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# MUSIC, MYTH AND MOTHERLAND: CULTURALLY CENTERED MUSIC AND IMAGERY WITH INDIAN ADULTS

Sangeeta Swamy, PhD, MT-BC

## ABSTRACT

This study assessed ethnic identity in adults of Indian origin through Culturally Centered Music & Imagery (CCMI), a music-centered, psychotherapeutic technique that emphasizes socio-cultural context, identity and meaning. The purpose was to examine how participants' native music, in the context of CCMI, could evoke identity-based imagery and assess ethnic identity in a globalized context. Five cisgender Indian men and women from Hindu backgrounds participated in one CCMI session each, including an interview and follow up discussions. The qualitative methodology of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997) was used in this study. The results reveal how CCMI can access the cultural and ethnic unconscious, a relatively new area of consciousness in Jungian and GIM paradigms. The study also shows how CCMI can highlight the fluid and multiple nature of ethnic identity, revealing its intersection with other identities such as gender, sexual orientation, caste and religion. In addition, the data support the use of contextual and identity-based music selections in assisting participants to explore, recreate or gain a deeper understanding of their ethnic identity through image and metaphor. Major findings include new categories of ethnic identity such as *Aesthetic*, *Ancestral*, *Philosophical*, *Mythological*, *Spiritual* and *Core* Indian identities. Subthemes include experiences of *Rebirth*, *Disconnection*, *Unconscious Divide*, as well as other socio-cultural identities such as *Kaleidoscopic*, *World Citizen* and *Global Nomad*. These and other themes relate to American, global, spiritual, queer, socio-economic, caste, gendered, and individual contexts. The research also suggests that this technique may be effective in emotionally and psychologically supporting adults who are going through the process of immigration or acculturation.

## INTRODUCTION

The motivation for this research originally came from my own life experience as a queer, Indian-American woman growing up during the post-1965 immigration era in the Midwestern United States. From a Hindu, Brahmin background, I was raised in a small university town. Over time, my family slowly climbed to middle and eventually upper middle-class status from humble socio-economic roots. Because we were one family of only a few South Asians in town, I internalized the unconscious racism around me and found it difficult to embrace my own heritage. Through navigating discrimination and struggling to understand my own ethnic identity, as an adult, I began to realize that my musical process was intricately related to my ethnic and cross-cultural identity. The American folk music, European classical music (and later South Indian *Carnatic* music)

that I had chosen to play, listen to, and surround myself with was not “culture-free.” On the contrary, it was laden with a quest for who I was and where I belonged. My own personal experiences led me to probe deep into the heart of music and culture, prompting me to explore how music and culture are related and intertwined, how one informs and feeds the other. Perhaps most importantly, I began to realize that music does not exist in a vacuum, without history or context, that on some level, music and culture are inseparable.

In addition, after receiving Level I and II training in the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music, I began to question the Western musical and cultural foundations of the method. Given my conflicting relationship with classical music, I wondered how the Bonny Method and its use of European classical music could assist me in exploring the vast, inner world of my shifting ethnic identity. It became clear to me that the method was steeped in one socio-cultural context that may not be appropriate or effective for people from various ethnicities. I recognized the need for a culturally centered approach, where both the music and the method were considered within a social and cultural context.

Despite an increase in literature and presentations on cultural competence and diversity in music therapy, socio-cultural research in Guided Imagery and Music and Music & Imagery has been sparse (Hanks, 1992; Short, 2005; Toomey, 1996). In addition, there is a need for a greater understanding of ethnic identity and its critical role in the music therapy process. In considering the areas of study for my dissertation, I was interested in the following research questions. How can Culturally Centered Music and Imagery (CCMI) be used to explore ethnic identity? Specifically, how does it assess ethnic identity within a postcolonial, postmodern, globalized context, such as when identities are fluid, incomplete, multiple and intersecting? How can CCMI help participants gain a greater awareness of their own ethnic identity, on an internal and unconscious level, and its relationship to their well-being?

## Related Literature

### *Ethnic Identity*

“All of us have had the feeling sometimes that there is a connection between the music we prefer to listen to and the people we are—perhaps not too literally, but metaphorically” (Ruud, 1998, p. 31). While a relatively new topic in the field of music therapy, ethnic identity has been studied and researched extensively in many interdisciplinary fields such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and ethnic studies. In this paper, ethnic identity is defined as the relationship that clients have with their ancestry or perceived genetic heritage (Swamy, 2014). While ethnic identity is not commonly a clinical focus in therapy, it is an important developmental process that impacts clients’ musical preferences, therapeutic needs, and sense of well-being. In particular, it is an important and neglected area for music therapists to assess when working with ethnic and cultural minorities.

To clarify, ethnicity and culture, while similar, are two separate concepts. *Culture* has historically referred to common and invisible norms, beliefs, behaviors and communication styles by a specific group, and is sometimes used synonymously with national identity. On the other hand, *ethnicity* generally refers to a sense of membership

based on a specific ancestral group or one's genetic heritage (Swamy, 2014). However, in this paper, both culture and ethnicity are further defined as self-constructed identities.

Modern theories about ethnic identity built upon racial identity models by William Cross (Hall, Freedle & Cross, 1972). This continued with multicultural psychologists Derald and Donald Wing Sue in the 1980's, establishing ethnic identity as important to ethnic pride, a sense of "ethnic esteem," and by extension mental health and psychological well-being (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993; Carter & Helms, 1987; Oler, 1989; Helms & Parham, 1981; Phinney, 1990, 2001; Sue & Sue, 1990). The models outlined a transformation in several stages. The first stage is a negative or deferred ethnic self-image, the middle stages involve periods of confusion, searching and conflict, and the last stage is one of integration or ethnic self-acceptance. Stage models also helped to account for power and privilege in psychology and counseling, as well as differences in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within ethnic groups where cultural norms were being applied blindly (Sue & Sue, 1990).

However, the early stage models are criticized for being too linear, pathological and overemphasizing culture in relation to other identities (Phoenix & Rattansi, 1997; Smith, 1992; Yi & Shorter-Gooden, 1999). I found that postmodern approaches to ethnic identity left room for more nuance and subtlety, defining both culture and ethnicity as more fluid and elastic, approximating human behavior rather than seeing it as fixed or concrete (Hoshmand, 2006; Kenny & Stige, 2002; Maira, 1998; Phoenix & Rattansi, 1997; Smith, 1992; Yi & Shorter-Gooden, 1999). Postmodern perspectives also view ethnic identity as intersecting with gender expression or identity, socio-economic status, neurodiversity, ability, age, or sexual orientation. They also situate ethnic identity within sociopolitical influences such as racism, oppression, and discrimination. The focus is not on achieving a single, completed identity but on honoring the reality of experiencing multiple, incomplete and partial identities (Arnett, Jensen, & McKenzie, 2011; Hermans, 1996, 2001, 2003; Hermans, Kempen & Van Loon, 1992; Hermans, Rijks & Kempen, 1993; Smith, 1992). Such a perspective allows for inconsistencies and contradictions that traditional models overlook in the interest of universality, such as how individuals negotiate and adopt various identities depending on context and place (Phoenix & Rattansi, 1997). Newer, globalized conceptions of ethnic identity include the dialogical self, which views the self as multiple voices in dialogue with each other (Andreouli, 2013; Bell & Das, 2011; Hermans, 2003; Hermans, Kempen & Van Loon, 1992), hybrid and reconstructed identities (Bhabha, 2004; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1996; Mishra & Shirazi, 2010; Radhakrishnan, 2001), and translocational positionality, which emphasizes location and position as defining factors (Anthias, 2001).

In addition, I used supporting research on music as a metaphor for identity (Deyhle, 1998; DeNora, 2000; Duany, 1996; Frith, 1996; Niewiadomska-Bugaj & Zeranska-Kominek, 1993; Ruud, 1998; Saldanha, 1997). This also includes arts-based expressions of ethnic identity, which have emerged within the fields of cultural studies, psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Burnim, 1981; Burt, 1993; Fitzpatrick, 2002; Forrest, 2001; Niewiadomska-Bugaj & Zeranska-Kominek, 1993). These studies highlight the complexities and contradictions involved in forming ethnic identity and point out the influence of socio-economic identifications on music perception. I also considered research and literature on Indian identity to provide a specific socio-cultural and political perspective. This included the role of Indian immigration policy and the

influence of themes such as purity, gender, and sexuality (Bhatia & Ram, 2004; DasGupta, 1997; Gopinath, 2003, 2005; Kidwai & Vanita, 2001; Maira, 1998; Shah, 2004; Thadini, 1996).

Later in my research process, I discovered a small body of literature on the ethnic and cultural unconscious (Adams, 1996; Hanks, 1992; Henderson, 1985, 1990; Herron, 1995; Javier & Rendon, 1995; Kimbles & Singer, 2004). Joseph Henderson defined the cultural unconscious as “an area of historical memory that lies between the collective unconscious and the manifest pattern of the culture” (p. 103). With the exception of Hanks (1992) research, I found the absence of the cultural or ethnic unconscious in the music therapy literature to be particularly striking. Within the context of the Bonny Method, images and psychic material are considered to stem from the personal or the collective unconscious. Several scholars including George Devereux (1980), however, argued that culture and ethnicity are indisputable parts of the unconscious. “Nonetheless, the expansion in exploration of the unconscious should involve, directly or indirectly, growth in the knowledge of its potential and actualized contents, including more room for cultural components” (Herron, 1995, p. 522). In conducting my research, I was particularly interested in how the cultural and ethnic unconscious highlight the internal and unconscious aspects of ethnic identity.

In addition, in today’s world, culture takes on new meanings for many bicultural and multi-racial individuals and communities, those living in Diasporas, and immigrants with homes in more than one country, leading to redefinitions of ethnic identity (Shepherd, 2003; Slobin, 2003; Straw, 1991; Toloyan, 1991). Given these re-definitions, there is a need for current methodologies and research in the field of music therapy to investigate the fluid and globalized nature of ethnic identity.

### *Music-evoked imagery*

“Music-evoked imagery” (Goldberg, 1995, p 112), the basis of the therapeutic technique used in this study, is defined as music-stimulated imagery experiences with the intention of navigating internal realms of consciousness. There are a variety of contemporary and neo-shamanic techniques that fall into this category. However, for the scope of this paper, the focus will be on Music & Imagery, an adaptation of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (BMGIM) (Bonny, 1975, 1978a, 1978b/2002). The terms, “The Bonny Method” and “BMGIM” (Bruscia & Grocke, 2002, p. xxi) will be used to refer to the original technique as developed by Helen Bonny. “Guided Imagery and Music” or “GIM” (p. xxi) will be used as an umbrella term to refer to the Bonny Method, Music & Imagery, and related variations and modifications created by those trained in the method.

Within the field of GIM, there are only a few studies and articles specifically addressing cultural context (Hanks, 1992; McIvor, 1998; Short, 2005). Through examining tapes and transcripts of past clients from sixteen years of her own private practice, for instance, Alison Short (2005) addressed important points that are neglected in current BMGIM practice. These include self-reflexivity, cultural imagery and symbolism (Short, 2005, p.81). Karlyn Hanks (1992) also conducted a phenomenological study of the Bonny Method with Chinese and Caucasian participants, utilizing both European classical and Chinese folk music. The study took place in both Taiwan and the United States, with the intention of examining the essence of the clients’ experience in a

cross-cultural context. Hanks reported that all of her subjects responded successfully to both cultures of music and experienced imagery at three levels: the personal, cultural, and archetypal. Hanks concluded that carefully selected music from different cultures can be “used effectively, with and without a translator, even when cultural prohibitions and inhibitions might seem to mitigate against its success...” (p. 6). In another study, Millicent McIvor (1998) experimented with using the Bonny Method with the Maori people of New Zealand. She wrote about the cultural history of the Maori and researched and interpreted their imagery according to cultural meaning and myths.

