

e-motion



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EDITORIAL

I am delighted to announce that following the AGM in June 2007, we now have a working editorial team, and thanks goes to those who have stepped forward to volunteer in assisting with *e-motion* in the future: Ana Maria Corredor, Goretti Bajacobi and Caroline Frizell.

Following our change to a web-based newsletter and the wonderful Special Edition during the summer, we are very pleased to offer you a range of news and articles from the 'moving' community of our profession.

We are privileged to be able to publish *A Postmodern Approach to Dance Movement Therapy: a prequel from 1999* by Beatrice Allegranti SrDMT. Beatrice is Course Convenor for the Dance Movement Therapy Post graduate/ MA training at Roehampton University, and has been working at length on developing her theories related to her approaches to DMT and gender. Beatrice writes: "Now, as I am completing my doctoral project I see *exactly how and where my practice is underscored by feminist approaches to therapy, poststructuralist understandings of language, and performativity...*".

Rosa Shreeves shares with us some of her personal writings from her travels to Mexico and Guatemala, where she reflects on her connections with both the people and the

indigenous dance within the context of culture in her article *Cultural Connections*.

We have received several writings from our community in Brief Reports from the Field, and welcome the sharing of thoughts and news from all who have taken the time to write:

Tricia Mason writes a reflective paper: *Reflections on leaving my DMT post in Hackney*.

Sarah Holden updates us on her next phase of working as a private practitioner in: *Taking a New Direction: From National Health Service Care to Providing a Personal Service*.

Alyson Nehren writes from New York informing us of a new DMT DVD arriving shortly as a resource from the US, and other news. *Letter from New York, August 2007*.

Please keep writing and sharing your news, students, practitioners and anyone who has something to say, and perhaps to get a shared dialogue moving between us. We are a small community with much to share, and the newsletter offers us a valuable way to keep connected, both to our own reflective practice and to that of others.

Its easy to send in your articles, just write to tracey.french.emotion@yahoo.co.uk

We look forward to receiving your words, and wish you happy reading,

Tracey French, editor

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NEWS FROM ADMT-UK COUNCIL

Following the ADMT AGM on 16th June 2007 at Siobhan Davies Studios, London, we are delighted for the unanimous vote to appoint Geoffery Unkovich as Chairperson for Council, and two new council members.

Council would like to thank all who stood down from council for all of their commitment and contribution to ADMT over the years. Thanks goes to:

Eilla Goldhahn
Barbara Feldkeller
Susan Scarth
Karen Rosevear
Sarah Holden

Current Council Members for ADMT-UK:

Geoffery Unkovich – Chairperson
Marie Ware – Vice Chair, ETC (Education and Training Committee)
Tracey French – *e-motion* and workshops
Jacqueline Butler – Treasurer and Finance
Kedzie Penfield
Pauline Sayhi
Shirley Mawer

Co-opted council member: Liz Payne
Andrew Clements – Administrator

It is with thanks that we include the speech given at the AGM 07 for Susan Scarth. Council wish her success and happiness in her next “leap” into something new!

THANKS TO SUSAN SCARTH – ADMT Chairperson for four years from 2003 – 2007

Speech written by Tracey French, and given on 16th June 07 AGM:

In the time that Susan has been chair, I have been lucky enough to work alongside her for two of those years on council.

Susan met with me face to face at the Southbank in 2004 as a way of discovering and supporting my work with *e-motion* newsletter. At this point I had just taken over the role of editor, I immediately liked this lady who seemed to be both open and caring, while at the same time strong and challenging. This is one of Susan’s strong points – meeting people face to face, and really being ‘present’ to the “getting down to business”. This is just one of Susan’s strengths that has aided her in carrying forward what can be seen as, some MAMMOTH tasks for ADMT.

I speak today from a place of thanks and gratitude. It felt extremely important to give recognition to the work and passion that Susan has put into ADMT over these 4 years, here today, in front of you, our members.

To name just a few of the larger tasks carried forward in promoting and regulating our profession (as there are so many, I wanted to highlight the work that Susan has done, alongside her colleagues who have aided in the work) that really has allowed us to become the “professional” Profession that we are today:

- HPC (health professions council) Application – Susan has worked extremely hard in getting ADMT accepted by HPC.
- Implementing and supporting the very needed and essential role of Administrator. We now run far more efficiently as a profession, with so much background work being done it would take me the rest of the day to name it!
- Working to Foster a strengthened relationship with the other arts Therapies – music, drama, art. This essential building of relationships can only strengthen our position in the umbrella of “Arts Therapies” as we go through some large changes within our work places.
- Susan has seen us through the AFC (agenda for Change), making sure we were seen and heard as a profession. She has also taken much time to make sure our needs as members were met and that we were given up to date information with regards to working in NHS environments during these hugely infuriating changes imposed upon us.

