

A Study on 'Creative Dance' as Blanche Evan's Therapeutic Intervention Based on Adlerian Individual Psychology

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I. Introduction

The therapist's therapeutic intervention in dance movement therapy is determined by thorough movement diagnosis and evaluation. This aspect is distinguished from a mere 'healing' by movement. The therapist's treatment intervention is a therapeutic process which entails a thorough diagnosis, evaluation, and treatment schedule. With their own methodology, the pioneers of the dance movement therapy have developed psychotherapeutic techniques over and beyond movement-educational level. One of the pioneers from the East, Blanche Evan utilized creative dance as a form of therapeutic intervention, because she believed in the power of dance. She was keenly interested in stress that neurotic adults who live in the urban areas experience, and by utilizing creative dance improvisation, she made a contribution to developing dance movement therapy as a way to escape from mental stress. Although people with urban neurosis, who were the subjects of Blanche Evan's therapy in this research, do not have problems in daily life, I think it can be an interesting psychotherapeutic methodology for those who suffer from a number of mental stressors. She particularly used dance as a therapeutic means. This does not indicate a high level technique in the art of dancing, but is based on Evan's philosophy that every human-being has the biological rhythm from birth and that everyone has the natural rhythm that enables to dance. The bodily rhythm can set free from the psychological tension and can enable to turn away the internal unconsciousness through the natural movement and

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improvisation. Through this process, bodily sensations can help realize his or her potential mental problems. Likewise, Evan's therapeutic intervention was originated from the human's natural resource, and this, perhaps, is one of the most useful dance movement therapy techniques. Especially, Evan believed that messages freely expressed by dance or sensations experienced in creative dance improvisation can discharge stress. Even though Evan's dance movement therapy technique, which targeted clients with urban neurosis, did not receive much attention in the era of dance movement emergence, I think it is worthy of further research as a psychotherapeutic methodology for numerous people suffering from stress in the modern days. These days, stress is a huge issue, and many people attempt to find ways to improve quality of life. In particular, as people's interest in the body has increased, a number of people are trying to find not only ways to enhance the physical health through exercise but also ways to integrate the physical and the mental, so as to obtain resources with which they can confront their fundamental issues and resolve them. Thus, the concept of the body for modern people is the integration of mind and body, attempting to focus on the body as embodiment. In that sense, I think it is necessary to consider Evan's therapeutic technique through creative dance improvisation as a methodology for those who do not have issues in daily life but need to escape from mental stress. Creative Dance as a people's activity has therapeutic values for the healthy, the "normally disturbed," the neurotic, the psychotic and the disabled. Although all five share the values of physical reconditioning and "psycho-kinesthetic" reward, the responses of the five categories to the same material are distinctly different. An effective teacher in this work relates pedagogic substance to the students "psycho-physical" condition.¹⁾ In a previous study on Evan's methodology of dance action therapy, Seo Yeon Hyun(2014) derived a positive and meaningful effect on the quality of peer relations of ADHD children, utilizing Blanche Evan's intervention technique. Kim Sun Yong(2005) similarly derived positive results on the depression symptoms of elementary school students with low body satisfaction, obtaining results with the utilization of Laban's Effort and Evan's improvisation method. Kim Hyeon-Jin(2006)'s research has resulted in significant decrease in somatization and reduction in test anxiety among high school girls through the dance movement therapy program that applied Evan's intervention technique. In a case study abroad, Melson (1993) studied the experience based on Blanche Evan's methodology of dance therapy, and Boris (1996) published a study of Blanche Evan's dance work in the American Journal of Dance Therapy. In Krantz's (1999) research, a study, based on Evan's methodology, using dance movement therapy for female patients during binge eclampsia was conducted. Evan's theory and techniques are not yet well-known in Korea; however, given the emphasis on dance and that the creative movement in improvisation are important therapeutic factors, its expandability is considered to be unlimited in academic acceptance in the field

1) Blanche Evan(1959), Therapeutic Aspects Of Creative Dance; Brief comments on a Weighty Subject, *Dance Observer*, 26(9), p.94.

of dance art.