However, I found that these studies did not sufficiently address the cultural context of the music used, the context of the psychotherapeutic setting, how any non-Western music was analyzed, or how the therapeutic potential and meaning of any non-European music was determined. In addition, they did not specifically assess, explore, or consider ethnic identity in the research and clinical process. For example, the Bonny method is framed within Western psychology, involving meeting in dyads and interpreting the inner psyche based on European psychodynamic theory. The music that McIvor and Short used was also European. This raises many questions around socio-cultural context and meaning in music. For instance, given its history of colonization and imperialism, is European music in GIM appropriate for clients who are not white or European? Is Jungian analysis of imagery based on the personal and collective unconscious sufficient and appropriate for non-white clients?

Musical analysis of historical context and theory-based examination in the Bonny Method has not traditionally involved socio-cultural or anthropological concerns. As founder Helen Bonny articulated, however, these approaches towards analysis are “culturally derived,” (1978/2002, p.301) based on a Western theoretical approach to syntax and interpretation.

Although musical variables may not have universal connotations, there seem to be culturally derived “meanings” which can determine therapeutic usefulness. It was upon these “meanings” that we based our choices. For the Western, American or European white, middle to upper class listener, we found certain elements in sample music consistently stimulated generalized meanings. (Bonny, 1978b, p. 301)

This highlights the need for BMGIM and other music-evoked imagery techniques to address the social and ethnic needs of non-Western populations. It also emphasizes how the cultural context of musical analysis, perception, and meaning can affect the therapeutic process.

### *Music as Culture*

To investigate these issues, I looked to the field of *music as culture*, drawing from interdisciplinary traditions led by the work of John Blacking (1967, 1995) and Alan Merriam (1964). This included research from branches of ethnomusicology, anthropology, sociology, cultural musicology and cultural studies, which suggest that music cannot be properly understood outside of its social and cultural context (Agawu, 1997; Becker, 1989; Blacking, 1967; Clayton et al., 2003; DeNora, 2004; Dissanayake, 1995; Frith, 1983; Herndon & McLeod, 1982; Kerman, 1985; Kramer, 1992; Lomax, 1962, 2003; Merriam, 1964; McClary, 2002; Nettl, 1965, 1976, 2005; Shepherd, 1991;

Slobin, 2003; Straw, 1991). Scholarship on the topic of *music as culture* sheds light on a number of factors related to music-evoked imagery, as noted above. This includes perspectives on how the music should be analyzed, researched, and selected, and how meaning, mood, structure and symbolism is determined in non-European music. This body of literature is also helpful in determining whether non-European music is appropriate for music-evoked imagery as well as for particular clients, and how to determine this.

Merriam (1964) believed that music should only be studied within its anthropological context and could not be severed from its social and cultural origins, beliefs, values, and social interactions. He advocated investigating music in several arenas: the role of musical instruments; the physical, verbal, and social behavior of musicians; cultural and social aspects of music learning; education and composition; cultural symbolism in music; the study of song texts; and the role of music in rituals and other facets of society. In addition, he focused on the function of the music in its original cultural context, such as whether it is primarily used for entertainment, religious reasons, continuity of culture, communication, conformity of social norms, symbolism, healing, and other functions.

Another important area that I considered is the concept of universality in music selection. For example, the use of European classical music in the Bonny method is considered by many as universal, that it has “transcended both time and cultures” (Goldberg, 1995, p.118; McIvor, 1998). However, many sociologists and ethnomusicologists believe that there is no universality to music. Their research supports the idea that music requires knowledge of the dialect being spoken in order for it to be understood, especially given the contrasting alphabets, social values, and belief systems of the music’s socio-cultural origins (Byron, 1995; Herzog, 1946; Seeger, 1941; Stige, 2002). Other theorists and researchers describe a biological basis for music that is expressed through cultural specifics (Blacking, 1974; Dissanayake, 1995; Kenny, 2006; Nettl, 2000), Pavlicevic, 1997; Stige, 2002).

In addition, GIM practices tend to view music as absolute, assigning the meaning of the music to the elements of music itself. European classical music is used regardless of the cultural or ethnic background of the client. Other scholars, however, find that music is referential, insisting that the meaning of music has primarily to do with its context, memories and associations (Becker, 2006; Meyer, 1956; Pavlicevic, 1997). Postmodernists, on the other hand, advocate that meaning in music is within both absolute and referential perspectives, an outlook that is more suited for socio-culturally centered approaches (Cook, 2001; Nattiez, 1990; Pavlicevic, 1997; Stige, 2002). They encourage researchers to view the “various meanings in music as complementing one another, and as enriching our understanding of why and how human beings find music meaningful and intensely significant” (Pavlicevic, 1997, p.27).

In terms of musical analysis, Blacking (1987e), Bruno Nettl (1973), Martin Clayton (2003) and others advocated that using culturally specific concepts and language to describe and interpret the syntax or structure of a piece of music is critical to its understanding. Others (Balkwill, Matsunga, and Thompson, 2004), however, claimed that only auditory cues such as volume and speed affect music perception of mood and emotions. Music therapist Soo-Jin Kwoun’s (2009) research shows, however, that perception does not depend solely on acoustic or referential features, suggesting that

listener perception is affected by both cultural influences and universal qualities in the music, as well as globalization and generational identity.

Research by Blacking (1995) and other theorists (Farnsworth, 1969; Frances, 1988; Langer, 1957; Ruud, 1998) also highlights the importance of culturally centered interpretation of semantics, or the mood, metaphors and symbolism in music. In other words, they found that it is the listener who attaches symbolic or referential meaning to the absolute or intrinsic qualities that they hear in the music. In music-evoked imagery, the understanding of musical metaphor is important for selecting appropriately therapeutic music. In fact, musical metaphor refers to how musical processes and elements reflect or symbolize psychological or emotional processes. For instance, in the Bonny Method, Bonny described how her interpretations about European music were culturally bound. She explained how a high range of pitch often symbolizes a feeling of being “up,” “associations related to women,” and a “transcendent” or “religious state” for Westerners (Bonny, 1978b/2002, p. 303).

The implications of the above research for music-evoked imagery show that mood and metaphor in music is not necessarily absolute. In other words, intrinsic qualities contained within the language of the music itself appear dependent upon the socio-cultural reference point of the listener. The inconsistencies in the literature on musical perception also suggest a need for further research and understanding. A more thorough discussion on the referential aspects, or the participant’s individual, cultural, ethnic, social, and other associations with the music, is missing in the above GIM studies. In particular, consideration of ethnic identity and how listeners’ relationship with the music from their ethnicity might affect their perception of mood and symbolism is warranted.

## METHOD

### Methodology

I felt that a qualitative paradigm that utilized small samples in rich, descriptive detail would be able to capture the complex, multidimensional concepts in my research inquiry. In addition, I hoped that a qualitative method could contribute to theory development for culturally centered music therapy practice. Specifically, the methodology of portraiture, developed by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, a sociologist, ethnographer, and biographer, was used in this study (Davis & Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). Portraiture utilizes a blend of phenomenological aims, ethnographic context, narrative presentation, and a multiple case study format. It focuses on creating an authentic, narrative portrait of a group of individuals or organizations, much like painters create portraits of their subjects. Because of the focus on context, portraiture involves ethnographic observations, interviews, and fieldwork (when researching communities). Portraiture is also unique in that it emphasizes “goodness” (p.9) rather than pathology. In short, the purpose of portraiture is to aesthetically highlight the nuance, complexity, and dissonance in people’s lived experiences, with the intention of addressing a broader audience beyond the walls of academia.



## Recruitment

This study utilized a purposeful sample of adults of Indian origin living in the U.S. in early to middle adulthood, approximately ages 28-41. I chose participants who, upon my describing the central research question, seemed interested and willing to participate. I also chose an Indian population because Indians living in the United States are often relegated to “model minority” status, and the complexities and depth of their inner experiences are often misunderstood or neglected (Isler, 2006; Takaki, 1993). Indians, along with other Asian populations, are also in need of therapeutic support. However, they tend to underutilize these services due to a lack of culturally sensitive professionals and treatment approaches. In addition, they may hold culturally determined interpretations about mental health and experience racial discrimination, (Glicker, 2004; Morishima & Sue, 1982; Furuto, 1992), as well as stigmatization and shame (Brown & Han, 2000). Unable to find any existing music therapy research on South Asian populations in the United States, I wanted to more fully understand my own ethnic group before researching other populations.

I chose the age range for several reasons. According to developmental psychologists and transpersonal theories, the period between twenty-five and forty is frequently when adults are faced with the challenge of meeting social and cultural expectations around family and intimacy, as well as a stage of re-examining cultural, societal and family imprinting or conditioning (Cohen, 2005; Erikson, 1994; Robbins & Wilner, 2001; Schmidt, 2004; Schostak & Weiss, 2004; Stevens, 1988; Sullivan, 2001;). However, none of these traditional models address the relationship between globalization and trans-nationalism to adult development. Within the context of adulthood and immigration, Indians and other minorities are forced to negotiate multiple identities of ethnicity, culture, ability, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and other self-identifications. To find participants for the study, I used contacts with Indian organizations in Boston such as the Massachusetts South Asian Lambda Association (MASALA) and personal connections. I sent out emails and used word of mouth to further locate suitable participants.

Five cisgender, able-bodied, Hindu adults of Indian origin living in the Boston area, ages twenty-nine through forty-one, participated in one to three CCMI sessions each. In keeping with the methodology of portraiture outlined below, participants chose a location to meet that was familiar and comfortable. All participants chose to meet either at their home or mine. The first two participants, Purnima and Anjali had one session each from March to May of 2009. This included a one-hour initial interview with open-ended questions addressing acculturation, immigration history and musical preferences. The interview also addressed basic questions about family structure and multiple self-identifications, such as gender, socio-economic status, caste, sexual orientation, and age. For the music selections, I chose to play approximately ten minutes of music for each participant. However, for some participants, this meant using two or three shorter pieces rather than one. See Table 1 regarding which music selections were used for each participant. After the initial two sessions, I realized that future participants would benefit clinically from an additional session to discuss further insights. Therefore, I decided to meet with the rest of the participants for two to three one-hour sessions each, which

continued in March to May of 2010. After a preliminary analysis of all completed sessions, I created the emergent themes in collaboration with participants.

## Procedures

Culturally Centered Music & Imagery (CCMI) is a music and imagery technique I developed, both influenced by my Level II training in GIM and adapted to a specific population, namely Indian adults. CCMI is founded upon the idea that music has both referential and absolute qualities. In contrast to GIM or Music & Imagery, it emphasizes context, ethnic and musical identity, contextualized musical structure (syntax) and contextualized musical meaning (semantics). To select music for the sessions, I researched the social, political, cultural context of various Indian music genres and their suitability for a music evoked imagery process. I also considered social, cultural, ethnic, local, and regional influences. I then analyzed the structure of the music within Indian music theoretical systems and researched the symbolism and metaphors of the music within Indian culture and society (see appendices A-E for more details).