Susan has stated that she wishes to stay in touch with the needs of ADMT and will continue to offer support where needed in the future.

Administration Update:

Andrew Clements will be available for ADMT administration needs on **Tuesdays and Fridays**. This has been changed from Thursdays and Fridays. Please take note of this for the immediate future.

Andrew would also like to urgently alert members of a fault in the current e-mailing system. It is no longer possible to contact Andrew or ADMT through this e-mail: admin@admt.org.uk. Please do not use this for future e-mailing. Andrew has kindly offered a more reliable contact in the interim period:

For all enquiries please contact: clementsas@aol.com

Other News – “Watch this Space!”

Change of Professional Name:

As decided at the AGM, Council will shortly be announcing its Launch date for the “Association of Dance Movement Psychotherapy UK”. Watch this space for details!

Annual Conference 2008

ADMT will be announcing dates and programme details for the forthcoming Conference in September 2008 in the Winter edition of *e-motion*. If you wish to help out in any capacity, please start by sending an e-mail to Andrew at the above address.

ADMT-UK Workshops

It is with great excitement that ADMT will be giving 2 CPD one day workshop/seminars by March 2008. So keep a look out for information which will be sent out to all members. These workshops will be valuable to counting towards your yearly CPD requirements as well as a good way to re-connect with people from the profession. We aim to provide these at a cost that is affordable to our members and other interested professionals.



A Postmodern Approach to Dance Movement Therapy: a prequel from 1999

Beatrice Allegranti, SrDMT

This article emerges from my Masters dissertation 'Exploring the Social Construction of Gender through Movement Improvisation' which I completed in 1997. Aspects of this research were presented at the Arts Therapies International Conference in Wales in 1997 and subsequently for a paper which I then submitted to the ADMT UK in 1999, for my senior registration. Rather than leave this paper on the shelf I have decided to offer it to the DMT community (as originally written) as it details my formative thoughts and research as a fledgling DMT. Looking at the past from the present (although my practice and the way I speak and write about it has evolved) I can see that the essence of what is presented in this paper is still relevant today, particularly within the pedagogical context of Roehampton University where my students are now engaging with the newly revalidated and re-accredited MA programme which foregrounds postmodernist approaches to DMT. I hope that this paper will also offer some insights to seasoned practitioners.

A decade later 'A Postmodern Approach to DMT' may be seen as a 'prequel' to my existing work (Allegranti 2002, 2004) and forthcoming research and publications. Now, as I am completing my doctoral project I see exactly how and where my practice is underscored by feminist approaches to therapy, poststructuralist understandings of language and performativity as explained in my forthcoming article 'Embodied Performances of Sexuality and Gender within DMT'. For more information about my DMT and Performance practice, research activities and publications please visit www.personaltextpublicbody.com.

Introduction

As a Dance Movement Therapist I work in a variety of contexts including in adult mental health, with elders in the community, in an educational context for adults with learning disabilities, with children who have special needs and with post-graduate dance movement therapy trainees. Additionally, as a professional dancer, my work with movement improvisation has led me to train post-graduate actors. Within each place of work I position myself in relation to, and work differently according to the needs of the individuals or group.

The way I practice dance movement therapy (DMT) is influenced mainly by the work of pioneer Marian Chace, as it allows me to explore the 'egalitarian' therapeutic movement relationship (Schmais, C, in P. Lewis, 1986) with its emphasis on a social circle formation. This offers the opportunity for "leadership [to be] easily shifted amongst members and [letting] people choose who they wish to

follow, be near, or avoid" (Lewis, P., 1986, p27) thus sharing power amongst the group in an improvisational way. Additionally I also incorporate aspects of Mary Whitehouse's 'authentic movement' approach which derives from the Jungian concept of 'active imagination' (1968). I consider this approach is also improvisational, since it requires an inner listening of the body's wisdom by attending to the ongoing stream of bodily-felt information such as images, sensations and feelings. This 'looking inward' is considered a necessary aspect of the 'individuation process' (Whitehouse, M. in Lewis, P., 1986, p66) which focuses on integration of opposites, including conscious and unconscious material.

