

Author biography

Becky Dowson is a Music Therapist and is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Nottingham. She completed her PhD in 2020, focusing on group singing for people with dementia and their carers.

© The Author(s) 2022
 Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
 DOI: 10.1177/13594575221103501

Jessica Collier and Corrina Eastwood (eds); foreword by Savneet K. Talwar, *Intersectionality in the Arts Psychotherapies*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London, 2022: ISBN 9781787754355 (ePub ebook), £29.99

Reviewed by: Rachel Darnley-Smith LGSM (MT) PhD , Freelance Music Therapist, London, UK

As a Black woman, I do not have the luxury of ignoring racism or being patient with slow-moving change. This is urgent. This is an everyday struggle and so it must be an everyday fight. Let us take care of the most marginalized among us and recognize that if they are well, all will be well. Black lives matter, inclusive of all identity intersections.

Every. Black. Life. Matters.

– Gipson et al. (2020)

I am writing this review during the heatwave of summer of 2022, at a time when as a White European cisgendered financially secure gay woman, it has become impossible to ignore the links between the causes of climate change, racism, war, disease, sexual violence, the price of oil, monetary inflation, hunger, climate and global injustice. The facts of this matter have created a sense of urgency to do something that is on a different scale to previous political activism I have been drawn to. The modern expression ‘woke’ as originating in ‘woke up’ could not be more apt. But who is it that needs to wake up?

The recent report of a survey compiled by members of the British Association of Music Therapy (BAMT) provides an invaluable snapshot of the music therapy profession in the United Kingdom during 2020 (Langford et al., 2020). The demographic information collated shows the profession as largely made up of White individuals (86%) trained in classical music (87%), who received private paid for music lessons (91.16%) and were not first-generation graduates (59.53%). The observation that the profession has historically been represented by White classical musicians and that this continues to be the case should come as no surprise to anyone currently living in the United Kingdom. The cost of this intersection of Whiteness, economic security, together with the dominance of Western classical music, means that for any number of reasons, in recent decades it is likely that the profession has lost a wide range of diverse knowledge, skills and experience beyond White culture, even before potential therapists are accepted on to a training. The problem with this state of affairs is the problem with any dominant culture, professional or otherwise; that is the tendency for insiders to stay comfortably within and to perpetuate its value systems, generally to believe its truths, and to hide from any notion of power or privilege. The impact of this tendency upon practice has begun to be challenged widely over the past two decades, and in recent years especially in music therapy literature published in North America therapy by therapists of colour. However, it must be acknowledged that change towards a widespread consciousness and acknowledgement of the impact of colour and class privilege upon the directions our profession have taken, and who this concerns, has been slow (Coombes and Tsisis, 2020; Gipson et al., 2020; Langford et al., 2020; Norris, 2020a, 2020b; Sajnani et al., 2017; Silveira, 2020; Webb, 2019).

Intersectionality in the Arts Psychotherapies is a timely exploration of clinical practice and practitioners that directly addresses many of these issues and it is theoretically well informed and reflexive at every turn. The notion of intersectionality is taken from many varied sources, as Editors Jessica Collier and Corrina Eastwood write, ‘the primary concerns. . . were born of activism, and social justice work prompted by social inequalities’ (p. 21). The term was first used in the famous essay from 1989 by lawyer, academic and Black feminist writer Kimberle Crenshaw. Crenshaw (1989) used case law history to demonstrate how Black women are rendered invisible, ‘theoretically erased’, where arguments for and against anti-discrimination are predicated upon either gender or race but not both. While fully recognising Crenshaw’s contribution, Collier and Eastwood also highlight the way in which ‘intersectionality as critical inquiry’ has become distanced from ‘intersectional practice drawn from grassroots politics’ (p. 23). They write,

The simplistic attributing of the founding of intersectionality to Crenshaw alone, without acknowledging the contextual social and historical complexities of its inception as a form of critical inquiry and practice, fails to practise what we hope to preach. However, it

does give a clear example of the way in which dominant thinking in practice, and normative practices in academia, can be steadfast and systematic in silencing the voices of the ‘other’. (p. 23)

Intersectionality in this volume is put to work *as* critical inquiry *into* grass roots practice. It is not a book which takes a single moral perspective, pointing at you, the reader. The general message is that we are all complicit and we all have work to do: social awareness is social justice. Collier and Eastwood write,