Despite that it is not well known in Korea yet, Evan's dance movement therapy technique, in which the nature of dance, creativity of movement expression and the healing power of improvisation is more emphasized than any other dance therapy pioneers', is considered to be worthy of further study in the practical application of dance action therapy.

II. Adlerian Psychotherapy

As applied in the practice of psychotherapy and counseling, the Adlerian research has continued to grow despite the fact that the Freudian was the mainstream of psychological research. Today, individual psychology has been acknowledged as a pioneer among a variety of recent concepts and research studies about counseling and psychotherapy. Alfred Adler was the first person to work with clients in public. In 1985, Adler received M.D. in one of the most prestigious schools in Germany, the University of Vienna. Leaving from Europe and settling in the United States in 1935, Adler gained popularity and acknowledgement after publishing over 300 books and academic journal articles. Adler explained that neurotic symptoms are a safeguard against threats to one's self-image and challenges outside of the world.²⁾ The effect of counseling is related to the extent that the counselor reacts to the client in emotional and humane manners such as empathic understanding. As a form of communication of comprehension, empathy is regarded as the best. We see the world in the client's eyes, mind, and heart. In that way, the counselor may see the world through the client's feeling, belief, and heart. Empathic understanding is grasping the other's core emotion and sharing the understanding. Empathy includes both the feeling expressed by the client and the feeling drawn from the counselor who listens to the message. Reflecting feeling is helping the client notice what he/she has experienced and helping the client express the feeling at the moment. While the focus of a therapy is to provide an answer to the question of 'what' and 'who' in the therapeutic relationship, the therapeutic process is to answer the question of 'how.' Namely, a therapeutic change is a change mechanism that psychotherapy emphasizes. Mutual trust and respect are fundamental elements in the Adlerian cooperative relation.³⁾ The Adlerian cooperative relation is an equal relationship with no superior or inferior position. Clients feel the sense of responsibility as they participate in the cooperative work creating psychological movements. Effective therapeutic relationships are initiated by focusing on the interest that the client suggested.

2) Don Dinkmeyer, Jr., and Len Sperry(200), *Adlerian counseling and psychotherapy: An intergrated individual psychology approach*, Third Edition (Prentice Hall, INC), p. 21.

3) *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Ivan who follows Adler's personal psychology believed that aggression and anger were the main problems of neurosis. Because the anger of the neurotic patients is suppressed, their self-assertiveness and responsibility for growth are also suppressed. It is clearly reflected in the body's muscle tissue. He said, "not only is the act repressed, but also the various tensions that follow, namely, rigidity at one end and numbness at the other. Ivan's dance therapy consists of four main interventions: preparation phase, system of functional technique, improvisation and execution, and linguist of thought and emotion. First, in the preparation phase, Ivan considered this phase as the indispensable part of the process in order to treat the unconscious elements that emerged in the impromptu stage completely. Second, in the functional technique system, Ivan explains: Corrective exercises were designed to retrain the muscles to move within the natural relationship of rhythmic expansion and contraction. As applied in the practice of psychotherapy and counseling, the Adlerian research has continued to grow despite the fact that the Freudian was the mainstream of psychological research. Today, individual psychology has been acknowledged as a pioneer among a variety of recent concepts and research studies about counseling and psychotherapy. Alfred Adler was the first person to work with clients in public. In 1985, Adler received M.D. in one of the most prestigious schools in Germany, the University of Vienna. Leaving from Europe and settling in the United States in 1935, Adler gained popularity and acknowledgement after publishing over 300 books and academic journal articles. Adler explained that neurotic symptoms are a safeguard against threats to one's self-image and challenges outside of the world.⁴⁾

Clients feel less anxious and more stable, and react with increased sense of trust when they see the therapist as someone who can empathize their plans. In self psychology, the role of the therapist is apparently not neutral. Rather, the therapist is an observer who joins in the therapeutic process. In this process, empathy is essential for enhancing self-structure. Kohut (1984) considered empathy as vicarious introspection and identified its two functional roles: comprehension and interpretation. Comprehension is judging the client's subjective mind immediately, and interpretation is helping the client understand that the client's recent reactions are based on failures of empathizing with meaningful objects in his/her childhood. By this process, empathy helps clients organize their subjective world and acknowledge it as well. Eventually, this leads to a cohesive sense of self.