As professional dancer and choreographer I have been influenced by Steve Paxton who taught me to work with the contact improvisation (CI) form. This dance form involves creating in the present moment, and is characterised by two bodies, regardless of gender, moving and co-creating a pathway in space whilst touching and sharing body weight. Moreover, I take 'contact' (in this instance touch) as a metaphor for 'relating' with another person. 'Movement relationships' in the CI form are guided by the dancer's sense of how to maintain body contact and continue the exchange of support. There is a use of three dimensional pathways in space, making spiral, curved, or circular lines with the body.

Initially, my (Masters) research intention was to make a practical 'intervention' whereby I created a movement experience which gave women and men the opportunity to play with different ways of identifying with themselves and others. So, together with my improvisational approach, I organised and facilitated two one-day workshops in January and February of 1996, which were entitled 'The MindBody Workshop: exploring the flow of opposites within creative dance movement improvisation'. My intention in these workshops was two fold; to draw from skills in my chosen profession as a dance movement therapist, as well as my background as a dancer.

Therefore my initial hypothesis at the onset of these workshops was to specifically attend to the notion of integration of female and male opposites in movement improvisation (Jung, C. G, 1973, Whitehouse, M. in Lewis, P,1986). Consequently, in the workshops I invited participants to draw from past and present ideas about themselves in movement, however during the workshops I observed that the men and women were playfully experimenting with their own embodiment of gender.



Their dances were reciprocal and constantly evolving conversations, which allowed duets or trios involving partnerships of women and men, men and men and, women and women. This provided a chance to construct atypical gender roles and dismantle gender hierarchies, and allow for a potentially empowering exchange.

Consequently, I discovered that the way I use improvisation in DMT has an impact in relation to meanings of gender and, as a result of this, I became aware of the social construction of gender. Thereby changing my initial hypothesis from integration of opposites to an exploration of *how* men and women collectively construct gender in movement improvisation.

The social construction of gender provides a perspective about alternative ways of ‘doing’ gender’ (West and Zimmerman, in Lorber and Farrell, 1991). This view suggests that society’s prevailing images of what it means to hold ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ qualities retain belief systems which propagate power inequalities and limit self expression, “thus if, men are doing gender, men are also doing dominance and women are doing deference” (West and Zimmerman, 1991, p32), consequently it is in my interest as a woman to challenge these social and linguistic definitions which may not necessarily reflect the way we choose to understand ourselves as individuals. Therefore I felt it somewhat naive and irrelevant to place women and men in such restrictive ‘opposing’ categories which carry stereotypical associations, needless to say the damaging effects of these stereotypes on body and mind. Finally, my aims in doing the research were to be aware of, and not maintain ‘fixed’ notions of gender, and thus unwittingly perpetuate disempowering gender stereotypes as a woman and a DMT practitioner.

For the purposes of this paper, I present the following; a brief methodology which highlights my Postmodern ethical stance in the research. A brief literature review which discusses inquiry into gender and examples of this from modernist and Postmodern positions, as well as, my ‘translation’ of Postmodern positions into movement, exemplified by my research. A discussion of wider implication of themes from my research, suggests further affinities with Postmodern psychological and sociological principles, which I consider break from traditional notions of gender. Finally, a reflection on my learning from the research as well as from my observations of practice, suggesting the usefulness for a Postmodern approach to DMT.

I have chosen to write in the first person or ‘active voice’ (Tong.R., 1989, p228) and in doing so I seek to challenge the dominant ideology which stresses a linear and objective third person voice. Narrating in an impersonal way can be considered as an excuse for a passive voice and, as Irigaray further argues, this distances subject from object and hides the identity of the speaker from the reader/listener (in Tong 1989, p228). If I were to remain absent from this research

I would be maintaining the status quo values of authority and power.

Instead, I wish to speak in a way that emphasises rhythm by allowing for many meanings to be present. I consider that speaking in a gender neutral voice suggests a naivety as, my position as a female researcher and DMT practitioner is clearly not a neutral one since I am actively involved in moving with a group in a session. Consequently, I seek to reveal my active involvement in this research where I stress co-construction between myself as researcher/therapist, and participants, as well as between gender positions.

