do not show who I truly am. *(Survey EX30)*

Yes. It shows me how other people think of themselves. *(Survey EX21)*

Gave me some insights into the self esteem of teenagers. *(Survey EX20)*

Yes, it made me understand who I am inside. *(Survey EX18)*

Yes, because it brought out the real me and I finally discovered who I am inside and out. *(Survey EX17)*

Yes, because it got to show me other people's views of themselves and how I can connect to them. *(Survey EX16)*

It caused me to "reflect" on my image - who I see and who others see! *(Survey EX7)*

Not particularly helpful but very interesting, great for the student's who participated. *(Survey EX4)*

I just looked at it as art. *(Survey EX68)*

Work with youth with behavioral/emotional difficulties that may benefit from such a project. *(Survey EX64)*

This exhibition was very helpful it helped ME find who I really was. *(Survey EX50)*

I found it extremely interesting to see the different responses. *(SurveyEX38)*

It was interesting to see other people just as insecure as I am.

Found it most interesting - how the kids really opened up about themselves to the mirror. I saw those who's mirror's reflected happiness and confidence and sadly those that didn't. *(Survey EX44)*

Yes, because I found myself and I learned what makes me me. *(Survey EX65)*

Yes, I really enjoyed thinking about what makes people themselves. It is interesting to see what people think is important when they're defining themselves. *(Survey EX67)*

Interesting and honest. *(Survey EX61)*

I felt something spiritual. *(Survey EX43)*

I find this exhibit needs time to sink in. At first, it's merely observation of other people's work, but then I realized that there's something common (humanity) in all of us. It's good to feel connected. *(Survey EX58)*

Thought provoking. *(Survey EX56)*

It opens the idea of a conversation with my teenager. *(Survey EX46)*

It really made me think about things differently after reading what some people wrote. *(Survey EX36)*

Question 3. As you look at the mirrors in the exhibition, which one resonates with YOU, and why?

	n	*%*
None	1	1
Defined by what they do/feel	24	34
Accomplish dreams/do anything	6	9
Who am I? Unclear	6	9
Embrace life/self/life is good/hopeful	11	15
Duality/contrasts/many mirrors	12	17
Artist/color/light/nature	6	9
No comment	4	6
	70	100

<u>Comments</u>

"Condensation" - have a son that has self-esteem issues that might reflect if he looks closely at himself. *(Survey EX5)*

I like the "Broken & Sharp" mirror, although it is simple, yet to me it expresses the emotion of the creator's life. Nothing is holding them together which seem similar to my life now, which make me feel I understand the frame of mind they are in. *(Survey EX1)*

Life is good. As a police officer you always hear & see negative situations and realize how important and valuable life is to us. *(Survey EX6)*

"I try not to look too hard." We shouldn't be so critical of ourselves that we hurt our potential. Love yourself. So you can love others! Warts and all! *(Survey EX7)*

"A really nice person who is unappreciated." I'm really nice but am often judged. *(Survey EX13)*

"Don't stop believing!" It doesn't under-estimate the power of one. *(Survey EX24)*

The "Sunshine" mirror because it doesn't lead me to question myself, but instead the universe. *(Survey EX28)*

The mirror that had a music note and the word "chocolate addict" resonated with me because that mirror was a description of me. *(Survey EX2)*

So many - especially ones that reach kids inner self-loathing. I specialize in eating disorders and people should listen when these kids express their unhappiness. *(Survey EX49)*

The mirror that said "I see… a person that can accomplish her dreams" because I did. *(Survey EX65)*

Glitter space. It sparkles & I can't see a perfect reflection but can see myself as I like! *(Survey EX61)*

Severe duality, or tri-ality, of personality are represented by: *(Survey EX58*

    1. The glitter mirror - bright, shiny, fun yet indistinct/fuzzy

    2. "Broken & Sharp" - our wounds can focus our strengths and weaknesses

    3. Some Beautiful Baby Blues - it's comforting to sometimes recognize something beautiful in our reflection.

Broken & Sharp - sad. *(Survey EX59)*

A boy with only a pen… I like the way this expresses his inner thoughts and his outer persona. *(Survey EX46)*

The happy, confident mirrors probably because I saw my own reflection (how I feel about myself). *(Survey EX44)*

Contrast of confidence vs. doubt and self-critical. *(Survey EX56)*

The one mirror I relate to is the one who said I see who I want to be. I relate to this because sometimes I try too hard to be someone else. *(Survey EX66)*