If we undertake arts psychotherapy practice without embracing uncertainty or potential discomfort; if we cannot accept that we might get things wrong; if we don’t question our own prejudices and experiences and how they influence our practice, then we are not reflecting on our inherent position of power seriously enough. (p. 21)

Each of the 16 authors explicitly reflect these principles in their writing. With the permission and in some places contributions from their clients, they generously share case studies of art psychotherapy, dramatherapy, and music therapy, demonstrating the way in which their own starting point of themselves is integral to the therapeutic work. Most volumes of case studies focus upon the life history of the clients and their presenting symptoms and/or life difficulties. The present book also foregrounds the his/herstory of the therapist.

Sarah Furneaux-Blick ‘models’ this ‘intersectional self-reflexivity’; she writes from a perspective of a White cisgendered heterosexual woman from a working-class family from the north of England and examines ‘the impact of her class related identities and past marginalisations’ might have had on her art therapy practice (p. 89). Class is an issue, she writes, that is ‘often absent from art psychotherapy literature, training and discourse, yet feels very present within the clinical setting’ (p. 88). She writes of the censoring of her own background of growing up in the 1980s and the shame associated with poverty:

I can acknowledge the power and insight I have gained as a therapist in allowing reflexive vulnerability and I can reflect on how clients may censor their own histories to respond to similar feelings, when their experiences may not fit the dominant narrative that determines those who are ‘deserving’ of our care in therapy. (p. 91)

Eastwood, in her chapter ‘Intersectional Reflexivity: Art Psychotherapy Practice and Self’, leads the reader through rich narratives of her artwork and stories from childhood. She writes that she is ‘Romani Gypsy, from the Gypsy, Romani Traveller (GRT) community’ and how she grew up with her ‘family keeping archetypal feeling tales alive through storytelling (p. 36). As the reader, Eastwood’s personal information caught me unaware: I wondered, how often have people from the GRT Community trained as therapists and written about their lives in this way? The topic of the therapist’s own ‘identity-related feelings of shame’ emerge in this chapter, quoting Hocoy ‘Do we silence in our clients the voices of difference that we have been socialized to silence in ourselves?’ (p. 41). This is a high-quality auto-ethnographic account of a long process of working through prejudice internalised from society at large: the art making of the author enriches and illustrates her words as do the observations from therapy, art psychotherapy training and her life as she is living it as she writes the chapter.

One particular quality of this book is that it is written by practitioners in different stages of their working lives, and the inclusion of chapters written by those still in training, or recently qualified, provide particular perspectives and scrutiny of commonly held assumptions.

Wabriya King writes about attachment theory and draws attention in her chapter to how a body of well known and much cited theory, through having its origins in a particular time and place, can come to dominate therapeutic training and practice as ‘truth’. She describes her experiences as a Black Dramatherapy student attending a professional meeting where she was

. . . faced with a discussion about patients, predominantly from ethnic and lower social class groups who were described as having disordered or insecure attachments. The conference attendees were predominantly White art therapists. I recall maybe two other Black therapists. . . the debris of post-colonialism felt very present and I felt compelled to share my thoughts and feelings with the group . . . my belief that popular psychological teachings of attachment derive from a White middle-class ‘secure’ perspective. (p. 50)

King draws on Dalal in her development of this observation, that ‘each cultural system will generate its own form of attachment which legitimate different ways of being together . . . [Dalal suggests that] the Western notion of the “secure base” should be known simply as “the base”’ (p. 56). As a White therapist who has drawn upon attachment theory as a tool with which to understand the life experiences of clients, this is a powerful and far reaching chapter presenting a perspective, which naively, I had not fully considered before. King also illustrates a particular set of power relationships in environments which are dominated in number by a White middle class largely female demographic. Her analysis will surely be an invaluable contribution to the ongoing decolonialisation of the arts therapies curriculum.