Methodology

The Postmodern ethical stance in my research reflects the way that I practice. My aims were: on a methodological level to dissolve a hierarchical approach to inquiry and on an epistemological level to **co-construct meaning** in the context of participants experiences. As a result the change of emphasis was from an observation of, to **an interaction** with, a social world. The subsequent ‘construction-site’ for knowledge in the research was based around two semi-structured interviews involving nine women and men, following two one-day movement improvisation workshops. The participants’ verbal processing of their movement experiences was the focus of my analysis¹, and considering the claims for co-constructed ‘knowledge production’ the question guiding the research was, **what meanings** did participants and myself as researcher co-construct in conversation?

The Gender Question

I have come to privilege the term ‘gender’ since it highlights the cultural construction of gender as the psychological phenomenon of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’, which is distinct from the biological construction of ‘sex’ as the physical reality of genes and genitalia with their differing hormonal states and secondary sexual characteristics (Segal, L. 1990, p66).

In their work, Rachel Hare-Mustin and Jean Marecek (1988) establish that psychological research on gender has typically focused on two lines of enquiry (also echoed in attitudes to race and culture); ‘alpha bias’ which is the exaggeration of gender differences as evidenced in psychodynamic theories, and the ‘beta bias’ which is the tendency to minimise gender difference exemplified in the systemic approach². The authors conclude that difference is a problematic way to construe gender since the assumptive frameworks of the alpha and beta bias both ineffectively challenge the gender hierarchy. Their use of the term bias suggests “that all ideas about difference are social constructs; none can be mirrors of reality” (1990, p30). Informed by Postmodern theory, which questions the fixed nature of reality, the authors conclude that gender is a social construction and that “assertions about male-female differences and similarities do not



have a single, fixed meaning” (1994, p531). I consider this Postmodern perspective of gender is coherent with my aims theoretically and in practice, since I do not seek to exaggerate gender differences, but seek to explore a multiplicity of gendered standpoints.

Within my research paper, I chose to investigate two ‘lines of inquiry’, one informed by feminist psychodynamic theory and the other by Laban movement analysis. Discourse from these areas was intended to provide an understanding for how exaggeration of gender differences was not coherent with my research aims, as well as my ethical stance. Furthermore, I locate these positions in a ‘modernist’ context as they both operate from a position of fixed reality and therefore suggest that gender is a fixed stable entity. Turning to these modernist positions now, exemplifies how exaggeration of gender differences sustains gender hierarchies.

Feminist psychodynamic theorists, Chodrow (1979), Orbach and Eichenbaum (1983, 1986), seek to challenge traditional social gender roles by providing a revised developmental theory³. I share affinity with areas of this feminist thinking where it can be argued that there is a collective commitment to the undermining of oppressive gender based power relations. For me as a DMT practitioner, Chodrow’s work raises useful questions since she argues that the traditional developmental trajectory is inaccurate, as it is a description of the male developmental trajectory in this culture. I believe this to be an important reconsideration since DMT relies on the traditional psychodynamic model.

Consequently, Chodrow provides a definition of *female* maturity based on attachment and not separation, maintaining that the development of gender identity formed in infancy is dependent on inner dynamics which establish gender differences where;

“the boy’s separateness from his mother is the source of his inability to relate to others, an inability that prepares him for work in the public sphere, which values single-minded efficacy, a down to earth business attitude, and competitiveness, [whereas] the girl’s oneness with her mother is the source of her capacity for relatedness, a capacity that is necessary for her role as a nurturing mother in the private sphere” (in Segal, L. 1988, p58).

Although Chodrow provides an explanation for the individual within a social context she clearly suggests that male and female infants follow different developmental paths according to their relationship with their mother. Perhaps this overlooks another view such as that presented by Lorber who believes that psycho-social roles are reinforced by elicited gendered responses from parents and others and that this is reflected in the first question we ask about a new born baby; “is it a boy or a girl ?” (1994, p13). I believe that these gender differences can be seen

to further distinguish the lives of male and female children in a pernicious manner. Therefore, society maintains ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ into differentiated social groups, and children need to internalise group distinctions in order to function as ‘social actors’.

Orbach and Eichenbaum follow in Chodrow’s footsteps by claiming that “daughters provide nurturance, as did their mothers before them...[and]...boys are not raised to develop the emotional antennae girls acquire” (1983, p75). Conversely, Segal importantly points out that “most women do not painlessly slip into their roles as women, if indeed they do at all” (1987, p128) and for me, this indicates that women have the choice of not following gendered conventions which may prove restricting. Additionally, Mason and Mason (in J. Perlberg and A.C. Miller, 1990) consider that aspects of socially constructed masculinity are deeply problematic and that men need to move away from patriarchal restrictions in order to “improve their understanding of their emotions and be able to express them in a way that is not oppressive to others” (1990, p213).