I selected the Indian music from my own collection as well as the participants' music library, downloading some selections from iTunes. I then divided the music into supportive (Paik-Maier, 2010) and re-educative categories, and matched music used in sessions referentially with the participants' ethno-musical identities. I did this in order to provide a moderate level of cultural stimuli through ethnic musical idioms. I used a balance of holding and stimulating qualities in the music, principles described by Lisa Summer (1995), to guide my selection process. Each participant then focused internally on an aspect of their Indian identity, allowed a starting image to emerge, and narrated imagery or drew a mandala while listening to the musical selection. After the experience, subjects verbally described the meaning they drew from the experience and the symbolism of the images. I also conducted participant observations simultaneously, noticing participants' body language, behavior, and physical characteristics during the session. After each session, I took notes about my observations, perceptions and personal reflections in journal entries.

Table 1. CCMI Music Selections

Participants	“Purnima”	“Anjali”	“Siddarth”	“Maya”	Sarav
<i>First music selection</i>	Supportive: excerpt from <i>Bhaje ham</i> , based on a traditional Sanksrit chant, performed and arranged by Bombay Jayashri (2003, track 2)	Re-educative: excerpt from <i>Aaj mera jee karda</i> (Today my heart desires), the theme song from film <i>Monsoon Wedding</i> , composed by Mychael Danna (2007, track 2), sung by Sukhwinder Singh	Supportive: <i>Allegro</i> from the Serenade for Strings by Antonin Dvorak (1998, track 5)	Supportive: <i>Mercy Street</i> from the album <i>So</i> by Peter Gabriel (2002)	Supportive: <i>Air</i> from the Orchestral Suite No. 3 by J.S. Bach (2010)
<i>Second music selection</i>		Supportive: <i>Your Good Name</i> , from <i>Monsoon Wedding</i> , composed by Mychael Danna (2007, track 5)	Re-educative: Chaiti, performed on the raga <i>Desh</i> , by N. Rajam (2000, track 4)	Supportive: <i>Ahir Bhairav</i> from the album <i>Call of the Valley</i> (Chaurasia, Kabra, & Sharma, 1997, track 1)	Supportive: <i>Invocation</i> from the album <i>Shyam Smaranam</i> (2006)
<i>Third music selection</i>					Supportive/Re-educative: <i>Vedic Chants</i> from the album <i>Chants of India</i> by Ravi Shankar (1997, track 3)

## Scope and Limitations

This study is limited in that it inquires into the experiences of primarily middle-class, neurotypical, able-bodied, Indian participants who grew up in Hindu households. Therefore, while the results may be transferable to other immigrants, South Asians, those living in the Diaspora or other backgrounds, they are not generalizable. Also, this study does not assume that Indian music is more desirable or effective for Indian populations than European classical music or other genres of music.

Reflecting on the fact that the participants are from similar ethnic backgrounds, age range, and possess other similar characteristics as myself, I considered the dangers of what is often called backyard or insider research (Coupal, 2005; Creswell, 1993), as well as the benefits (Hooks, 1994; Jarvis, 1999; McMillan & Schumacher, 1994). To reduce possible distortions of the research results due to my own ethnic lens and filters, I wrote regular journals throughout the process of data collection, data analysis, and while writing the results. I also identified and wrote about the challenges in switching and separating roles between community member, fellow Indian, clinician and researcher.

Finally, I utilized a peer review with my dissertation advisor to identify, acknowledge, and address any potential areas of research bias.

## Data collection

I collected audio recordings of interviews and CCMI sessions, written transcripts, mandala drawings captured on digital camera, written observations and journal entries, and general information about context and location (found through web-based information on regional and local demographics). I addressed researcher self-reflexivity (called “Impressionistic Records” by Davis & Lawrence-Lightfoot, p. 67) through journaling thoughts and feelings related to my own experience. I also included my reaction to the participants’ experiences and responses throughout the analysis process, and used these journal entries as additional data.

## Data analysis

I categorized data from participants and sorted them into emergent themes, using quotes and paraphrases for aesthetic as well as informational reasons. The emergent themes were named using the specific language of participants and created based on repetitive comments, participants’ use of metaphors, individual and cultural rituals, and data triangulation between verbal accounts, observations, and imagery. I then searched for convergent and dissonant patterns between themes. I constructed the final narrative by considering the over-arching conception, structuring and organizing the narrative, adding form through stories and interpretation, creating coherence through sequencing information, and finally balancing the aesthetic whole.

I engaged in participant authenticity by discussing and confirming major themes with participants, making adjustments to names or labels when appropriate. In particular, I was interested in whether the names of these themes felt accurate and authentic. All participants reported the themes as accurate and made changes to primarily factual data and theme titles. Participants also checked factual errors by email and verified authenticity of the final narrative.

In summary, this particular study involved five portraits. This included a phenomenological investigation of Indian identity, researching several individuals in depth in a multiple case study format. Ethnographic methods of interviews, observations, and journaling were used, situating participants in a wide socio-cultural context. Final portraits included scientific as well as aesthetic considerations, consisting of participants’ descriptions, images, and my observations and reflections, woven into a first-person narrative.

# RESULTS

## The portraits

I present the results of this study in the form of abbreviated portraits. Each portrait is portrayed separately and include “Anjali,” “Purnima,” “Maya,” “Siddarth” (all

pseudonyms) and Sarav, who requested for his name to be used. Each full portrait is designed to be an artistic representation of the complete research context, process, and results. However, due to the limited scope of this paper, the complete portraits are not shown here, but are edited and summarized.

### *Purnima*

“Purnima” was a thirty-four-year-old Bengali woman pursuing post-doctoral work in Boston. In the initial interview, she told me that she was born in New Delhi. She lived there for seven years before immigrating to the west coast of the United States, finally settling down in a small town in Pennsylvania for the rest of her formative years. Only returning to India twice in her life, Purnima soon experienced discrimination and spent her childhood buffering acts of name-calling and exclusion. In her youth, she focused on efforts to connect to her Indian heritage through the limited local community, taking Indian dance lessons and speaking her native language, Bengali. She was particularly fond of Bengali folk music and not so fond of Hindustani classical music, which she felt “pushed” to study as a child. However, as an adult, she found herself feeling distant from the Indian subcontinent and gave up the ancestral practices she was exposed to as a child. Although her family identified as Hindu, Purnima called herself “more of a spiritual person.” Initially, Purnima expressed conflicting voices about her Indian identity. “I identify as an Indian. I don’t feel American.” However, she didn’t feel that she fit traditional expectations of what it means to be Indian. “I know that I don’t really fit. If I went to India, people would probably find me not very Indian.”

As we began the CCMI session, I asked Purnima to identify a positive quality of being Indian. “Ancient traditions,” she said. I guided her to take a few deep breaths and relax each part of her body. I asked her what images, body sensations or feelings came to her mind when she imagined the ancient traditions of India. “I see a temple and sculptures,” she said. Because of Purnima’s focus on ancient traditions and spirituality, I chose to play *Bhajeham Bhajeham* (2003, track 2). A devotional piece of music, it contained repetitive qualities, a positive mood appropriate for a supportive focus, as well as spiritual associations that I felt matched her intention (see Appendix A for a full musical analysis). As the singer’s voice soared effortlessly over the kirtan style chorus beneath her, I encouraged Purnima to bring the sounds into her image. With closed eyes fluttering in REM fashion, she easily connected to the music, having heard bhajans and devotional songs as a child. “There’s a class with a teacher and disciples. It’s very spiritual...” she said. “Bha-je-ham, bha-je-ham, bha-je-ham, shi-vo-ham,” repeated the women’s voices, chanting Sanskrit mantras to the God Shiva. “It’s pleasant...It feels calm... light...open...”

As the music continued, Purnima’s image of the temple grounds began to unfold. “There’s learning, not by being told, but by doing, doing what feels right. They’re learning through singing...” she said. “They’re wearing traditional clothes, vibrant but simple...but it’s not about what they’re wearing, it’s about the learning process.” She paused as the raga elaboration on the melody intensified and the singer’s voice rose. “Now it’s nighttime, they’re still there, it’s a long process...and there’s a big fire, like the kind used in rituals. The lighting is like twilight, but glowing red and orange, as if the fire is reflecting off gold. I can feel the cool breeze on my skin in my head and neck...” she

said. “I can breathe easier, it’s easier to breathe...” I noticed with interest that Purnima’s imagery mirrored ancient descriptions of the raga and the character it is associated with, particularly the time of day, setting, and auspicious and reverent mood (see Appendix A for more details).

Purnima’s identity was expressed through two themes. The first theme, *Temple of Ancient Knowing*, symbolized her appreciation for India’s ancient knowledge through images of a temple. This theme described a sense of inner knowing, preserved in the ancestral practices of art, spirituality, and meditation. “For me, the temple...it’s more about the artwork, spirituality, meditation, cultural programs, contemplation,” she said, after the imagery finished. “As I get older, I find that I’m more drawn to learning more about those old, ancient traditions that are still going on today,” drawn from “local stories,” and “personal histories.” She feared that the ancient traditions were “dying” in India and felt a responsibility to keep them “alive.”

The second theme, the art of *Learning by Doing*, manifested through her imagery of disciples learning. It represented an intuitive form of learning for her, one that was maintained and passed on through oral transmission, rich with mythology, history, and ancient Indian theory. “[It’s] more so than just going to a dance program and looking at a dancer,” she said with conviction. “So knowing, okay, where did those moves come from? [...] What’s the origin of that song, or verse? [...] There’s a lot of theory that you’re supposed to be taught...of the mythology and everything.”

In summary, Culturally Centered Music & Imagery facilitated a powerful inner connection with Purnima’s ancestral Indian heritage. It stimulated a reconnection to invisible ancestral threads of awe, wonder, and passion, beckoning her to carry on the survival of Indian traditions through contemplation and reverence in her own life.

### *Anjali*

“Anjali,” a twenty-nine-year-old Hindu woman, grew up in Calcutta. In the initial interview, she described herself as Brahmin and having a mixed socio-economic background due to her father’s refugee status during the 1947 partition of India. Speaking Hindi, Bengali and understanding Marati, she moved to Boston a few years ago to attend university, where she met her Jewish-American husband. Upon arriving as an immigrant in New England, however, she experienced intense hardships, facing harsh winters, racism, and exclusive social interactions. She became aware of her ethnic identity for the first time and found herself being labeled as Indian, something she had never thought of or experienced before. “When you’re in India, you just are. When you come here, you become Indian.” I asked her if she had any negative associations with Indian music, and she described not listening to bhangra, not “having much appreciation for” Carnatic, and “having difficulty with” songs by Tagore.

After hearing about Anjali’s background, I asked her to identify a positive quality about being Indian. “Power and strength,” she said. I guided her to focus internally on power and strength and to notice any visual, sensory, or kinesthetic images that arose. “It came before you asked. It’s a tiger,” she said. As she focused, I chose to play the song *Aaj Mera Jee Kardaa* from the movie *Monsoon Wedding* (Danna, 2007, track 2). Given her negative associations with regional music, I felt that film music might be more positive or neutral for her. Although the piece is intense, with references to the monsoon,

I felt that the strong, low bass beats, driving rhythms and articulation in the melody matched her qualities of strength and power (see Appendix B for more details). Because she identified as an artist, she felt most comfortable drawing her imagery rather than closing her eyes. I provided her with pastels and a blank mandala and encouraged her to let the image deepen and become clearer. As the music began, I guided her to let her image unfold on the paper in front of her.

