

BOOK REVIEW

Dance and creativity within dance movement therapy: international perspectives, edited by Hilda Wengrower and Sharon Chaiklin.
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Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) looks for ways to increase its visibility within the creative arts therapies and, more importantly, within the larger therapeutic landscape. DMT trainings prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed for working therapeutically with the moving body; however, the essence of DMT is its use of dance (Lauffenburger, 2020). Thus, it is time to revisit and revalue the core essences of DMT, dance and creativity. This is what Wengrower and Chaiklin have done in their new text *Dance and Creativity within Dance Movement Therapy*. This new volume builds on their previous text (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2016) and expands the theoretical and practical discussion into philosophical, aesthetic and cultural realms.

Wengrower and Chaiklin approach dance and creativity much like the Tao. An oft-quoted translation of the *Tao Te Ching* states: 'The Tao that can be named is not the Tao' or put another way, 'the unnameable is the eternally real' (Mitchell, 1988). In Taoism, a person only understands the central truth of life, by experiencing it indirectly from differing perspectives. Similarly, Wengrower and Chaiklin point the reader towards the central truth of DMT through the theoretical and embodied perspectives on dance and creativity of their international contributors.

In the foreword, Fraleigh sets the tone with personal reflections on dance as art, and aesthetics as a therapeutic tool. She directs us to the *aesthetics of care*, musing that 'care is theoretical until it manifests in some action, feeling or dance'. Within this statement Fraleigh is both acknowledging *what* DMT does and *how* dance movement therapists feel about what they do. The aesthetics of care is an essential truth of DMT, and can be found in every chapter of this text. Drawing on reminiscences, Fraleigh quotes Mary Wigman as saying 'We dance to know who we are'. Here, Fraleigh points to the personal and psychological truth of many dance movement therapists. I could feel my reasons for being in this profession encapsulated in this simple statement. I wondered if Fraleigh and the editors want readers also to reflect upon 'without dance, who are we?'

In the introduction the editors name the text's purpose and themes: connecting dance to its healing aspect, bringing creativity, aesthetics, and body-mind-spirit integration to the fore, and exploring the embodied relationship between client(s) and therapist. An overview of each chapter connects the reader with these themes and engenders curiosity about the conceptual offerings. Most chapters left me nodding vigorously, positively and/or in disagreement,

scribbling notes in the margins to ponder further, and scurrying to the references in order to deepen into what was being said. Every chapter moved me, but I will only focus on a few.

Structurally, the book is divided into three sections; Part I: *About Dance*, Part II: *Research*, and Part III: *Practise*. Each part has international breadth and depth, with authors from Europe, the UK, USA, India, Israel, and Asia. Part I: *About Dance* locates dance within the historical, cultural, philosophical, psychological and psychoanalytic theories that support the use of dance and creativity in healing, and sets the stage for the critical questions: What is it about dance that makes it a historical, cross-cultural, universal agent of healing? To what does the health-striving human spirit respond in dance?

In Chapter 1 (*Dance comes to the front stage in Dance Movement Therapy*) Wengrower writes from her strengths – psychoanalytic training and years of dance and DMT experience. She weaves vignettes from her own practice and teaching with writings of psychoanalysts and philosophers, reconnecting the dynamic vitality of our inner lives to the qualities, intensities, tempos, and flow of dance. With the Tao hovering in the background, she reminds us of the unnameable developmental experiences, traumatic events, as well as the ephemeral everyday life which dance can exquisitely communicate.

In Chapter 2 (*Back to basics: The aesthetic, poetic, and contemplative movements' attributes that heal in DMT*) Ho offers a condensed overview of the use of dance in the various regions of the world. Inclusion of the 40,000-year-old philosophy of healing dance of indigenous practitioners, still accessible in Australasia (Jordan et al., 2017), may have added completeness. The potential of DMT for healing the trauma experienced within indigenous cultures has been discussed (Bernstein, 2012; Buihth, 1999; Devereaux, 2012; Lucas, 1999). However, a fuller discussion of 'what is dance' in indigenous culture may also be needed. Ho offers three movement attributes that heal across history and culture: aesthetics, expression and contemplation, which would have benefited from discussion from a non-indigenous frame of reference.

Chapter Four (*The invisible of the dancing body*) interrupts a psychoanalytic view of the moving body as representation of psyche. Ronan discusses the ideas of Jean Luc Nancy (Monnier & Nancy, 2005), and makes it clear that the dancing body is not the contingent carrier of information or code that can be reconstituted completely or authentically in syntactic language. It exists separately, a priori, 'from external principles of unity (whether unity is understood in terms of the body's own complete shape or function, or in terms of subjectivity, selfhood, purpose, or meaningfulness)' (p. 47). Ronan reminds us that dance requires an experiential understanding, and that movement and gestures are only 'energy' transmitted to our senses for perception.