I consider ‘developmental’ revisionism an extremely relevant area, because it points towards a revaluing of the feminine position which is largely ignored in the traditional developmental model and in our society. For this reason the work may be considered as a necessary process in order to dismantle hierarchical gender relations and patriarchal thinking. It also has further implications for DMT which relies on traditional psychodynamic principles.

However, feminist psychodynamic theory can be said to assume a modernist position since generalisations about individual psychologies appear to mirror the generalisations they make about social phenomena. According to this view, gender is seen as a stable entity acquired at birth and this produces enduring differences in behaviour, identity and relational capacities. However, I consider these differences as gender stereotyped roles for men and women.

Paradoxically, by exaggerating gender differences the feminist revised developmental model to follow a line of inquiry which substitutes the male research object with the female research object⁴. For this reason these feminist research methods can be considered as “context-stripping” (Parlee, M.B. in Duelli-Klien, R, 1983, p91), which means that social interactions are simplified by methods which lift them out of their context, stripping them of the very complexity that characterises them in the real world. By doing this, feminist psychodynamic theorists implicitly maintain the imbalance of power relations between men and women which they originally set out to challenge and I consider that this may not be a useful way to understand and research gender.

Sheinberg and Penn who are also influenced by the



school of feminist revisionism suggest Keller's concept of "dynamic autonomy [where] increased complexity in relatedness replaces individuation and separation as the premise of development" (in, 1991, p35)⁵. I consider this re-description of development as a process of increasingly complex forms of relatedness a useful one for the construction of gender, however I seek to explore alternating states of connection and differentiation through the body in movement improvisation.

Looking towards the context of movement research, Warren Lamb's (1992) study of gender incorporates Laban movement analysis. I consider Lamb's initial intentions important as he seeks to "provide an understanding for the shift in gender roles, particularly the emergence of women into a place of power in society" (p141). Thus in Effort-Shape language Lamb describes his observations people's postural expressions in a variety of social contexts such as 'parks, airports and stage performances' around the world. For example, Lamb's findings, based on observations of men and women embracing are that,

"women spread their arms to welcome men, growing and spreading simultaneously...[whilst]...men enclose women to them. In the process they grow, shape their posture into a concave retreating movement, and may include a descending movement" (p147).

Instead of viewing these men and women in their social context, Lamb suggests an approach which *distinguishes* between male and female movement, and further postulates a search for "intrinsic differences - as free from cultural conditioning as possible" (p136). In other words, Lamb's underlying hypothesis is that gender differences intrinsically exist, and consequently his research method is based on 'objective' experiments where he sets out to 'prove' his initial hypothesis; that women and men are 'intrinsically' different cross culturally. Consequently, the weakness of Lamb's approach is that it may be considered to operate from a modernist position since his underlying assumptions suggest a 'fixed' and stereotypical view of gender.

I now turn to more recent feminist research as well as Chaplin's psychological model (1988) as I consider that these perspectives exist in a Postmodern sphere. These are positions with which I share an affinity, since there is a collective focus on the social construction of reality, therefore gender is considered within a social context. For example, recent feminist psychological research has concluded that studying gender differences perpetuates gender stereotypes (Hare-Mustin, R. and J. Marecek, 1994, Holloway, W. 1994, Eagly, A.H. 1994, Halpern, D.F. 1994) and that gender is a complex mixture of traits, roles and behavioural preferences influenced by situational demands (Unger, R. in Hare-Mustin and Marecek 1990, p102). This perspective is reflected in Fischer's study on sex differences in emotionality (1993) which concludes that

different cultural rules exist for the expression of emotions, "the rule for men is that they should hide and control their emotions. For women on the other hand the rules of emotional expression seem to be less restrictive: they are allowed, even reinforced, to show their emotions" (1993, p310), which can also act as a self fulfilling prophecy.

Fischer's research provides an important understanding of gender: when viewing in these restrictive terms emotion becomes a 'feminine' domain which is associated with 'weakness' and thus undervalued and 'masculinity' carries associations of 'strength' which is equally restrictive. Additionally, I consider that these gender divisions importantly highlight the fact that in order to fulfil gendered expectations and 'appropriate' behaviour, women and men need to follow certain 'rules' in order to perform their gender accordingly.

