

Strengthening the presence of dance/movement in Dance Movement Therapy

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Abstract

Arts therapies and dance movement therapy (DMT) as well, have their roots in the arts. Human beings have used arts to overcome their fears and worries especially those related to natural phenomena and their dependency from Nature (rain, draught, beast hunting, etc.) Doing arts-performances in the form of rites helped them to feel the safety the togetherness of group offers, to celebrate the course of life. However, in the practice of some colleagues these roots are weakening. There is the aspiration to reproduce-translate concepts and theories of psychotherapies and epistemology dominated by words-talking. This sometimes misses delving into the especial and unique qualities of the experience of arts making, being actively or passively involved in dance.

As Dr. Pinchas Noy (psychoanalyst) wrote: arts fill the need of expression and communication that words cannot provide (free translation of the author). There are colleagues around the world that base their work and theories solely or mainly on psychoanalysis or other psychological theories. In many cases this is not enough. Freud himself supported learning from different sources (Seligman 2011, 868).

Another point to remark, is that psychotherapies have laid themselves on philosophies that focus on lack, while arts have been more often associated with vitality. With this perspective, we are losing the effect of vitality and interpersonal communication that are potential or ingrained in dance.

In this lecture I will share the path I walked in a multidisciplinary perspective that encompasses Humanities, Social Sciences, performers' and philosophers' writings about dance and the phenomenology of dancing, qualitative research with students, etc. I will briefly explain how one station in the road took me to another and the place where this path arrived.

One of my departing points is the epistemology of social-constructionism which holds that social forces operating and commonly used images, model the behavior of people, their understanding and definitions of institutions and social figures. Metaphors have at least two sources here taken into consideration: scientific, philosophical images and common language uses.

Principal concepts related to dance

Dance as metaphor or image.

Contemporary conceptions of dance

What dance allows to experience in professional and non-professional dancers

Forms of Vitality (Daniel Stern)

Aesthetics and Dance movement Therapy

Positivity in Psychoanalysis and in DMT

To summarize: the purpose of the lecture is to open the knowledge of the reason and contribution of the arts and especially of dance to therapy. The theoretical background stems from dance studies, philosophy, especially F. Nietzsche and S. Langer, Daniel Stern, D. Winnicott, Positive Psychoanalysis, phenomenology of dance. Hermeneutic enquiry is the methodology employed. The results show the distinct character of dance (and arts) and how it connects people to vitality.