III. Normal Neurotic

Adler taught that neurotic symptoms have the purpose of protecting the client's self-esteem.⁵⁾

4) Yang Eun Mi(2008), Projecting of stressed single woman into a drama, Dongshin University graduate thesis, p. 87.

Today, the term self-defense is described as an attempt to protect oneself from external threats. Adler believed that conscious infiltration of neurotic protection was the most important factor in psychotherapy. He said that these exposure processes happen in a gradual fashion through encouraging, retraining, and forward. Beitman and Moony (1991) argued that a common mechanism for change in psychotherapy is desensitization. Desensitization is the process of eliminating emotional responses such as anxiety, uneasiness, and guilt. Adler-type therapies have attempted to minimize fear and de-sensitize by incrementally moving neurotic defenses gradually in an incremental fashion. Neuroticism is a condition that has no major problem with realistic judgment and that does not have a big problem in maintaining normal social life. However, it has various problems such as central nervous system and neurotransmitter disorders, subjective discomfort, emotional control, impulse control, and anxiety in which it is referred as psychosis.⁶⁾

Blanche Evan is the pioneer in Dance/Movement Therapy as applied to the 'normal neurotic' that is the person who function, but without adequate fulfillment. Evan mainly focused on children and adults with schizophrenia. In psychiatric hospitals in New York, in the 1950s, she treated children with mental illness and children with developmental disorders with dance therapy and worked with adults who were called to have urban neurosis. Evan's lifetime post-work regarding the oppression, anger, fear and dependence of urban neurotic adults are seen as important maladies, which is consistent with Adler's School. At the vanguard of a relatively new science, Evan utilizes dance and movement as practical therapy, a practice which is relatively unknown in the United States.⁷⁾ In Dance/Movement Therapy, many areas of neuroses are defined as a combination of psychological and physical elements, becoming a psychological phenomenon. And likewise, a similarly integrated therapy is often the solution. As a practicing Dance/Movement/Word therapist, I treat tension and relaxation on a psycho-physical level with a physiologic approach to ways and means that divert the human being away from self, leading him to oblivion, to psychedelic blow-up, and in the extreme, to submission to murderous and suicidal cultists and their ilk.⁸⁾ Following Adler's psychology, Evan believed that repressed aggression and anger were the main problems of neurosis. She interpreted these problems as an expression of inner impulse towards oppression, fear, and dependence and as a resistance to the client's full use of the physical potential. Evan believed that instead of heavily focusing on the repressed desires of the therapists, focusing on the conflicting desires for the expression of the self could deal with the repressed needs. Her special interest in urban neurotics

5) Ibid., p. 24.

6) Ibid., p. 234.

7) Blanche Evan(1978), Jagged tensions and the flow of dance/movement therapy, *Sedona Life Journal*, April, May, p. 159.

8) Ruth Gordon Benov(1991), *Collected Works by and about Blanche Evan* (Blanch Evan Dance Foundation), p. 110.

helped to solve the difficulties of subjects who were isolated from nature and unconsciousness and those who lost inner emotions and physical self-contact. Evan believed that dance was a natural tool for the human body to integrate the body and mind; dance therapy was believed to be suitable for retraining the adults in the city who suffer from neurosis according to the natural and expressive body rhythm.

