



APPRECIATING DIVERSITY, COMMONALITY AND THE TRANSCENDENT THROUGH THE ARTS THERAPIES

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The call for papers for a journal issue on the "Multicultural Application of the Arts in Psychotherapy" resulted in such a high response on a special focus for *The Arts in Psychotherapy* that it prompted a decision to publish two issues on this profoundly significant topic. What we have discovered is that the use of the arts in the area of multiculturalism is a many-faceted subject. In the first special issue (Vol. 24, No. 2, 1997) Dosamantes-Beaudry began the exploration of how culture is developmentally transferred. Bradt and Coseo focused on the need for the therapist to be aware of his or her own world view as well as what it means to be a culturally sensitive creative arts therapist. Application articles from Farr, Linden and Landy addressed the use of the arts in psychotherapy with individuals whose race and culture differed from those of the therapist. Antinori and Moore discussed the use of drama in diversity awareness training.

In this second special issue on multiculturalism and the arts in psychotherapy, Pallaro furthers the exploration of Dosamantes-Beaudry's article with an in-depth discussion of "Culture, Self and Body-Self: Dance/Movement Therapy with Asian Americans." Pallaro holds a magnifying glass up to some of the Western psychological theorists' views of such topics as healthy human development and their focus upon separation and individuation and the spiritually reductive approaches that devalue and ignore the profound and pervasive significance of the transpersonal in the daily existence and world view of Asians from vari-

ous cultures. She views dance/movement therapy as a medium that creates and supports a facilitating environment for the process of biculturalization. Dance/movement is capable of holding both cultures allowing participants to explore their relationship to both world views without discounting either one.

Lewis' article, "Transpersonal Arts Psychotherapy: Toward an Ecumenical World View" continues Pallaro's discussion of the religious and spiritual biases of therapists and their perceptual frames and their effect upon psychotherapy with individuals who hold divergent belief systems. The history and range of Western theories of transpersonal psychotherapy are traced and current or neo-transpersonal approaches discussed. Lewis then explores the role of the arts therapist as the modern priest and shaman who, as in early civilizations, combine art and spiritual beliefs toward the healing of the individual and the well-being of the community. Clinical cases follow, describing creative arts processes with three clients who hold differing transpersonal frames.

Linden's "A Festival of Light" describes the creation of a healing arts event in a high school that utilized an archetypal transpersonal symbolic theme to assist in the celebration of diversity and commonality among a multi-ethnic school body. In describing the creation of this celebration, Linden discusses the way in which the "transpersonal draws individuals together through manifesting a conscious intention that had the power to transform all who participated" (p. 255). The creation and perhaps invocation of the

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numinous resulted in participants reporting an experience of being moved deeply into a greater sense of commonality and connection to humanity regardless of cultural and ethnic differences.

Stepakaoff's "Poetry Therapy: Principles and Practices for Raising Awareness of Racism" and Gray's "This is the Story of Wicked" both continue to expand on the use of the arts in promoting anti-racist multicultural consciousness. Stepakaoff's use of selected poems authored by individuals of color served, through the power of metaphor and symbol, to draw the majority European American participants into a more meaningful connection to the plight and view of those who are of a different racial origin. Additionally, poetry that addresses taking action against racism and participant writing exercises can empower individuals, moving them from isolation into participation and empowerment. The use of symbolic language, as opposed to left hemispheric secondary process cognitions, can more directly enter into the realm in which the transformation of prejudice can occur (Lewis, 1993).

Gray utilizes the theatrical production of sociodramatic stories written by Aboriginal youth in Australia to move the Euro Australian dominant culture into a heightened awareness of their inaccurate assumptions and the sociological effects of their racism. The involvement of these youth also resulted in the raising of their self-esteem, motivation and capacity to be proactive in their life. This dual purpose arts model can be easily utilized in other cultures where prejudice against a divergent group exists whether it be due to racism, sexism, genderism, ageism, able bodyism or any other "ism" that isolates and inhibits full participation in the community.

Continuing with an international focus, two dance therapists address the use of movement therapy in Japan and Israel. Cohn's "Movement Therapy as a Bridge to Biculturalization: Ethiopian Immigrants in Israel" can be seen to draw upon Pallaro's sense that dance/movement can provide a "facilitating environment" within which two cultures may co-exist, thereby offering the client an opportunity to communicate their concerns in a familiar language (i.e., culturally situated movement) regarding this major life transition. Additionally, Ethiopians, as with others in divergent cultures such as many found in Asia and those of Hispanic origins, are less apt to "talk about their emotional problems" and more apt to somatize them. The utilization of a body-oriented approach

along with a therapist who is sensitive to the manifestation of stress-related "dis-ease" and its symbolic meaning can perhaps be a more suitable bridge into the often dichotomous health and human services of more Western-based cultures.

Finally, Arakawa-Davis' "Dance/Movement Therapy and Reminiscence: A New Approach to Senile Dementia in Japan" draws upon the Western technique of Chace dance therapy and reshapes it into a Japanese "culturally friendly" compatible approach to be effectively utilized with their expanding aging community. The use of arts expression such as music, dance, song and stories has proven to be significantly beneficial to all aging populations in the early stages of dementia. These art forms are now considered to be a crucial part of services provided for this growing population.

It is this guest editor's hope that these two issues have begun a continuing process toward greater awareness and connection with the diversity of ethnicity within countries and with the international use of the arts in psychotherapy. Clearly the arts are a bridge not only to ourselves but to each other and to the numinous as well. From their inception the experience of the arts has given individuals the capacity to heal and evolve intrapsychically, interpersonally and transpersonally. As we move into the next millennium it is hoped that the arts and those who utilize them in service to transformation may continue to hold "the bigger picture" drawing this global village in which we live toward greater consciousness.

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