Jaspal Kaur Lotay writes as a Sikh Punjabi woman (with Corrina Eastwood) about negotiating the culture of training in art therapy, within the culture of her own south Asian community:

I can see the complex matrix of difficulties in a profession dominated by White theoretical perspectives . . . My race and cultural positioning starkly represented otherness during my training and embodied very different culturally specific ways of thinking, learning and knowing. (p. 165)

She finds a way to move between the two and make sense of the two different worlds: ‘seeing members of my community struggling to navigate mental health services was personally painful. This pain seemed to mirror my experiences on my training, of feeling misunderstood and different’. (p. 166). The case material Lotay describes is very affecting. She focuses upon work with a teenage boy during the period of his father’s illness and death, and the aftermath of this. Through sharing the art work from sessions, the author provides such a clear illustration of her thinking processes and understanding of him through his work, linking her insider cultural knowledge with the understandings from the art therapy practice she was imbuing from training. The images of war are familiar to her from Sikh history, but they may also have wider meanings. The monotone colours he uses, she intuits, may be about the repression of a teenage boy, shortly to become the only male in his household who felt he needed to keep a lid on emotions. Lotay shows us how the pictures can speak in different ways for different purposes, conveying fears and feelings. As a music therapist, this was one of many places in this book where I felt I learnt so much as the processes of art therapy were explained and made transparent with such emotional and artistic creativity.

There are two chapters written by music therapists. Power relationships in music therapy are always being negotiated or not negotiated music making: who decides or changes the tempo, metre volume, style, mood and so on, and who follows or doesn’t follow. Tsolka and Rowe both refer to this negotiation of power in their writing. Eleni Tsolka writes about a music therapy project in the West Bank, Palestine and closely considers language, class, gender and ethnicity as intersecting in the professional and therapeutic relationships she developed. As a non Arabic speaker, she cites national identity as a Greek citizen who had studied music therapy in the United Kingdom, could speak English fluently and whose work was ‘supported by a charity in the UK’ (p. 159). She writes generously and perceptively,

Thus, although I’m not a British citizen, I could be perceived as a British person. This may have affected the way Palestinians encountered me . . . the relationship between these countries is complicated. The UK can be considered responsible, at least in part, for the conditions Palestinians live under, while at the same time being a country that offers support in different ways. (p. 159)

Tsolka describes the expectations she experienced of her as a professional women and the need to adapt in an ‘explicitly segregated society’ where women wore clothes which fully covered their bodies and would not go out socially on their own without their husbands. She considers the tension of difference borne out in the 6-week group she ran for health professionals, a position which ‘in Palestinian culture would likely be held by a man’ and where there was just one male member (p. 157). She writes of how the sole man in the group, his ‘dominant masculinity emerged in the music; his playing was louder and it seemed as if all the females in the group were following him’ (p. 157). This included Tsolka as therapist, ‘unconsciously seduced into a position’ where she too ‘was following the man’s lead’ leaving her feeling ‘passive and undervalued’ (p. 157). As Tsolka writes, ‘such is the pervasive nature of social conditioning’, it took much reflexive work for her to make a link between her feelings as the therapist and ‘the local traditional relationships between men and women – and indeed between the powerful and subjugated worldwide’ (p. 157). This is such a vivid account of how relationships take place in music, maybe particularly in rhythm, intersecting with a wealth of complexity which the therapist could only begin to unravel in the short period available to her.

Naomi Rowe’s chapter ‘Disabled and LGBTQ + I’ also concerns music therapy, although her wider suggestions for practice are very welcome. She writes of the intersections between gender, sexuality, neurodiversity and illness, both emotional and physical, and provides many practical suggestions for practice. Her section on the use of pronouns, on page 216, will be particularly useful for practitioners unused to working within diverse client populations.

There are many more discussions to be considered in this fine volume in addition to those that I have briefly commented upon in this review. Only one author self-identifies as male, maybe reflecting the demographic of arts therapists? This is certainly a topic for further consideration. Some other themes addressed include issues of male violence, rape, therapists’ disclosure to self and others, poverty, self-harm, immigration, language. The descriptions of clinical practice throughout are first-rate: I learnt a good deal about art therapy. In particular, I was struck by the expressive and aesthetic richness of the images and the different kinds of practice that take place. The images a client drew of herself in Collier’s chapter ‘Men just Hit You’, were particularly illustrative and affecting (pp. 202–3). To finish, I have a final thought prompted by reading Collier’s chapter as I wondered about the status of our arts therapies professions in this intersectional mix. Collier’s client was discharged from prison based on a decision that seemed to shockingly disregard the work of therapy in a way that called to mind Miranda Fricker’s (2007) notion of Epistemic Injustice. What standing do the arts therapies have in the wider context of crucial decision making about our clients? What power does the knowledge generated by the processes of arts therapies have in the wider world?