IV. Therapeutic intervention

1. Therapeutic aspects of creative dance

The task of therapists who utilize creative dance is to promote the integration of mind and body through expressive movements while teaching basic dance technique. Blanche Evan used her body expression that reflectively and immediately respond to creative improvisational dance or sensitivity to objects as her primary treatment intervention technique. That is, there is a relevance on the influence of Larson, the founder of expressive improvisational dance of 'Natural dance.' There are creativity, correlation of body and mind, nonverbal communication, mutual relationship and personality change as a basic in dance movement therapy. These related factors are closely related to the purpose of dance therapy as psychotherapy. Dance movement therapy, which is based on the artistic characteristic of dance, is emphasized as creativity in the therapeutic process. Creativity is not only the process of creation as a medium of art but also the process of creating a personal life and personality itself in a positive direction. The experience of creativity in such a process of treatment is to have a process of creating a new self as a therapeutic meaning to an individual. Evan especially emphasized dance with her therapeutic interventions and is a dance therapist who focuses on the creativity of improvisation in dancing. Evan mainly focused on improvisational dance and believed that she could demonstrate her creativity and emotional potential in dance. Her main interest was improvisational dance with creative and emotional potential. Evan called her dance action therapy 'creative dance as a therapy.'⁹⁾ Evan believed that dance therapy was the most original and basic, self-directed movement to find the source of the stress of the client. Dance was believed to be able to directly meet the demands of psychological and physical union, and that the means of expression of dance is the human body and that the medium of expression is the movement of the body. Evan's main goal was to connect the sense of gap between the mind and body in order to restore vitality that was suppressed or lost through the recovery of the body in the form of dance. Evan's main interest was improvisational dance. The most important purpose of movement work was to express the recovery of

9) Fran J. Levy(1988), *Dance Movement Therapy: A healing art*(American alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance: New York), p. 40.

the body and the unconscious world as a movement and to promote self-awareness and insight and interact with the outside, emotional impulses and psychological difficulties in order to overcome them successfully. Her emphasis on improvisational dance and the present state of expression are closely related to Adler's psychological theory. Adler, thus, contends that human is a creature that can control his or her life with creative force. Adler's psychological theory that was looked at from the present, not from the past, was reflected in the therapeutic intervention of improvisation. Improvisational dance can be considered as an imaginary expression expressing one's emotions since imagination and expressions are expressed from oneself. That is, there is a relevance on the influence of Larson, the founder of expressive improvisational dance of 'Natural dance.'¹⁰⁾ The art philosopher, Collingwood stated that the expressions of improvisational dance can be said to be self-expression or imaginary expression since improvisation is expressed from self imagination and expression. Evan thought that improvisational dance was a tool that could reveal honest and genuine inner-self. In the process of improvisational dancing, the unconscious world, oppressed emotions and stresses concentrate on their internal impulses. She believed that through improvisational dance, individuals could escape the encountered problems.

The system of dancing as taught by Bird Larson is one which she herself has developed and has no connection with and other school or system. It is meeting the needs of two distinct group of people; actresses, singers and dancers who meet the public through their art, and those who pursue more practical lines of endeavor but who desire and mental awakening.¹¹⁾ Bird Larson recognized the forces of technique and expression as complementary, as correlative, and she sought to balance them in the classroom. "The mastery of the body is not limited to the performance of physical feats but to understanding and feeling movement in relation to the emotions."¹²⁾ Here Larson implied the construction of a system that would treat to technique as mechanical physical mastery. She took cognizance of the necessity of establishing a living relation between technique and movement as a medium of expression. Larson recognized the forces of technique and of expressions as complementary, as correlative, and she sought to balance them in the classroom. "The mastery of the body is not limited to the performance of physical feats but to understanding and feeling movement in relation to the emotions."¹³⁾ Here Larson implied the construction of a system that would treat technique as mechanical physical mastery. She took cognizance of the necessity of establishing a living relation between technique and movement as a medium of expression. She was interested in teaching only whatever was discoverable in the "body's capacity for movement"¹⁴⁾ and in building

10) Ibid., p. 39.

11) Paul R. Milton(1939), Tribute to bird laron by blanche evan, *Dance Journal*, p. 34.

12) Ibid., p. 35.

13) Ibid., p. 36.

14) Ibid., p. 38.

that technique, which would hold within a paramount skill in her student's for movement variation and for the free movement of individual style in her student's creative work. Evan thinks that 'natural dance' in other word that improvisational dance is a process that responds to special stimuli. It expresses past knowledge, experience, and feelings through the mediating body. She emphasized improvisation in creative dance, and believed that improvisation could be expressed in terms of individual creativity and emotional potential. Dance becomes an artistic act through imagination and exerts imagination through inspiration that becomes an artistic source. Here, creativity is a key feature in dance. Evan believed that 'dance' in dance movement therapy meant finding the cause of stress of the client through self-directed movement, which is the most fundamental and basic method.