The four authors of Part I offer a range of philosophical viewpoints into experiencing dance, such as vitality affects, detachment, authenticity and aesthetics, as well as an embodied perspective. This effective yin/yang approach should speak to readers and move them towards experiencing understanding.

I feel a sense of awe when I enter a major library – the knowledge and thought contained in the tomes around me hold the possibility to enrich my current views.

Similarly, I was awed by Part II: *Research*. The chapters are germane to issues that dance movement therapists are examining. For example, Chapter Eight (*Wording the complexity of DMT: A scoping review on how dmmts describe their clinical practise*) provides research into the development of a scope of practise. A scope of practise describes the procedures, actions, and processes permitted to a healthcare practitioner while keeping within the terms of their professional licence. However, it must also fit how a dance movement therapist languages their professional focus, activities, and interventions.

In Chapter Seven (*'Being moved' as a therapeutic factor of DMT*) Koch highlights the authentic movement construct of 'being moved' as an aesthetic perspective on affect/emotion theory, noting the importance of movement as emotion as a major therapeutic contribution of DMT. Table 1 maps the categories and typical manifestations of affect representation. Although most creative arts therapies and psychotherapies work with expressivity, I agree with Koch that DMT has the most effective methodology to fully engage motoric affect expression. The research in Part II will offer support, questions, and enrich the reader's professional endeavours.

International usage and efficacy of DMT can be seen in Part III. The text's international authors generously invite us into their personal world, life experiences, and professional practise and discuss their approach to DMT with passion, cultural sensitivity, theoretical knowledge, and commitment to dance. Each offers cases which enliven ideas contained in Parts I and II. The vitality, aesthetics, authenticity and energy of dance are experientially felt in each chapter.

In Chapter Fifteen (*Asian cultural body, dance and therapy: a Korean perspective*) Ko explains the Korean attitude towards the West's psychological concerns, and provides a cultural understanding of Korean dance and the Korean disorder of *Hwa-Byung*. Interestingly, while working with a Korean client, she used the Laban/Bartenieff Movement System (LBMS), which is based on a primarily European

Table 1. Representation and expression of emotion.

Categories for representation of emotion	Description
Somatic/Prebehavioural	Regulation and interest in the world Manner of engagement Physiological response Interceptive, sensation
Behavioural/Motoric	Simple/complex gestural or full body communication Motoric impulse Dance
Symbolic	Pretend play sequences Visual imagery Dreams Free associations Spatial communications Often communicated through artistic processes
Abstract/Verbal	Verbalisation of Feeling states which can include both personal meaning Tends to refer to specific, categorised and differentiated feeling states

Lauffenburger (2020, adapted from Greenspan, 1999).

perspective, to bridge her western DMT training with her Korean understanding of bodymind. Noting that the Asian culture tends to communicate problems indirectly through the body, rather than through words, she works with her client's somatisation. Recognising the risks of cross-cultural appropriation of approaches, Ko's DMT approach nonetheless holds useful insights for those working outside of Asia.

In Chapter Eighteen (*Time, space, and an aesthetics of survival: DMT and embodied imagination after unimaginable loss*) Harris' work with child soldiers in West Africa demonstrates the cross-cultural healing power of dance. Integrating neuroscientific and psychoanalytic understanding of trauma with trust in the vitalising energies of dance and ritual, Harris demonstrates the parallels of the children's external dance and intrapsychic work. Again, with a caveat on cross-cultural appropriation, Harris demonstrates a cultural collaboration as he uses dance movement therapy. Although dance is an ephemeral art form, he demonstrates that 'the transitory something to be remembered'.

The text's numerous clinical vignettes engage one's imagination and allow vicarious experiencing of the information. For example, in Chapter 10 (*Creating the dance of self: A stage theory of the creative process in DMT*) Purcell presents a state theory for the creative process and pairs it with her work on an inpatient psychiatric unit. The hard-to-language vitality, aesthetics, and authenticity of DMT stands beside her creative process theory to fully inform the reader.

The text's three parts could be expanded to add a fourth: *Culture/History*. We now practise DMT in multicultural and indigenous environments, thus our understanding and practise could be further supported by exploring 'what is dance or creativity within a specific culture?' and 'who or what do dance and culture serve within a specific culture?' Dichotomous constructs such as individual versus collective, appropriation versus integration, ritualistic versus authentic, might be considered. Nonetheless, the editors have created an inspiring collection to explicate and embody dance and creativity as the central essence of dance movement therapy.

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