“Aaj Mera Jee Kardaaaaaaa!!!” a powerful, solo male voice proclaimed in Punjabi, as the song began. Booming bass beats in Bollywood style and a dynamic vocal refrain formed the stimulus for Anjali’s imagery, as she positioned bright red and black pastels above the empty circle on the page before her. She hesitated for a moment, and I encouraged her to not think too much but to follow the music. I selected it to provide a mixture of containment and challenge to her psyche, match her intention, as well as evoke new insights from the cultural unconscious. Deftly, she drew three curves in the upper half of the circle, with small spheres underneath (see figure 1). As the music unfolded with Indian vocal elaborations, a group of women began chanting. I watched curiously as Anjali formed blood red peaks with black accents around the arcs. For Anjali, these symbols represented the three eyes of Kali, the Hindu, mother goddess of destruction.

Next, I chose to play a calmer, supportive piece to end the session. Also from Monsoon Wedding, the song, *Your Good Name*, is repetitive and gentle, with a haunting melody. It begins with a solo bamboo flute, slow and mysterious with subtle gamakas, or microtonal, ornamental slides. “Oh, I love this song,” she said, recognizing the romantic tune from the film. Immediately, she discarded the red pastel, picked up blue and purple, and created circular, “paisley” patterns in the lower half of the mandala. She told me later that these were reminiscent of the traditional rice paste floor designs she created while growing up in India. As the hints of raga-like melody wound up and down, conversing between sitar and flute, Anjali wove in various shades of ocean blue and lavender throughout her drawing.



Figure 1. Mandala drawing by Anjali

Supportive Culturally Centered Music and Imagery helped Anjali explore the affirming aspects of her evolving Indian identity. Her Indian identity was characterized by the following themes: *Female Power*, *Surrender*, being *Malleable*, and *Wholeness*. *Female Power* was represented by the three eyes of Kali, reminding her of an inner strength that she embodied through the devotional practices of Kali worship. “This is Kali. Red and black are her colors, which I associate with power and strength,” she told me after the imagery portion ended. The theme of *Surrender* expressed an attitude cultivated by Kali followers that helped Anjali to accept and transform pain and hardship in life. “With Kali, you have no choice but to surrender to her,” she said. “And once you surrender, everything gets taken care of by her.” The theme of being *Malleable*, according to Anjali, was represented by colors of blue, lavender and images of water in her mandala. It also symbolized her ability to “be true to oneself, to find her own path like water, as well as “deviating from the norm,” particularly cultural and gender norms. Lastly, the theme of *Wholeness* expressed Anjali’s sense of integration about her Indian identity despite still experiencing feelings of vulnerability and discrimination. The sessions also highlighted her efforts to embrace her “race and skin color, and identity,” figure out “who I am, as an Indian person period,” and integrate multiple parts of herself, “not just as an Indian but as an Indian woman.”

### *Maya*

“Maya,” a forty-one year old Hindu woman from Brahmin roots, was born and raised in a small, white, middle class, suburban town in New England. “Growing up, we were barely the only Indians around.” Despite the ethnocentrism and microaggressions she experienced as a child, her family maintained strong connections to India, traveling to Mumbai for extended visits every few years. Maya’s mother also led a Hindu “Sunday school” for her and her sister, where she learned to speak Marati and was exposed to Indian mythology and culture.

After coming out as “gay” in college, however, Maya struggled with finding community, avoiding Indian associations and cultural events. She also felt misunderstood in queer communities, which she found mostly “homogenous” and “white.” Although labeling herself as “Indian-American,” at our first meeting Maya was unclear about how to define herself. “It’s hard to say. I don’t really know what it means to be...American values, Indian values. Sometimes I’m just a scientist. So it’s kinda hard to define. Just very eclectic. Kaleidoscopic! [...] It’s a good feeling.” Because of her response, instead of just asking her to focus on a positive of being Indian, I decided to focus on her kaleidoscopic identity.

Her musical preferences ranged from light Indian classical music to American folk, rock and pop, classic rock, musicals, Bhangra, salsa mixes and other world musics. Because her musical tastes were so diverse, I asked for copies of her favorite selections ahead of time, which included the album *Call of the Valley* and selections from Peter Gabriel. As we began the Culturally Centered Music & Imagery session, I guided her to bring her attention inwards and relax her thoughts, feeling her head resting back on the pillow. Given her apprehension about imaging to unknown music, I chose *Ahir Bhairav*, a light Indian classical selection (Chaurasia, Kabra, & Sharma, 1997, track 1). A piece



from her library, I felt that its consistent raga and moods of joy, peace and pathos were supportive enough for her intention (See Appendix C for more details). I asked her to bring her attention to the positive kaleidoscopic identity she mentioned earlier, and as the music began, to let an image come forth. As the drone of the tanpura started, the plucked strings of the santoor slowly introduced the notes of the raga in free improvisation. Although the raga contained elements of dissonance and pathos, Maya experienced the piece as relaxing. “That kind of plucking, I can feel it relaxing, massaging me. I can feel it in the back of my head, kind of in this area,” she said, gesturing towards the base of her skull.

As the gentle sound of a bamboo flute entered, Maya’s visual imagery began to form. “Now I see a river, I can see a river flowing...the flute reminds me of Krishna,” she said, referring to the Hindu incarnation of God, Lord Krishna. I encouraged her to stay with the music as her imagery continued to unfold. “It’s a sunny day, peaceful, in Kashmir, in the valley. It’s early morning. I can hear the cows lowing...like they do when they need to be milked.”

Culturally Centered Music & Imagery helped Maya clarify her Indian identity and envision new possibilities for defining herself. This included the themes: *Mythological*, *Spiritually Hindu*, *Modern Interpretations of Ancient Myths*, an *Unconscious Divide*, and *It’s a Small World, After All*. *Mythological*, the first theme evoked by Indian musical idioms, represented a deep part of Maya’s consciousness, symbolized by images of Krishna, cows, rivers, and Kashmir. The theme connected her not just to ancient Indian myths, but people and situations in her everyday life. “I guess it’s the Indian part of me,” she told me after the imagery session finished. “It reminds me of when I went to Kashmir with my cousins and aunts, we all went and had a great time. [...] I used to read the Indian mythology and all of those stories—I loved them! The stories are all in my head. Sometimes I notice things happening with other people in the world, and it reminds me of those myths.” The theme of *Spiritually Hindu* represented “cultural or traditional feeling[s]” that were important to Maya, rather than all Hindu customs or practices. *Modern Interpretations of Ancient Myths* reflected multiple configurations of Maya’s “non-traditional” Indian identity through sci-fi, feminist, blues and transgender interpretations of ancient Indian lore. “I always look for like different versions of retellings or whatever. [...] Like different versions of Mahabharata, or different re-writings? Shiva or Vishnu—one of them took the form of a woman, and they mated [...]. So if you kind of look for it, you can find things in there.” The theme of an *Unconscious Divide* described an internal separation she felt about her identity, “that you can’t be Indian and gay.” Finally, *It’s a Small World, After All* symbolized Maya’s changing Indian identity within the larger context of an increasingly virtual and globalized world, including an emerging gay Indian identity.

### *Siddarth*

“Siddarth,” a thirty-seven-year-old computer scientist, was born in Vellore, India and raised by his Brahmin aunts and grandparents. Well versed and educated about world cultures, during our first interview, he told me that he was fluent in “Tamil, Hindi, Marathi, English, some French,” as well as Mandarin. Rejecting his Brahmin background, he “had all sorts of issues with the caste system and you know, like the

history of oppression that the Brahmins perpetrated. I just rejected it...*outright*.” Instead, identifying as a “skeptical or qualified Buddhist,” he was drawn to the United States and immigrated to the Boston area. “Primarily the U.S. meant independence. It was exciting to be in a new place and to have newer opportunities.” However, at our first meeting his sense of identity was contradictory, describing himself as “not-Indian,” yet not experiencing an “American self” or identity. At other times he also described a sense of “Indian-ness” in himself. “You know sometimes it’s hard to separate these things [...]. I haven’t been in many [social] situations where I’ve actually had to think deeply about who or what I am.”

Growing up surrounded by Indian classical music and Bharathanatyam dance, Siddarth was exposed to a variety of Indian artistic forms as a child. However, he had no interest in music or the arts a child, particularly popular music. Consistent with his attitude towards his own South Indian experience, he also found South Indian Karnatic music “a very narrow sort of discipline.” After finding a demo recording of the Bach Tocatta and Fugue for the first time as a teenager, he fell in love with European classical music. It was not until he grew older that he developed a taste for the music of his heritage, particularly North Indian Hindustani music.

As we began the CCMI session at our next meeting, I instructed Siddarth to get in a comfortable position and focus inwards. Utilizing Siddarth’s positive relationship with European classical music, I played a recording of the first movement of the String Serenade by Antonin Dvorak (1998, track 5). A supportive piece with mostly consonant harmonies and little change or tension (see Appendix D for more details), my intention had slightly evolved since the first few sessions. I felt that I first needed to introduce participants to the experience of imaging to music, observing their comfort level with the imagery process using familiar music. As the gentle violin melody began, I guided him to relax his neck and jaw, take a few deep breaths and tell me what he was experiencing.

He closed his eyes and listened thoughtfully and silently for several minutes. “Feels very joyous actually,” he began cheerfully. “Feels like I’m on the ocean, on a boat, on a sunny day, just pleasantly so...just bobbing on the ocean.” As the second musical theme began, Siddarth’s natural visual imagery deepened. “The ocean’s not very quiet, calm...but it’s not very choppy either,” he said slowly. Finally, as the opening melody returned, reaching into the upper octave of the violins, Siddarth’s experience expanded. “It’s expanding...feels like wide open space, pure space in all directions...” His arms and chest began to relax and open, and his face was drawn upwards. “Wide expanses...wide expanses...as wide as possible...” he repeated as if in a trance. “As wiiide as the universe!” he said, blissfully. As the music faded, Siddarth slowly returned to ordinary consciousness.

Next, I focused on the original research question. I asked him to bring his attention to the feeling of liberation he described in the initial interview, of being able to “pick and choose” aspects of his Indian identity. Because of his fairly neutral associations with Hindustani music, I chose to play a solo violin recording of Hindustani classical music by N. Rajam (2000, track 4). Although it contained elaborate melodic improvisations in the raga *Desh*, it was steady rhythmically, with an uplifting character and open texture throughout (see Appendix D for more details on music analysis). The Hindustani music created an immediate shift in his identity perception. “Um...I feel very Indian suddenly. It feels like I’m listening to this music as only an Indian can, someone

who can identify with all that this music represents...” he said softly. “It’s this strong affinity in music, like I’m resonating with the music. I’ve never heard this piece before, actually, but it feels very familiar somehow.” His imagery then became increasingly cultural. “The first few bars...the image that came to my mind was...you know like smoke rising up from incense sticks, you know the way they curl up and sort of waft off into open space,” said Siddarth. “I feel very light here, in the heart area,” he said, gesturing towards his chest.

As the tabla rhythm doubled and sped up with high-pitched slaps, Siddarth’s imagery changed direction one last time. “It’s suddenly very different. Just a moment ago it felt like I was a kid running around the house,” he said in disbelief. At this point, Rajam’s fingers were cascading up and down the violin. “It feels like the violin is doing the running, and the tabla is the parent that’s trying to hold the kids back.” As the tabla rhythms quadrupled to lightning-fast speed, his image evolved. “Now it seems that the parent—it feels like the parent has realized the kid is enjoying himself, or herself, and wants to join in!” he said with amazement as the rhythms reached a climax. As the piece ended with a graceful violin slide, Siddarth quickly returned to ordinary consciousness.