2. Functional Technique

In body movement Therapy emphasis is placed on the alignment of the body as a phenomenological methodology for 'awareness' of the body.¹⁵⁾ Study of Evan and Bird Larson has laid the foundation for her functional technique of anatomical and appropriate methods of rehabilitating and educating the body. Functional techniques included body posture, body coordination, and structural placement of body parts and rhythms. Ivan emphasized the strengthening and alignment of the spine, which is the basis of all movement. She also mentioned human upright walking as the only characteristic that was distinguished from all other species and believed that it accompanied emotional responsibility and physical task of balancing the body. Ivan believed that the power of the spine determines the overall stress using the body. Body alignment through body reorientation is a fundamental factor for body perception.

The right alignment of the body results in the recognition of body perception, which accompanies spirit, and eventually suggests promotion of healthy mind and body. The projection technique comes from creative dance, the cornerstone of Ivan's work. Ivan used projection techniques for self-expression and diagnostic purposes. A projection is a dramatic concept that is contrary to identification. A projection is a mental process in which one imagines that another person feels as if he feels it, or more broadly, imagines that another person is like himself. When people have negative emotions to an object, they often defend themselves from negative emotions by projecting it to another object. The positive function of the projection is that people project their qualities to the outside in order to experiment while playing with reality in a safe distance.¹⁶⁾ Man is the only mammal that has achieved a vertical posture that stands at approximately a 90 degree angle to the base. There are theories that many of our illnesses are caused by the effort to maintain this verticality.¹⁷⁾ To

15) Eun-Sook Cho, and Kyung-Hee Lee(2012), Study on Breathing in Body Movement Therapy-Centering on Bartenieff fundamentals, Piatas and Topf Technique-, *The Korea Journal of Dance Studies*, p. 175.

16) Yang Eun Mi(2008), Projecting of stressed single woman into a drama, Dongshin University graduate thesis. p. 87.

change posture means that you want to be upright in forego postural fixations of childhood and the stubbornness of neurosis, to feel worthy enough to occupy and to command the space in which you move. It is granted you by nature. This does not forego natural moods or dips from high to low. Even in real depression, psychologists now agree in recommending movement as an integral part of therapy. Posture in each individual amounts to how he is coping with inertia. Dance therapy is based on the ‘muscle memory’ concept used by physical therapists. Gestures and posture can reveal much about a person’s underlying feeling of inferiority, self-consciousness, fears and frustrations which by words and social masks people hide from others and especially themselves. The therapist looks beyond these pretenses by diagnosing movements and directs the client through improvisational exercises designed to free him of self-defeating attitudes which block the actualization of human potential. Through improvisation under the guidance of the dance therapist in the safe, controlled environment of the studio students ‘dance out’ their emotions, releasing them from the body’s muscular memory. Once feeling are exposed, students can become aware of and accept them for what they are emotions. They can with them constructively by redirecting their insights toward change and personal growth.

”Normally disturbed” is my own term(as are the other designations in quotes) to describe the person of our time who rejects the blatant characteristics of contemporary society, who is harassed by the noise, the megalomania, the success story unattainable for most, who is aghast at the violence, the junior delinquency and the adult atom bomb, who as a result is often depressed, discouraged, confused. The prevalent person of our time profits therapeutically in creative dance especially when the teacher utilizes content that makes contact with the hurt areas. I separate these “social neuroses’ from personality problems of the individual neurotic student.¹⁸⁾

Nature’s mechanism to maintain psychophysical health relies on movement. Dance/Movement Therapy is based on the body in actual movement. Not just any standard exercise, but movement which through concentration and guidance evokes from within, a movement based on stifled feeling a movement that expresses your present and at times your future. You move according to your individual structure, function, social mores, and habit. No one can move as you do because no one equates your unique to totality. Out of your individuality you can create movement just as a novice can pick up a piece of chalk and draw or a brush with colors and paint. Evan helps students further by prescribing corrective exercises based on functional technique to re-educate the muscles, to change the old and develop new movement habits, which re-enforce psycho-physical balance. The creation and selection of a dance technique plain and undramatic, devoid of pat “forms” of expression, can