Feminist counsellor Jocelyn Chaplin also recognises the damage of gender stereotyping in women's and men's psyches and bodies in our hierarchical society. Chaplin stresses the need to go beyond limited gender expectations, encouraging that "associations and characteristics previously associated with females, such as caring, empathy, recognising interconnections, containing, co-operating and being in touch with cyclical change, are available to everyone" (1988, p10). Consequently she offers a psychological 'rhythm' model⁶ which emphasises "pro-equality rather than pro-hierarchy" (1988, p5) and this allows for a both/and instead of either/or theory.

I consider that this model provides a useful psychological understanding of how to view gender as the spiral emphasises the interconnection of opposites over time, and that there needs to be a balance between the 'so called' masculine and feminine sides of ourselves but Chaplin acknowledges that these labels carry restrictive and hierarchical associations.

More recently, Chaplin explains her affinity with current ideas in postmodernism. She refers to the term 'equalizing' (1997) in other words, constant liveliness and change over time, and I read this as a useful metaphor for movement improvisation, which involves non-static constantly changing realities. Consequently, the spiral is a useful psychological model since it reflects my use of improvisation as an ongoing process with no fixed meanings, also suggesting a multiplicity of gender identifications which can be co-constructed by people in interaction. Furthermore, Aldridge recommends that "improvisation demands the maintenance of a theme that must change to gain liveliness. So our lives are improvised, from the cellular to the cerebral, to maintain our identities intact" (1986, p108) and I argue that the fluidity of interaction in improvisation may encourage a re-construction of gender meanings in ways which do not sustain psycho-social power inequalities.



This review of literature has shown there has been a shift in perception in the way gender is considered with most recent research being strongly influenced by Postmodern ideas, where gender is considered in social interaction. This position is in contrast to previous research and theoretical positions, as reflected in the feminist psychodynamic model and by Lamb's movement analysis, as both maintain fixed notions of inquiring into gender both physically and psychologically, and may be said to be operating from a modernist position.

It may be further argued that paying attention to the social construction of gender suggests that there are no either/or categories in terms of identity or expression of emotionality or behaviour. Instead there are multiple determinants as recent feminist research and Postmodern positions indicate. For me, this seems to be a more democratic understanding of gender which I believe to be available in movement improvisation, since women and men are afforded the possibility of placing themselves in a variety of psycho-physical positions, according to the context and interaction rather than relying on gender stereotypes. Consequently, the unusual nature of my research lies in the fact that the social construction of gender, it seems, has never been researched in the context of movement improvisation. Next, I will discuss examples from my research and elaborate links to Postmodern psychology.

A Multiplicity of Gendered Standpoints

The following section explains a Postmodern approach to viewing Gender as the main context, drawing on examples from my research. My intention is to elaborate links with Postmodern ideas mentioned earlier, and more specifically to extend these ideas with the notions of "decentering of the self, the move from the inside of the psyche to the text of the world, and the emphasis on practical knowledge" (Kvale, S.1992, p1) which, Kvale (1992) argues are a break with major psychological assumptions.

Within my research, the 'many stories' or movement conversations in the egalitarian space gave rise to a multiplicity of gendered standpoints emotionally as well as physically. I encouraged participants to experiment or 'research' what they normally do in everyday life, in other words to 'converse' in movement.

The interactive way in which participants explored, offered a new vocabulary which illuminated dimensions of gender experience obscured by modernist vision. Therefore, participants had the opportunity to make references to existing belief systems of gendered communication and go beyond the formal dichotomous rules. I believe that this was made possible by emphasis on 'practical knowledge' (Kvale, S. 1992), in other words learning from bodily experience. Consequently, the men and women participated by: '**performing**', '**observing**' and '**playing**', all three of which are important components of improvisational experiences identified by participants⁷ in the data are discussed below.

Aldridge proposes that "the body is a canvas upon which our identities are performed" (1996, p108) and since movement qualities are embodied and offer the opportunity to 'try out' different perspectives I argue that participants can be seen to have **performed various identities** in relation to other movers. In this instance performing is possible through exploration of different movement qualities and interactions for example, dyadic or triadic exchanges may be considered as metaphors for different types of relationships where participants had the possibility of experiencing a variety of 'rhythms' with different people in each exchange and response.