Culturally Centered Music and Imagery allowed Siddarth to explore and understand the conflicted and multiple voices of his global, Indian, and “not-Indian” identities. This included the following themes: *As Wide As the Universe*, *Rebirth*, *World Citizen*, *Aesthetic Resonance*, *Resiliency*, and *Reconciliation*. Music by Dvorak (1998) evoked images and themes from his “not-Indian” voice, characterized by the first two themes, *As Wide as the Universe* and *Rebirth*. “I think for me, coming to the U.S. was more than just a move, it was like a *Rebirth*, I was starting fresh,” he explained afterwards. “It was liberating. Starting off life on my own and doing things the way I want to.” This was represented by images of nature and feelings of liberation, describing Siddarth’s life and “almost American” identity in the United States. This led to the second theme, *As Wide as the Universe*, signifying the “space and expanse” he felt at living in the United States. The third theme, *World Citizen*, symbolized a reconstructed identity in response to his immigration, describing a sense of global identity beyond his ethnicity. “[I’m] maybe not so much American but more cosmopolitan. More of a world citizen as opposed to being just Indian.”

In contrast, Hindustani violin music evoked feelings and images related to Siddarth’s Indian identity. The theme of *Aesthetic Resonance* expressed his affinity towards Indian artistic and cultural symbols, describing a metaphoric and musical connection to his Indian heritage. “This music speaks to some of the aesthetics of being Southern Indian that I very much appreciate. When I listen to this music, I can set aside all the things about my Brahmin culture that I don’t admire.” The theme of *Resiliency* represented Siddarth’s efforts to overcome childhood oppression through culturally specific images of watching incense smoke. “When I went to temples with my family, they light the oil lamps, you know the various colors in the flame and the way you could see a little puff of smoke on top of it. [...] There’s all this commotion around me, people talking, chatting, fighting with each other. I could just sit and watch in the smoke.” Finally, the theme of *Reconciliation*, represented through images of parent and child, violin and tabla, touched upon Siddarth’s desire for personal resolution with his oppressive Brahmin upbringing. “I think my efforts now are more towards somehow

reconciling myself with aspects of my own upbringing, and finding some measure of peace with it.”

### *Sarav*

Sarav, a thirty-six-year-old, gay, software engineer, was born and raised in Coimbatore, India. In the initial interview, he identified as a “spiritual Hindu,” describing himself as being from a lower caste and growing up in poverty, “paycheck to paycheck.” Like the religious and caste diversity in his hometown, his musical tastes varied widely, from Indian film music, melodious devotional music and Gregorian chant to Cher and Britney Spears. Realizing he was gay as a young teenager, he attempted suicide. “Lying in the hospital bed and hanging on to the razor edge thin life line which divided life and death, while the doctors and my mom trying to save me. I would never want anyone going thru that experience. It’s dark, horrible, lonely, painful.” As a result, Sarav immigrated to the U.S. for financial stability and to live freely as a gay man.

Initially, he described his identity as Indian. “I have a very *strong* identity as an Indian. That doesn’t go away, no matter gay or straight, or my past experiences. Even though I’ve lived here for a long time, I’m still [at the] core, I’m just *Indian*.” However, he expressed mixed feelings around living in the U.S. For instance, upon arriving in Kentucky for his first job, he found himself a victim of discrimination as an ethnic minority for the first time in his life. “People were treating me very badly,” he said. “I thought, I’ll come here and people here would accept me with open arms. Christmas comes and Thanksgiving comes and people don’t invite me to anything and you’re alone. And it’s not what I grew up with.” However, immigrating to the U.S. also opened many doors for Sarav, where he said, “your horizons are expanded, [and] the personal freedom is invaluable.”

Sitting up, I asked Sarav to take a few breaths, let go of any distractions and bring his attention inward. He immediately closed his eyes and focused his attention. Like Siddarth, I decided to introduce him to imagery through playing the *Air* from the Bach D Major Orchestral Suite (2010), performed on original instruments. I chose this because of his affinity to many styles of music and for its gentle style, steady rhythms and colorful harmonies. As the violins soared over a slow, steady continuo bass, I asked him to describe any visual images, sensory experiences or feelings. He immediately connected to a visual and kinesthetic image. “I see...a man and a woman. They’re dancing and they’re romantically looking at each other.

As the hanging suspensions highlighted the dissonance between melodic lines, Sarav’s experience became located in time and place, tapping into the political and colonial history of India. “I feel like it’s some...Victorian thing. Something long back,” he said with a slow, dreamy voice. “I feel like I’m dancing with them or floating along with them. [...] I almost feel some cool breeze coming in while these people are dancing.” As the piece returned to D major, the tonic key, Sarav expressed feeling “very comfortable, very soothing,” “touching,” “very loving” he repeated, drawing out each word with feeling. After a few minutes, the piece concluded, and Sarav slowly opened his eyes.

As we continued the CCMI session, I turned to the original research question. I asked him to notice any images, feelings or sensations related to feeling Indian at the

core. “Yeah, I was back in my hometown,” he said, connecting to a visual image. “And I found myself wearing something very traditional, clothing like lungi, sarong, and a shirt. I feel...quiet and peaceful.” Based on Sarav’s positive connection to devotional, melodic Indian music, I chose to play a recording of *Invocation*, from the album *Shyam Smaranam* (Binita et al., 2006). It contained a simple form and texture, idiomatic ornamentation and a peaceful mood (see Appendix E for more details). My intent was for the music to expand upon his initial image and stimulate metaphors and symbols related to his core Indian identity.

The drone of the tanpura began and a deep, melodious, male voice entered, singing in melismatic, devotional style. I encouraged Sarav to let the image unfold with the music. “I’m traveling...I’m somewhere in the...among fields,” he said, dreamily. “It’s not in the city, it’s like...I feel a lot of green around me. And I’m cycling, bicycling through the roads, when I’m hearing this.” The flutes ended the piece in a flourish, playing gamakas up and down the scale like a bird. “The flute, especially that flute, brings me to that kind of...” he trailed off, before the next piece begins.

Because the *Invocation* was so short, I continued with a recording of *Vedic Chants* by Ravi Shankar (1997, track 3), both because of Sarav’s preference for devotional music and its repetitive and stimulating qualities. As the flutes gently improvised in a pensive raga, Sarav’s imagery shifted. “Shifted to a temple...I’m praying,” he said, slowly. Male voices entered, chanting Vedic scriptures in Sanskrit above the music. Sarav’s imagery became more vivid. “I can smell the camphor, and the smell of flowers and fruits, and oil burning, and...I see a lot of people.” As the chanting continued in hypnotic fashion, however, Sarav described feelings of confusion and nostalgia. “I’m there, but—I’m not understanding why I’m there. I don’t connect with that, what’s going on. I don’t understand what they’re saying, what they’re doing,” he said, irritably. “I’m just there because somebody asked me to go.” I asked him how it feels to be there, and he is reminded of similar rituals he witnessed in India. “It just feels very nostalgic being there. [...] It’s a ritual, yeah, versus you understand what’s going on.” As the music ended, Sarav opened his eyes and returned to ordinary consciousness.

Culturally Centered Music & Imagery allowed multiple layers, contexts, and conflicts within Sarav’s Indian identity to emerge. Indian devotional music evoked peaceful nature scenes from his hometown in the first theme, *Indian at the core*. Subthemes included *Your Heart is in Your Hometown*, symbolizing peace, love and longing for India. “Your heart is still back in your hometown,” he said afterwards, describing how immigrants always connect to their “motherland.” “Your point of reference is always going to be India.” The theme, *Talking to Nature, Talking to God* further deepened his experience, as he described a pathway to spiritual transcendence stemming from Indian childhood images. “Talking to nature is like talking to God. You can close your eyes and pray to God whenever you want to communicate with the God.” The Vedic chants, however, evoked images of temples, representing a theme of *Disconnection* due to his past experiences of caste and economic discrimination. “The Indian temples, predominately they use Sanskrit mantras and stuff. Which not many people understand. [...] They themselves discriminate. [...] What if a person wants to pray and doesn’t have money, then he has to stay in line for five hours to get into the temple?” he said in outrage, his voice hoarse.

In contrast, European classical music evoked images for Sarav in a Western context. “They were white, white people!” he said, surprised. Despite how soothing his imagery experience was, he was reminded of how white people have treated him. “Medical, service providers and teachers, they make assumptions about you, going by the stereotypes. [...] I’ve experienced like people coming and yelling at me at work...or making fun of me. People are treating me bad, like contempt, disgust, that’s how I felt. [...] Either I’m exotic or I’m dirty. I’m not considered equal at any point. If you don’t fit into the group box, you’re an outcast. He’s always judging himself against others, something he’ll never be—a white person.” In contrast, a theme of *Romance* was characterized by images of love and tenderness, relating to Sarav’s gay identity in the U.S. “For a lot of people in our community, the GLBT community, the core family doesn’t happen that easily. Especially for immigrants, it never happens—it’s very difficult, or very rare that it happens.” Finally, the theme of *Mutually Exclusive Distinct Identities* highlighted the internal split Sarav still felt. “I cannot accept myself as gay because I’m Indian.”

## Summary of Portraits

As I reflected upon all five portraits as a whole, each participant seemed to experience their Indian identities in multiple contexts, such as at an individual, group, universal, global or spiritual level (see Figure 2). For instance, themes such as *Resilience* seemed to express personal or individual desires, related to family and personality structure. Global themes like *World Citizen* and *It’s a Small World After All*, on the other hand, referred to a larger perspective, describing participants’ identities from a global context as well as their place in the universe. Themes including *Aesthetic Resonance* and *Indian at the Core* expressed various aspects of Indian identity, while those such as *Female Power*, *Rebirth* and *Disconnection* expressed the relationship between ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, caste, and American identity.

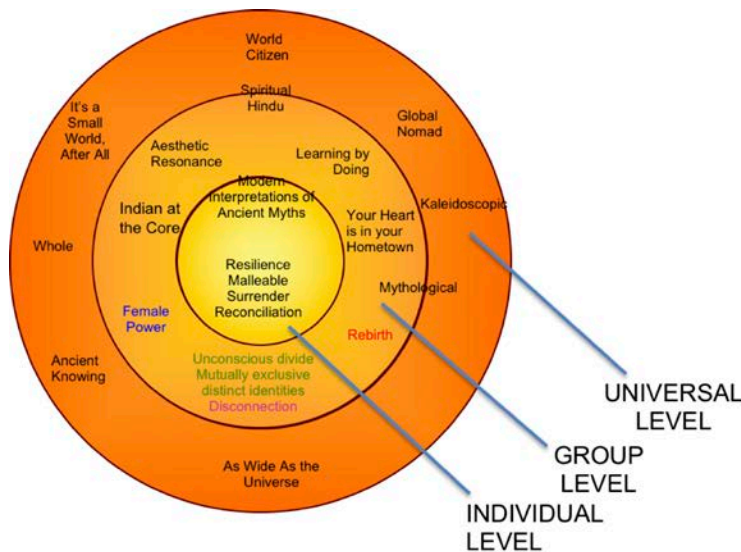


Figure 2. Summary of themes

I noticed that participants' interpretation of their Indian identity also changed depending on whether it was viewed through an Indian, American, gendered, queer, or global lens.

### *Indian context*

In an Indian context (Table 2), I found several themes portraying the basic nature of the participants' Indian identities. A *core* Indian identity, expressed by Sarav, Anjali, and Purnima, describes Indian identity as a central, primary identity, around which other identities and experiences revolve. These participants were very adamant to be called "Indian," not "Indian-American," regardless of where they grew up or how long they lived in the U.S. They also conveyed a singular sense of loyalty and attachment to their Indian heritage and identity, with individual themes of *Indian at the Core* and *Your Heart is in Your Hometown*.