How children's thoughts are deeper than we think. *(Survey EX48)*

Question 4. What do you see when you look in the mirror?
(Seven respondents did not answer this question)

	n	*%*
Thoughts, Feelings about Self	48	76
Connection to Others; People, Place, Things	12	19
Helping others	3	5
	63	100

Comments

I see fragments and I see the distraction. With the plastic over it is also a symbol of the mind trying to contain the chaos and dysfunction. *(Survey EX1)*
I see the efforts, personalities, and interest of those who worked on the mirrors. *(Survey EX2)*
Well, I don't see the good looking man I used to be. I see a slowly aging man. Lot of what could have been is gone, but the man in the mirror still has some time for good things to happen. *(Survey EX3)*
I see the reflection of a tangible world filled with materialism shown as an intangible portrait. *(Survey EX4)*
Old man with *(an)* 18 year old mind. *(Survey EX5)*
Being alive and enjoying. *(Survey EX6)*
A work in progress. *(Survey EX7)*
Life – Happiness – Enjoyment in being alive. *(Survey EX8)*
I'm too old for that…. *(Survey EX9)*
Me. *(Survey EX10)*
Myself. *(Survey EX13)*
Myself in every light. *(Survey EX14)*
When I look in the mirror, I see someone who appreciates life and all of the good things in the world. *(Survey EX15)*
A young boy who likes a lot of stuff. *(Survey EX16)*
It makes me happy. *(EX18)*
Funny, creative, happy. *(Survey 20)*
Drawings. *(Survey EX21)*
Myself as I relate. *(Survey EX22)*
Me. *(Survey EX23)*
Myself. *(Survey EX24)*
I see my inner self. I like doing things for others. *(Survey EX25)*
I hardly look, but to groom my hair or make sure I got the spinach from my teeth. The image I see is limited by my view…. But the image I project is my life's goal. *(SurveyEX26)*
Conflicted, Russian, atheist, laid back, friend, helper. *(Survey E27)*
What I could be. *(Survey EX28)*
An open book with a cover that is sometimes in need of straightening. *(Survey EX29)*
A fake. *(Survey EX30)*
I haven't thought about it. *(Survey EX32)*
Beauty & love. *(Survey EX33)*
Me being a chocolate person. *(Survey EX34)*
A self confident person eager to help others and get involved. *(Survey EX35)*
Dreams & emotions. *(Survey EX36)*
A budding artist. *(Survey EX37)*
My own reflection. My insecurities. My emotions. My doubts. My hopes. My appearance. *(Survey EX38)*

Me. *(Survey EX39)*

Me. Someone who likes to follow her dreams. *(Survey EX40)*

Someone who has history and is strong! *(Survey EX41)*

Someone who is getting old! *(Survey EX43)*

Someone who laughs & smiles a lot. *(Survey EX44)*

Me - needing to take time for "self." Needing sunlight! *(Survey EX45)*

My face in the mirror doesn't match the face in my mind's eye because I feel younger than my face shows. It's sort of a surprise. *(Survey EX46)*

That would take some time to think about it. So maybe "indecisive." *(Survey EX47)*

A woman who has begun to age. *(Survey EX48)*

Growth. *(Survey EX49)*

A mother, daughter, wife, someone who loves to embrace family and life! *(Survey EX50)*

Me. *(Survey EX51)*

A complex, good hearted person. *(Survey EX52)*

A young girl. *(Survey EX53)*

Not the full me. *(Survey EX54)*

Me happy. *(Survey EX55)*

Beauty. *(Survey EX57)*

Tired but hopeful. *(Survey EX58)*

I'm an overworked mom, who has many faces. *(Survey EX59)*

Someone who can accomplish many positive things in this world to help my children and many other people, and doing my best to find the most productive positive way to do this. *(Survey EX60)*

Still happy with the person looking back. Often wondering what the image will look like in 5 years – 10 yrs etc... *(Survey EX61)*

A girl who can accomplish her dreams. *(Survey EX62)*

A girl who can do anything. *(Survey EX63)*

I see…. MEEEEEE!!!!!! *(Survey EX64)*

I see me and what I accomplished. *(Survey EX65)*

I see a pretty young girl who wants to grow up. *(Survey EX66)*

A bundle of emotions, thoughts and ideas. Whatever I think is important to me in that moment is reflected back at me. *(Survey EX67)*

My smiling face. *(Survey EX68)*

Blemish. *(Survey EX69)*

I see a beautiful person. *(Survey EX70)*

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