ORCID iD

Rachel Damley-Smith  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5944-0949>

References

- Coombes E and Tsisir G (2020) Adapting to change, welcoming otherness. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy* 12(2): 167–168.
- Crenshaw K (1989) Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989: 8.
- Fricker M (2007) *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gipson L, Williams B and Norris M (2020) Three black women's reflections on COVID-19 and creative arts therapies. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 20(2): 31153.
- Langford A, Rikallah M and Maddocks C (2020) BAMT diversity report. *BAFM therapy*. Available at: <https://www.bamt.org/resources/diversity-report>
- Norris M (2020a) A call for radical imagining: exploring anti-blackness in the music therapy profession. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 20(3): 3167.
- Norris M (2020b) Freedom dreams: what must die in music therapy to preserve human dignity? *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 20(3): 3172.
- Sajnani N, Marxen E and Zarate R (2017) Critical perspectives in the arts therapies: Response/ability across a continuum of practice. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 54: 28–37.
- Silveira TM (2020) 'But where are you really from?' Approaching music therapy research and practice as an Australian of Indian Origin. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 20(3): 8.
- Webb AA (2019) *The Full Has Never Been Told: An Arts-based Narrative Inquiry into the Academic and Professional Experiences of Black People in American Music Therapy* (Publication Number ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019. 13862525.). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University. Available at: <https://search.proquest.com/openview/d9732c46548bfac4be9a087d13f15b3e/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

Author biography

Rachel Darnley-Smith is a Freelance Music Therapist, living and working in London UK. Between 2003–2020 she lectured in music therapy as part of the team at Roehampton University, UK.

© The Author(s) 2022
 Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
 DOI: 10.1177/13594575221120347

Umberto Volpe (ed.), *Arts Therapies in Psychiatric Rehabilitation*. Springer: Switzerland, 2022; 169 pp.: ISBN 9783030762070 (printed book) £99.99, ISBN 9783030762087 (eBook) £79.50

Reviewed by: Cerrita Smith

The quest to develop the evidence base in the Arts Therapies has accelerated considerably in the last 20 years. As Priebe highlights in his foreword, the manualisation of clinical approaches may impede core practices that are creative and rely on expressing their therapeutic value through various forms of improvisation and spontaneity. Priebe explains that there is renewed interest in Arts Therapies research, particularly as neuroscientific and psychiatric research has failed '... to come up with new treatments that are clearly more effective than what was available 50 years ago' (Priebe, S viii). Stefan Priebe's foreword is the start of what will become a narrative arc across this book; the case for and against standardisation of clinical practice.

This honest statement, outlining the limitations of the medical model's predominance, with pharmacotherapy often the first line of treatment, was refreshing as it demonstrated, or at least suggests, the need for innovation in practice. Citing renewed interest in the Arts Therapies, and broader arts practice, is a step forward. However, this generates some questions around equity and inclusion of opinion. How can we ensure Arts Therapists are equal partners in the generation of new research and research concepts? Who will create the ideas that can be tested as new hypotheses? Although this question may initially appear unusual, these are not unfair questions. Getting answers right will have longer term impact in the development of future approaches the future of Arts Therapies, and ensuring that developments are emergent and rooted in Arts Therapies clinical practice. New attitudes to research should be delivered in partnership and true collaboration with arts therapists, and this text clearly outlines, from an international perspective, research developments in the profession.

Reading this book prompted me to think about the power imbalances between professional groups in psychiatric care (Ranasinha, 2022). This is implicit in the reference by multiple authors who cite the need for more RCTs or rigorous clinical research (Pizziolo, 2022; Ren et al., 2022; Rodriguez-Jimenez, 2022). Furthermore, there is a danger that those who would commission new research might implicitly perpetuate the imbalance by, and may risk, over-ruling the opinions and concerns of the Arts Therapies community. However, there is also a responsibility for our professional bodies and training institutes to continue to promote the importance of robust research and evaluation. They should also continue embedding