An *Aesthetic* Indian identity, expressed by Sarav, Purnima, Maya, and Siddarth, describes a connection to India through engaging in or appreciating aesthetic or artistic forms, such as Bharathanatyam dance, regional and Bollywood music, Indian food and art forms, images of temples, and appreciation of architecture. Sunaina Maira (1997) calls this symbolic ethnicity. In fact, for Siddarth, *Aesthetic Resonance* with Indian cultural and art forms was one of the few ways that he related to being Indian at all.

Siddarth also embodied a *Philosophical* Indian identity, representing a reflective and intellectual outlook that is characteristically Indian. In his case, this refers to the traditional Indian qualities he valued such as acceptance and *Resilience*, his experience that Indians tend to accept difficulties in life more easily, as well as Buddhist concepts of impermanence and equanimity.

Purnima and Maya related to an *Ancestral* Indian identity, one that was connected to ancient practices, mythology, oral traditions, and ways of learning. For Purnima, this was expressed through individual themes of *Ancient Knowing* and *Learning by Doing*.

For Maya and Anjali, their Indian identity manifested as *Mythological*, describing a connection to India through ancestral, religious, and contemporary myths. For each woman, the light classical and Bollywood music conjured images of Krishna, Kali, and the Mahabharatha. However, the myths took on a unique role in each of their lives. Anjali used the story of Kali for spiritual enlightenment, tools for *Surrender* and a path to *Wholeness*, while Maya sought out modern, contemporary versions of ancient, Indian myths, incorporating feminism, sexual orientation, and her individual love for sci-fi in her interpretations.

Finally, Sarav, Anjali, Purnima, and Maya all described a *Spiritual* Indian identity, one that was either connected to religious practices, beliefs, and rituals or indicative of a broader perspective such as general meditation or prayer. Many portrayed themselves as a "spiritual Hindu," with themes of *Talking to Nature*, *Talking to God*, the *Female Power* of Kali, and images of Lord Krishna. Also, Siddarth did not use the term "spiritual," but nonetheless expressed a transcendent quality in his imagery through the theme, *As Wide as the Universe*.

Table 2: Indian themes

Indian identity	Themes
Core	Indian at the Core Your Heart is in Your Hometown
Aesthetic	Aesthetic Resonance
Philosophical	Resilience
Ancestral	Ancient Knowing Learning by Doing
Mythological	Surrender Wholeness Modern Retelling of Ancient Myths
Spiritual	Spiritual Hindu Talking to Nature, Talking to God Female Power As Wide as the Universe

#### *American context*

In an American context, the participants described feelings of freedom and liberation, as well as oppression and discrimination. For example, for Siddarth, the freedom and independence he experienced in the U.S. was so potent that he described his immigration as a *Rebirth*, identifying as being “not Indian” while living here. An American context allowed him to shed aspects of his Brahmin heritage and Indian identity that he found limiting and oppressive. Anjali and Sarav, on the other hand, recounted stories of subtle and overt discrimination in the U.S., being treated as “less than” and labeled “dirty” or “exotic” due to their Indian ethnicity. Sarav, in particular, expressed tension between freedom and discrimination, appreciating new opportunities and the ability to be open about his sexual orientation in the U.S., but never feeling a sense of belonging as a gay, Indian man.

#### *Queer and gendered context*

In a queer and gendered context, Sarav and Maya struggled with the lack of support from the white, queer communities in the U.S., being considered a “minority within a minority.” Sarav experienced his Indian and gay identities as *Mutually Exclusive Distinct Identities*, where Maya described an *Unconscious Divide* with being Indian and gay, frustrated with both sexism and the invisibility of queer identities in traditional Indian mythology.

#### *Global context*

Finally, participants described the significance of being Indian in a global context. For instance, Siddarth preferred to identify as a *World Citizen*, someone who is cosmopolitan and familiar with world cultures, rather than Indian. Others found themselves forced to redefine their Indian identities amidst an increasingly globalized world, such as Maya’s theme, *It’s a Small World After All*, where she endeavored to make sense of new, virtual,



online connections back and forth to India. Struggling to negotiate both his gay and Indian identities, Sarav, on the other hand, found himself feeling lost in a global context, a *Global Nomad*, going wherever the job was in search of belonging and navigating the borderlands of an impossible space.

As I began this research, I was under the impression that I fully understood my own ethnic identity, primarily identifying as an Indian-American woman and expressing my Indian heritage through ancient spiritual practices and music. However, as I heard the participants' stories and reflected on their experiences, I found myself questioning and re-evaluating areas of my identity that I was previously unaware of or had taken for granted. Participants' global identifications and creative configurations inspired me to consider a wider scope and context with which to view my own personal experience.

## DISCUSSION

This research study showed participants' experiences of ethnic identity to be complex and multi-layered. This includes data consistent with the basic principles of postmodern and postcolonial theories. Participants also expressed many, but not all, of the common themes found in Indian scholarship, including those relating to gender and queer identity. However, the expression of Indian, globalized, dialogical, reconstructed, and hybrid identities in an artistic and metaphoric form is new and noteworthy. In this light, Culturally Centered Music & Imagery proved to be an effective process for assessing the fluid, multiple, and multi-dimensional nature of the ethnic self.

Admittedly, I was not expecting to find data in alignment with stage models, which I interpreted to be too narrow and predictable. Yet, stages models of ethnic identity did more accurately describe aspects of some participants' experiences. I also found that participants embodied a sense of strength despite the obstacles or discrimination that they faced, despite much of the implied pathology in both modern and postmodern theories. Finally, I was uncertain what responses that Culturally Centered Music & Imagery would elicit in an Indian context, such as whether absolute or referential aspects of the music would influence the participants' imagery experiences. Participants also responded to both the absolute and referential aspects of the music. The technique revealed richness and depth of data, as well as its ability to access the cultural and ethnic unconscious through artistic symbols, images and metaphors.

### Musical implications

For all participants in this study, both the referential (Becker, 2006; Nattiez, 1990) and absolute (Stravinsky, 1974; Hanslick, 1957) qualities of the music appeared to influence their imagery. In other words, they experienced the internal elements of the music and their associations with the music not as separate entities, but interwoven. This is consistent with postmodern music researchers who advocate that both perspectives complement one another (Cook, 2001; Nattiez, 1990; Pavlicevic, 1997; Stige, 2002).

Purnima, for instance, fondly remembered listening to *bhajans* and *kirtans*, Indian devotional songs, as a child. During her CCMi session, she immediately connected to the religious genre of the music as soon as the music began, saying, "It's very spiritual." Her

referential associations seemed to contribute to her calm, soothing feelings, and inspiring images of temple grounds and learning.

From an absolute perspective, the steady rhythmic foundation and repetitive melodic chant also served to sustain the images and general feeling for her. “It just seemed very repetitive, but I think it was good to help sustain [...]—this image, because if it did change, then probably that image might be lost,” she said. The piece was not “foreign” but contained idioms she was musically acculturated to and comfortable with. In this context the vocal elaborations characteristic of Indian classical music were not disruptive or confusing, as they might be to a listener unfamiliar with these musical elements (Hanks, 1998). Instead, they were appropriately stimulating, serving to deepen and expand her imagery. For instance, when singer Bombay Jayashri (2003, track 2) intensified the basic melody in *Bhaje ham, Bhaje ham* by leaping an octave and adding ornamentation, Purnima was about to speak but hesitated for an instant, listening. Her image then shifted from daytime to nighttime, and she brought herself into the scene for the first time, psychologically an important step in the process of fully engaging with her internal world.

Anjali clearly had positive referential associations with both selections used and immediately recognized them from a Mira Nair film. “Oh, I love this song!” she said upon hearing it. “From *Monsoon Wedding*, right?” The steady beat and repetitive quality of the melodies in *Aaj mera jee karda* also served to sustain her feeling of strength and power, symbolized by a red and black Kali. “Once you stopped it, I noticed I picked up red, and I know I put it down, because I wasn’t feeling it with the music at that time.” Her image of water as malleable, trickling and destructive is also interesting given the music’s themes of water, rain, and the power of the monsoon season to both bring relief and flooding in the film. From an absolute perspective, the tension in the opening melody and the driving rhythms also seemed to contribute to the intensity, stimulating images of mythical destruction and unknown symbols of fire, shapes, lines, and anger in Anjali’s drawing.

Initially, Siddarth’s response was also referential, based on his childhood experiences of growing up surrounded by Indian music, saying that although he sometimes fell asleep and did not listen to the music, “*it stays with you.*” The drone of the tanpura and unmetered improvisation typical of Hindustani music also evoked referential associations for Siddarth. He described feeling “very *Indian* suddenly” and listening to the music as “someone who can identify with all that this music represents.” Despite the fact that he had never heard the particular piece of music used in his session before, it aroused in him a feeling of ethnic familiarity described by researchers (Niewiadomska-Bugaj & Zeranska-Kominek, 1993). “I’ve never heard this piece before, actually, but [...] it feels very familiar somehow.”

The Dvorak Serenade (1998, track 5) also evoked referential responses from Siddarth, eliciting feelings and memories reminiscent of his travels in Europe, the deep, blue Mediterranean Sea, being alone in nature, and a connection to something greater. “Feels like wide open space, pure space in all directions [...] wide expanses,” he said. “Another time [...] I was in Switzerland. [...] It was just the mountains and the snow, yeah, it was a similar feeling.” While he clearly had positive referential associations with European classical music, however, he identified the “autonomy” and “purity” of the music, or the absolute qualities, as eliciting such powerful images for him. “[The music]

seems almost autonomous, [...] it's so pure, not related to mundane, day-to-day reality. [Western classical music] seems, you know, on a completely different, I don't know, dimension." For Siddarth, European classical music seemed to connect him to a universal realm, with images of nature and the ocean.

The absolute qualities of both the Hindustani raga and the Dvorak (1998, track 5), however, also deepened Siddarth's imagery experience. For example, while listening to the Dvorak, he initially visualized a peaceful image of "bobbing on the ocean" in a boat. However, as the music developed, returning to the main theme an octave higher with additional counterpoint, his image expanded. "It's expanding, [...] wide expanses...wide expanses...as wide as possible...as wide as the universe!" he said. In another example, N. Rajam's violin improvisation became virtuosic, flying up and down the fingerboard with great speed. Siddarth's image then shifted from quietly sitting and watching incense to one of himself as a child running around the house. "It's suddenly very different. Just a moment ago it felt like I was a kid running around the house."

For Maya, the sounds of gamakas (melismatic ornamental idioms characteristic of Indian classical music) immediately stimulated referential responses from her. "Just that d-ee—ee, that noise," she says, "it's kinda relaxing, it's kind of massaging. [...] I guess it's the Indian part of me." The flute also "reminds" her "of Krishna," she said, the instrument and its Indian style of playing leading to culturally specific themes, *Spiritual Hindu* and *Mythological*.

Sarav is the one participant in the study who had a negative referential response to the music. This was specifically due to the caste origins and socio-economic dynamics surrounding the Sanskrit Vedic chants. Although the piece contained a simple and supportive musical structure from an absolute perspective, his associations overpowered any reactions to the musical elements. Instead, the chants reminded him of experiences of discrimination and exclusion. "They don't let you into the temple, up to this level. Nobody else can go except these Brahmin priests, and you have to pay them for blessings. That really doesn't sit well with me when I go to temples. [...] What if a person wants to pray and doesn't have money, then he has to stay in line for five hours to get into the temple."