Each exchange or movement response may be seen to suggest a **variety of contexts rather than fixed qualities**, and each movement interaction with another person can elicit a different response in each changing moment, therefore it is possible for the movers to assimilate a variety of characteristics from each other. These new qualities are reflected, mirrored and absorbed in interaction with another, and the process of identification in movement is constructed in relation to others in the group. Consequently, the participants revealed that this **re-positioning and re-shaping** around others in space offered an opportunity to challenge habitual postures and interactions. This may be seen in contrast to Lamb's (1992) theory that posture remains static for women and men.

As a result, these improvised movement exchanges can be said to allow for "self-identity [to be] constituted and reconstituted relationally, [and] its boundaries [to be] repeatedly remapped and renegotiated" (Lather in Kvale, S., 1992, p101). In the mixed gender 'research' groups participants were "placed in relation to those around [them]" (Shotter in Kvale, S. 1994, p67) quite literally with bodies in motion. This psycho-physical repositioning of self-identity may be linked with Shotter's understanding that "**the postmodern self** may be something of a mosaic, no self is completely an island, in Postmodern everyday life...**one occupies a multiplicity of standpoints**" (in Kvale, S. 1994, p70). Thus, in the **improvisational** landscape I believe that participants had the opportunity to view themselves from a variety of perspectives or positions which may have been outside of their awareness.

This constant re-positioning of the self is in contrast to one 'stable identity' as is the traditional or revised psychodynamic view as proposed by Chodorow (1979). Instead it corresponds to the Postmodern notion of the '**de-centering** of the self' (Kvale, S. 1994, p1). However, the effect of performing many gender positions is that the self may be considered as fragmented, and perhaps having too much choice may also be restrictive. On the other hand, participants revealed that they did not have to choose between identifying solely with stereotypical feminine or masculine qualities, but that they were given the opportunity to explore an infinite variety of qualities, thus moving away from either/or understandings of gender to both/and



possibilities. This further corroborates the claim made by Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1990), that **gender** may be seen as an **ongoing process** expressed in different ways according to the context or interaction the individual is in.

This multiplicity may also be considered in terms of **emotional** expression. Shotter states that emotion “can become more concerned with ‘movements’ in one’s position in relation to those around one; they can be viewed as ‘transitory social roles’ (in Kvale, S., p67). From this perspective an individual’s **emotional expression is context-bound** and not determined by gender. This is a more fluid approach to understanding emotions by revaluing them rather than pathologising according to notions of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’, and Arnold Mindell further argues “just as each group has many types of expressions as it has people, so each person has various modes of perception and expression” (1992, p3).

In movement, participants were afforded the position of ‘**dis-identifying**’ by taking a physical distance from a particular way of being. The observer position may therefore be argued as an important function since it provides the opportunity to ‘stand back’ from the landscape and observe the stereotypical roles that may be habitually played. Therefore, these gender roles in this context are not fixed but are improvised, and the observer position may also provide a ‘base’ for reflection and/or **an alternative position**.

Participants found it necessary to ‘re-write’ the past, and Shotter remarks that “remembering in a social group clearly raises matters of authority” (in Kvale, S. 1992, p68). Furthermore, in the research data the mixed gender group revealed that matters of power were relevant, as well as finding ways to **(re)formulate disempowering relationships** amongst gendered interactions. Concurring with Fischer’s study (1993), I believe that the data shows that participants had recognised social ‘gender rules’ however, they sought to re-construct them and thus gain authority to navigate their own maturation and growth. Billing further argues that “rules do not exist only to be followed; they also have to be created, interpreted and challenged” (in Kvale, S. 1992, p48). I consider that the process of ‘re-writing the past’ may be an empowering one, since it allowed participants the freedom to choose **and re-invent ‘scripted’ gender roles**.

Consequently, the effect of re-constructing rules was that participants were able to play with new meanings, and play was another activity identified as important in the improvisational exchanges. Playing in this improvisational context may have been a further recapitulation into childhood memories or re-membling a pre-linguistic developmental bodily state. It may have enabled participants to play with a ‘given’ gendered developmental pattern and to continue to explore different types of relationship formation. This may also suggest the possibility of **playing with (and changing) signifying postures and gestures** through which gender is established (in other words old rules, habits and patterns) and

find more **‘local’ pathways** towards growth and awareness, and this paradoxically leads the individual to re-acquire child-like spontaneity since “play can be a serious business, as any child will remind us” (Aldridge 1996, p111). In this case maturity, growth and change may be about being able to play with possibilities of gender identity and thus having the freedom to choose, instead of unquestioningly accepting the certainties. Therefore I am not suggesting discarding all that we know (since this is impossible) but that by playing with what we know, we can **bridge past and present identifications**. As a result of conversing in less restrictive patterns participants were not “invaded by social forces” (Serlin, I. 1996, p147) but had the possibility of re-shaped social attitudes through the body.