17) Blanche Evan(1978), The tree, the spine, and the Myth of posture, *Sedona Life Journal*, April, May, p. 155.
18) *Ibid.*, p. 94.

leave the student relatively free of influence, and make the way clear for the student's own movement imagery. The human body function only movement: the inner moving process of muscles, joints, nerves, glands, and the five senses live by movement. Mentality and spirituality derive from a body in motion internally and necessity externally.¹⁹⁾ Through movements, we can have the opportunity to strengthen the muscles of the human body and improve the endurance, sensitivity, vitality and vitality; the neural system principle of movement started with the belief that it can have a more expressive effect than any language form of communication. A spin which support and easily achieves verticality while also having the potential for fluid grace flexibility seem to convey an important message: "This person is proud to be the human being s/he is and is comfortable attending to the world."²⁰⁾ Spinal level of development in the human being. Indeed, the culture is quite deprecating of a person who has not achieved a sense of self, whose intenal support does not allow them to reside easily in a fluid upright relation to gravity.

IV. Conclusion

Recently, with the rapid change of our society, individuals are experiencing more and more stress in social relations in which demand of repressive emotional relief is increasing. The overall issues of the society are beyond what individuals can accept or understand in that fatigue from mental and physical exhaustion has been appealing. These social phenomena have been receiving attention on the question of how to carry out the mental health of an individual and interest in art therapy, as an alternative, has been increasing recently. Especially, since personal well-being ultimately being possible in the integration of body and mind has been recognized, people have begun to acknowledge that they can achieve true personal well-being in body-mind integration rather than simple physical exercise. Considering that dance therapy originally started with the healing power that dance carries, Evan thought that the dance therapists best utilized the original power of dance. Through her artistic career as a dancer and choreographer, she believed in the therapeutic power of dance. Her theoretical foundation was to connect the gap between mind and body and to restore vitality from suppression and lost vitality through the recovery of the body in form of dance. Evan focused on the creativity and improvisation of the dance and believed that these factors were the resources of dance movement therapy that could integrate mind and body. She believed that effective dance and body movements could play a decisive role in stabilizing the mind and body in that it became the basis of her therapeutic

19) Ibid., p.142.

20) Peggy Hackney(1998), Making connections; Total body Integration though Barenieff Fundamentals, Gordon and Breach Publishers, p. 85.

theory. Dance movement therapy, which was started by Marian Chace in the United States, was introduced in Korea about 15 years ago. Most of the literature on dance movement therapy has been mostly focused on the two figures, Marian Chace in the East and Mary Whitehouse in the West.

Evan's theory and techniques are not yet well-known in Korea; however, given the emphasis on dance and that the creative movement in improvisation are important therapeutic factors, its expandability is considered to be unlimited in academic acceptance in the field of dance art. Evan's therapeutic technique through creative dance improvisation as a methodology for those who do not have issues in daily life but need to escape from mental stress. She pointed out that emphasizing creative movement which is the essence of dance movement therapy and emphasizing the importance of body alignment. Even though Evan's dance movement therapy technique, which targeted clients with urban neurosis, did not receive much attention in the era of dance movement emergence, I think it is worthy of further research as a psychotherapeutic methodology for numerous people suffering from stress in the modern days. Evan's therapeutic intervention was originated from the human's natural resource, and this, perhaps, is one of the most useful dance movement therapy techniques. I hope this study will be an academic resource for a more divers dance movement therapy methodology.

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Dance movement therapy, which is based on the artistic characteristic of dance, is emphasized as creativity in the therapeutic process. Creativity is not only the process of creation as a medium of art but also the process of creating a personal life and personality itself in a positive direction. Evan main interest was improvisational dance with creative and emotional potential. Evan believed that dance therapy was the most original and basic, self-directed movement to find the source of the stress of the client. Evan's main goal was to connect the sense of gap between the mind and body in order to restore vitality that was suppressed or lost through the recovery of the body in the form of dance.

Keywords: Dance/Movement Therapy(무용/동작 치료), Creative dance(창의적 무용), Neurotic(신경증), Therapeutic intervention(치료적 개입), Adlerian individual psychotherapy(아들러 학설)