In the devotional Hindu flute selection and the Bach Air (2010), interestingly, Sarav responded primarily to the absolute qualities of the music. This included the simple form, repetition and gentle melody containing almost no variation or sudden change. In fact, Sarav was very clear about the musical qualities that appealed most to him. "I like something very melodious with not many variations. [...] I don't like 'Arghhhhhh!' This doesn't work that well. [...] Same thing with classical music, and suddenly you get so scared because they are going like, 'Bam ba bam!'"

## The Cultural Unconscious

In GIM and other music evoked imagery techniques, transpersonal experiences and content are common and expected. However, in GIM, the imagery has traditionally been interpreted from a Jungian perspective, as universal or archetypal (Javier & Rendon, 1995; Kimbles & Singer, 2004). Anjali, Purnima, Maya, and Sarav's experiences, on the other hand, are manifestations of the ethnic or cultural unconscious (Adams, 1996; Hanks, 1992; Henderson, 1990; Herron, 1995; Javier and Rendon, 1995; Kimbles and

Singer, 2004). They are not only mythical and spiritual, but also culturally and ethnically specific.

In Anjali and Maya's portraits, their experience was consistent with Javier and Rendon's definition of the ethnic unconscious, containing raw material of ethnic myths and legends (1995). For example, Anjali's images included the eyes and colors of Kali, a female Hindu goddess whose myth represents elements of destruction, pain, surrender, and enlightenment in her followers. For Maya, the ethnic unconscious manifested as images of Lord Krishna, peaceful valleys, and lowing cows, representing traditional Hindu myths. The ethnic unconscious also expressed itself in her own recreated, contemporary versions of Indian mythology.

Purnima, Siddarth, and Sarav's images more accurately fit descriptions of the cultural unconscious, expressed through unconscious images representing "historical memory" and the "manifest pattern of the culture" (Henderson, 1990, p. 103). For instance, Purnima imagined a temple, an Indian icon, symbolizing cultural practices of meditation, contemplation, and the arts. She also visualized an ancient Indian form of learning and embodied the Hindu notion of the self as witness. Siddarth's detailed images of incense smoke are also culturally specific, reminiscent of everyday uses of incense in India. Sarav also vividly imagined the Indian icon of the temple, full of "camphor," "the smell of flowers and fruits, and oil burning." The scene, however, taps into negative aspects of the cultural unconscious for him, patterns of discrimination and oppression based on a centuries old caste system.

Within the context of Jungian archetypes, ordinarily many of the participants' images would be interpreted as aspects of the personal or collective unconscious. Certainly, Sarav and Siddarth's visuals of nature, the ocean, open space and a beautiful green countryside are universal or global images. Participants' imagery also embodied archetypes from the collective unconscious such as parent and child, guru and disciple, as well as layers of the personal unconscious, such as Siddarth's insights and feelings about his relationship to his parents. However, many of the participants' spiritual or transcendent experiences are more accurately expressions of the cultural and ethnic unconscious.

For example, in Purnima's portrait, the spiritual nature of her experience manifested in a unique way. She crossed barriers of space and time to ancient Indian lands, experiencing a feeling of deep tranquility. Characteristic of a non-ordinary state of consciousness, the colors and light in her imagery were also exceptionally vivid. "The lighting was as in twilight but glowing red and orange, as if the fire that was lit was reflecting off gold," she said. Through image, sound, story, and artifact, she found herself transported to a world of ancient Indian temples, music, sculpture, and learning. In Sarav's session, I was also intrigued to find the music of Bach (2010) evoke culturally specific European images, touching into a layer of a European or Victorian cultural unconscious. Upon listening to the *Air*, he immediately imagined a white, Caucasian couple dancing in the nineteenth century. "It's some...Victorian thing. It's not current, it's like old, old...old. Something long back...[...] They were white, white people!" he said.

In these portraits, Culturally Centered Music & Imagery evoked ethnic identity-based, multi-dimensional, spiritual, and culturally specific content. These internal, spiritual, ancestral, and mythical layers of the participants' experiences provide support

for the cultural or ethnic unconscious and suggest the potential for such an approach to access this internal, collective space. Contrary to Hanks' (1992) study that suggested that the cultural context of the music does not necessarily stimulate cultural imagery in music evoked imagery, the results of this study suggest otherwise. In other words, the goal or intention of the session, the ethnic identity of the recipient, as well as both absolute and referential aspects of the music seem to affect whether the imagery is produced at a personal, cultural, ethnic, or archetypal level. In this case, the intention of exploring ethnic identity in conjunction with music that participants' associate with their ethnicity seemed to contribute to stimulating imagery at the level of the ethnic unconscious.

## Music Therapy Implications

Given an increased emphasis on cultural competence and sensitivity in music therapy (Baines, 2012; Bradt, 1997; Brown, 2002; Forinash, 2001; Hadley, 2013; Hadley & Norris, 2016; Kim & Whitehead-Pleaux, 2016; Nogawa, Tanaka, & Tanaka, 2012; Shih, 2011; Short, 2005; Swamy, 2014; Valentino, 2006; Whitehead-Pleaux & Tan, 2017), serving clients in a postcolonial, globalized world poses specific challenges for music therapists. This is especially true given the lack of culturally centered music therapy theories, tools, assessments, interventions, and curricula. The first qualitative music therapy study with Indian adults, the results of this study contribute to a theoretical foundation for the development of culturally centered receptive music therapy techniques, as well as a clinical example of music therapy with members of the Indian Diaspora.

However, it should be noted that Culturally Centered Music & Imagery is not necessarily appropriate for all settings, ethnicities and cultures and should not be used as such. Instead, the participants' diverse personal, ethnic, and referential associations with the music should be taken into consideration. Music therapists should use a contextualized approach with multicultural populations versus a one-size-fits-all model (Ansdell & Pavlicevic, 2004). The unexpected response of Sarav towards the Vedic chants, for example, contradicts the notion of music as one universal language, or even as one cultural or ethnic language. This suggests that the concept of "universal" music is insufficient for music therapy interventions with ethnically diverse clients. In addition, creating ethnic archetypes or solely relying on client preferential music, as traditional music therapy methods advocate, also may be insufficient in today's world.

The results also show how a client's ethnic and musical identity impacts their experience of receptive music therapy techniques. This is consistent with the theories of community music therapists (Ansdell, Pavlicevic, 2004; Ruud, 1998) who advocate the importance of ethnic identity in the music therapy process. As Even Ruud wrote, this involves choosing "the right music for our clients—the proper music to empower people within their own cultural context" (1998, p. 47). The results also support describing and interpreting musical analysis and syntax within the music's own cultural framework as Ruud (1998) and Stige (2002) suggested. The data also support music therapists being aware of culturally agreed upon musical meaning established by a culturally specific group.

The material from the ethnic and cultural unconscious evoked in this study is also significant for the music therapy field. It supports the idea that music therapists should

consider both referential and absolute qualities in choosing appropriate and effective music for clients, as Mercedes Pavlicevic (1998) suggests. This seems especially relevant to the use of pre-recorded music and receptive music therapy techniques. As the exploration of the personal unconscious transformed the face of Western psychology and influenced the field of music therapy (Bonny, 1978a; Bruscia, 1998; Nordoff-Robbins, 1977; Priestly, 1994), the cultural and ethnic unconscious provides an exciting new realm of relatively uncharted territory for Music & Imagery and GIM practices. This study shows how acknowledging and exploring the cultural and ethnic unconscious within a music therapy context can reveal powerful and mythical material related to clients' internal experiences of their ethnicity, beyond external labels and cultural norms.

## Clinical Implications

The results of this study also provide insight into the needs of the five participants and suggest how CCMI might be used to support them clinically, in a variety of ways. In Anjali, Sarav, Purnima and Maya's case, CCMI could have been a valuable resource to help them with a sense of positive "ethnic esteem" (Phinney, 2004). This might have been particularly useful when they were faced with the obstacles of discrimination and culture shock during their immigration and experiences as minorities. For example, Anjali's positive associations with North Indian film or Bollywood music could have helped her access internal resources through Supportive CCMI while she was struggling with her acculturation process. Melodic, Indian, devotional music could have been used to support Sarav in internalizing a positive sense of Indian-ness when he was excluded by the white community in Kentucky. Bengali folk music might have been used in the context of Culturally Centered Music & Imagery to help Purnima re-connect to her heritage and find a way to manifest her inner sense of ancient Indian knowledge in her everyday life.

CCMI could also be used to explore ethnic identity further. For example, Indian music that Anjali had negative associations with, such as South Indian *karnatic* or the songs of Rabindranath Tagore, might be used in the context of music evoked imagery to explore areas of tension within her ethnic identity. This could include areas such as internalized oppression or cross-cultural conflicts with her Jewish husband. The Indian music that Purnima had mixed associations with, such as her memories of being pushed to study Hindustani classical music, might be used to uncover internal obstacles to developing her desired relationship with her ethnic self. Popular, East-West fusion music, which Maya avoided, might have been used to help her explore and strengthen a sense of globalized identity, where she was able to manifest being both Indian and gay.

Siddarth already had an idea of how Hindustani music could help him accept difficult aspects of his Brahmin upbringing. "I'm realizing [...] you've got to stop rebelling against aspects of your own upbringing. [...] There is nothing I can do to change the past, the Brahmin culture is what it is. [...] I don't think it's useful, or even a *healthy* thing to do. [...] I think my...my efforts now are more towards...somehow reconciling myself with aspects of my own upbringing, and finding peace, and finding some measure of peace with it. [...] When I listen to this music...I'm able to do that."

## Directions for Future Research

Given the narrow range of the participants' religious and socio-economic backgrounds in this study, further research using Culturally Centered Music & Imagery with Indian adults should include more diverse religious backgrounds such as Muslim, Sikh, Jain or Christian Indians living in the U.S. In addition, because the majority of Indians in the U.S. are middle class, able bodied, neurotypical and Hindu, the experiences of those from lower socio-economic, neurodiverse, disabled, working-class, Muslim, transgender, gender queer or gender non-conforming backgrounds tend to be marginalized and will be important voices to include in future studies. In addition, as described in the above section, a study focusing on the clinical needs of participants, such as acculturation difficulties, immigration struggles, depression or anxiety due to discrimination, challenges with negotiating multiple identities, family conflict or marital problems due to cultural or ethnic differences would be a fruitful next step.

Culturally Centered Music & Imagery may be beneficial for other South Asian, Asian, or various cultural and ethnic populations as well. However, it would be important to conduct preliminary research or an ethnographic study examining the appropriateness of a receptive music therapy technique before embarking upon such a study. Non-musical considerations should also be addressed in determining whether individual, group, clinical or non-clinical settings, for instance, would be most appropriate.

## CONCLUSION

From a universal or personal perspective, using European classical music may be sufficient, especially for GIM experiences with specific socio-cultural populations. However, if one acknowledges the role of cultural and social context, and in particular the existence of the cultural and ethnic unconscious, a culturally centered approach is required. This is the first study of its kind to use referentially selected music to elicit imagery from the ethnic unconscious. In other words, the results suggest that the cultural elements of the music itself and each person's socio-cultural associations with the music are important in addressing the clinical and musical needs of ethnically diverse populations. In addition, this is the first music therapy study to evoke metaphoric and symbolic descriptions of participants' ethnic identities. Specifically, the results show how Culturally Centered Music & Imagery has the potential to serve as an arts-based assessment of ethnic identity. This implies that each person's relationship with their ethnicity and other socio-cultural identities are important factors in the music-evoked imagery process, and that simply substituting a client's native music for traditional GIM programs may not be effective. Instead, the results support the consideration of context, identity and meaning for each person, ethnic population, and music selection. Psychodynamic theorists recognized the role of the personal and collective unconscious in influencing the mental health and level of functioning of the individual. I hope that this study may provide a contribution toward recognizing the power of music in accessing the ethnic unconscious and understanding its role in ethnic well-being and health.

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## Appendix A

### CCMI MUSIC SELECTION FOR PURNIMA

<i>Music Analysis for Purnima's Session</i>	
Title, composer, performer	Excerpt from <i>Bhajeham, Bhajeham</i> , based on a traditional Sanskrit chant, performed and arranged by Bombay Jayashri (2003, track 2).
Tala/meter	Khandu Chapu: 5 beat cycle
Raga/scale	Nattai Kurunji  Arohana (ascending) S R2 G3 M1 N2 D2 N2 P D2 N2 S (A B C# D G F# G E F# G A)  Avarohana: (descending) S N2 D2 M1 G3 M1 P G3 R2 S (A G F# D C# D E C# B A)
Rasa: Emotional taste, flavor, "essence".	Sringara: Auspicious, love, devotion (Rangacharya, 2007)
Time of day/season:	Night: generous, loving, enjoyment, pleasant feeling (Rangacharya, 2007)
Laya (tempo, speed)	moderate
Range	Moderate vocal range
Instrumentation	Tamboura (drone), voice, mrindangam (drum), cymbal/bell
Form	Cyclical, repetitive mantra, concert version of kirtan or bhajan (devotional song)
Timbre	open, non nasal singing

Tension:	Irregular meter in 5 cycle beat
Texture	Clear, group "chorus"/solo improvisation on top of a drone
Melody: song melody, intervallic motion	Repetitive mantra, close intervals, consonant harmonies between melody and drone
Lyrics	Bhaje ham, bhaje ham, Bhaje ham, Shivoham Om Namah Shivaya  No literal translation, a combination of syllables symbolizing elements, chakras; a well known chant worshipping the God Shiva
Function/genre	Devotional chants, religious in nature
Potential for non-ordinary state of consciousness	The repetitive chants are designed to evoke a non-ordinary state of consciousness, or union with the divine; the tamboura also has an eternal quality, with overtones also supporting a spiritual or divine state; the quarter tones, gamakas (slides) and microtonal elaborations in the melody and ragas are designed to also evoke altered states
Music & Imagery level	Supportive for populations familiar with bhajans and kirtans

## Appendix B

### CCMI MUSIC SELECTION FOR ANJALI

<i>Music Analysis for Anjali's Session</i>		
Title, Composer, Performer	Excerpt from <i>Aaj mera jee karda</i> (Today my heart desires), the theme song from film <i>Monsoon Wedding</i> , composed by Mychael Danna (2007, track 2), sung by Sukhwinder Singh	<i>Your Good Name</i> , from <i>Monsoon Wedding</i> , composed by Mychael Danna (2007, track 5)
Tala/meter:	Cycle of 2 to 4 beats, fast, driving rhythms, consistent throughout	Dadra tal/ meter of 6 beats in semiclassical and light Indian music, simple and clear rhythms in drums and melody
Raga/scale	No established raga is used; however, the melodies are based on a raga-like structure, which is approximated below  A section: n1 S R1 S (G A Bb A C B C Bb A G)  B section: S R2 S d2 n2 S (A B A F# G# A)	No known raga is used; however, the raga-like scale is approximated below  ar: S R G1 M P N1 D2 P D2 S ascending: D E F G A C B A B D  av: S N1 D2 P M G1 D2 P M G1 S descending: D C B A G F B A G F D
Rasa/mood	No associated rasa; however in the context of the film, the mood is related to the power of water to provide relief, catharsis from the unbearable heat as well as relentless flooding	This scene from the film is associated with longing, love, and desire as the wedding planner falls in love with the maid and tries to approach her by asking her what her "good name" is
Time of day/season:	Monsoon	Monsoon
Laya (tempo, speed)	Moderately fast, consistent tempo throughout	Moderate
Range	Moderate	Medium melodic range
Instrumentation	Male solo voice, men and women's chorus, synthesizer, acoustic and digital drums, bass, strings, shennai (reed instrument) bells/tambourine	Flute and sitars, tabla, bowed strings, tanpura (drone)
Form	Bollywood/fusion with bhangra style rhythms intro A B A C A C outro	A, A1, A2 Cyclical, as the melody does not change The A section is reminiscent of a short alap (North Indian free improvisation). A1 is similar to the

		jhod section, adding more texture, and A2 is similar to the gat (entrance of percussion, metered)
Timbre	Electronic/synthesized sound mixed with acoustic instruments	Acoustic
Tension:	In the A section, there is some melodic tension in between the intervals, as well as driving rhythmic tension.	The tritones between F and B are typical of a raga with associations of twilight, a combination of two scale patterns, and characteristic of a complex mood.
Texture	Generally thick but varies by section, solo voice or chorus juxtaposed with strong, rhythmic drumming, with strings and synthesizers providing supporting melodies.	Thin, clear. Initially solo instruments play independently, then a drone is added, and finally the drum and gentle hints of melodic accompaniment are included.
Melody:	The main melody has close intervals and stepwise motion.	Melodic motifs are repeated throughout, with only a slight change from G1 to G2 (F to F#) for a hint of brightness
Function/genre	Entertainment, dance/ film music, popular	Film, entertainment, popular
Music & Imagery level	Re-educative	Supportive



## Appendix C

### CCMI MUSIC SELECTION FOR MAYA

<i>Music Analysis for Maya's Session</i>	
Title, Composer, Performer	<i>Ahir Bhairav</i> from the album <i>Call of the Valley</i> (Chaurasia, Kabra, & Sharma, 1997, track 1).
Tala/meter:	Cycle of 2 to 4 beats, fast, driving rhythms, consistent throughout.
Raga/scale	Ahir Bhairav  Arohana: S r G m P D n S' (A Bb C# D E F# G A)  Avarohana: S' n D P m G r S (A G F# E D C# Bb A) (Bor, 1999)
Rasa/mood	Peace, joy and pathos, awakening (Dipavali, n.d.)
Time of day/season:	Early morning
Laya (tempo, speed)	Slow in the alap section, then moderate tempo
Range	Moderate
Instrumentation	Santoor, slide guitar, tanpura, flute
Form	Not a pure classical form, but is similar to the alap (free improvisation), jhod and gat (rhythmic and faster) sections. A A1 B B1
Timbre	Acoustic Indian instruments

Tension:	Some tension with the pathos in the raga and the augmented 2 <sup>nd</sup> interval
Texture	Simple and fairly thin, including a drone with mostly one solo instrument at a time. Added texture with tremolos in the santoor
Melody:	Mostly stepwise motion
Function/genre	Aesthetic, cultural, religious/ light classical genre
Music & Imagery level	Mostly supportive, given the consistency of the raga throughout, particularly for populations enculturated with traditional South Asian music. However, because the raga itself has a mixture of moods, it may be heard more as pathos, in which case this piece would fall under the Re-educative category.

## Appendix D

# CCMI MUSIC SELECTION FOR SIDDARTH

<i>Music Analysis for Siddarth's Session</i>		
Title, Composer, Performer	<i>Allegro</i> from the Serenade for Strings by Antonin Dvorak (1998, track 5)	An excerpt from Chaiti, performed on the raga <i>Desh</i> , by N. Rajam (2000, track 4)
Tala/meter:	4/4	Keharwa: cycle of 8 beats commonly used in light classical and folk music (Goel, 2007)
Raga/scale/key	E major	Desh  Arohana: Sa Re Ma Pa Ni Sa (C D F G B C) Avarohana: Sa ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Re Ga Ni Sa (Sounds of India, 2000) (C Bb A G F E D E B C)
Rasa/mood	cheerful	Sweet and soothing
Time of day/season:	n/a	monsoon
Laya (tempo, speed)	Moderate	Moderate, easy
Range	Wide	Moderately wide range of melodic intervals
Instrumentation	Violins, violas, cellos, basses	Violin, tanpura and tabla
Form	A B C A1	Alap, jhod (slow, rhythmic), gat (entrance of percussion, faster), typical of Hindustani classical forms
Timbre	Acoustic bowed	Acoustic

Tension:	Only a little tension in the harmonies during the transition to the recapitulation	Not much tension in the raga itself, but some tension arising in the rhythmic and melodic improvisations
Texture	Generally rich and thick, with string parts divided	Fairly clear, solo and tabla accompaniment. However the texture becomes increasingly thicker as the improvisations become more elaborate
Melody:	The main melody has close intervals which then expand as wide as octaves at some points	Wide range of melodic elaborations on the raga
Function/genre	Autonomous, aesthetic, European classical, formal, original associations with aristocracy	Aesthetic, autonomous, Indian classical, formal, original associations with higher castes
Music & Imagery level	Supportive	Supportive, particularly for those familiar with South Asian classical music styles

## Appendix E

### CCMI MUSIC SELECTION FOR SARAV

<i>Music Analysis for Sarav's Session</i>			
Title, Composer, Performer	<i>Invocation</i> from the album Shyam	<i>Vedic Chants</i> from the album Chants of India by Ravi Shankar (1997, track 3)	<i>Air</i> from the Orchestral Suite No. 3 by J.S. Bach (2010)
Tala/meter:	Unmetered, no tal	No specific tal or meter, moderate and steady tempo of chanting	2/4
Raga/scale	No raga is listed, but the notes imitate Yamuni Kalyani Ascending: s r g p m p d S (Rao, 1984) a b c# e d e f# g# a  Descending: S n d p m g M r s (Iyer, 1976) a g# f# e d c# d# b a	No specific raga is listed, however the notes used are: S r M P D n S  (C Db F G A Bb G C)	D major
Rasa/mood	Auspicious, love and spiritual desire	No specific rasa is indicated without a definite raga. However, the mood follows a pattern of several similar ragas, which highlight both pathos and serenity.	Positive, calm, expansive in a European classical context
Time of day/season:	Night	None indicated	Moderate, slow walking speed
Laya (tempo, speed)	Slow	Moderate	moderate
Range	Narrow melodic and intervallic range	Medium melodic range,	Medium melodic range
Instrumentation	Male voice, tanpura, flute, keyboard	Vocals, flute, tanpura	Violins, viola, cello, bass, and harpsichord
Form	Intro, A, tag	Intro, chanting	AABB
Timbre	Acoustic, vocal	Acoustic, nasal vocal chanting	Acoustic, original baroque style instruments

Tension:	none	Intervallic and melodic tension between the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> scale degree	In the B section, some tension and dissonance on hanging suspensions between the violin sections, which is then resolved as soon as the melody continues
Texture	Clear, solo voice, instrumental accompaniment and drone, simple I-V harmony	Thick vocals in unison, overlapping with flute melodies	Clear with single melodies, basso continuo and alternating voices between the violin sections
Melody:	main melody has close intervals, stepwise motion	Close melodic intervals	Stepwise with some large leaps
Function	Aesthetic, devotional song to Lord Krishna (lyrics from traditional Sanskrit sloka describing Krishna's ornaments, fragrance, qualities, etc.)	Aesthetic, devotional	Autonomous, aesthetic
Music & Imagery level	Supportive	Supportive or Re-educative, depending upon the reference point of the listener	Supportive