In conclusion, participants were afforded the opportunity to perform a variety of positions and identifications, to dis-identify from the habitual as well as to play with established gender rules of the past, and find ways to spontaneously **re-invent** themselves according to the interaction in the present moment. Therefore, I consider that for these participants to explore the social construction of gender through movement improvisation was an invitation into part of an ongoing process, which may be said to transcend disempowering gender stereotypes pervasive in our society. Reflections on the relevance of this research for DMT theory and practice are considered next.

DMT in a Postmodern Age

The strength of the research carried out, lies in its being one of the first studies to be carried out into the experience of gender through movement improvisation. Consequently, my theoretical explorations derived from the research data are taken back into my practice of DMT allowing it to be reformed and challenged. My intention in this next part is not only to reflect on this personal change, but also to suggest how these new ideas may assist other practitioners in theory and practice, as well as those participating in DMT.

Although not self-consciously Postmodern, I believe the practice of DMT specifically using **improvisation** demonstrates the effectiveness of using **Postmodern principles**, and in the research carried out, these principles have provided a useful context for creating meanings regarding gender in a less restrictive manner.

For me, to explore this improvisational way of working as a DMT practitioner has required a Postmodern shift. Anderson and Goolishian (1993) reflect this shift primarily within a linguistic context by proposing adopting a **‘not knowing’** approach in practice. The authors recommended to think of communication as “originating in vague, not-yet cognitively-formulated feelings, of ‘sensed movements’ or ‘sensuous repositions’ to which as a recipient they must reply in some way” (in Shotter, 1993, p130). It may be argued that in improvisational movement communication, facilitator and practitioner do not privilege any one position, but instead, the development of the ability to **move positions**, (verbally



and non-verbally) as they shape and re-shape themselves in each changing movement interaction.

By adopting this perspectival approach my role as facilitator becomes dialectical (Lather, P.1991) or reciprocal. For instance, within the research/workshops, as well as my current practice, I observe my **shift of roles** from directive to non-directive and I consider that this way of attending to process may be seen as **contextualising**, in other words, trying out different strategies according to the situation, or acting in relation to feedback from participants.

Shifting of positions or roles according to the context, allows me to share 'special moments' with participants. Shotter defines these as moments in which therapist's share feelings with their clients in order to "establish with them something of a common ground, a shared basis in which both can intelligibly contribute in their different ways...to the **joint authorship** of a (new) biographical account of the significance of just those very feelings" (1993, p120). Although Shotter does not specifically refer to movement, I consider that a shared relationship is able to develop between myself and participants through role shifting, mirroring and in physical contact, in this way the interaction becomes a shared experience both sensorially and emotionally. **Co-constructing** realities in this way can be seen to reflect a therapeutic dynamic which addresses the interface between participant's meanings and therapist, and the rest of the group's meanings, thus allowing a **multitude of expressions**.

As a consequence of the **fluid re-positioning** available through 'performing', 'observing' and 'playing', non judgementally in the space, I believe that participants within the research, as well as those which I observe in my practice, are invited to create their own '**narratives**' or meanings through improvisation. Aldridge (1996) further suggests that "if the big narratives of modernism are now being replaced by our own personal sets of meaning made locally *with those whom we seek to live*, then we need to understand more about the person before us in the studio" (Aldridge, D. 1996, p109). I suggest that at least one useful way for a practitioner to understand more about the participant in a therapeutic context is to allow them to improvise their own narrative in movement.

Acting in relation to feedback from participants also allows me to be aware of my theoretical 'prejudices', and I suggest that a Postmodern approach to DMT requires theoretical integration which means, drawing on appropriate theoretical focus **as a result of what is presented in practice from the client**. This means, as Chaplin suggests "not thinking in terms of either/or but rather in terms of both the behavioural level and the unconscious psychodynamic level" (1988, p90) but I suggest that beyond these choices involves the attention of the wider social system in which we exist and interact. Moreover, Unger claims that we need "...to abandon the belief that a particular construct can be located in a specific

time of place. We may also need to accept the idea that not only are multiple answers to a question produced in various theoretical frameworks, but other answers will evolve as circumstances change and new paradigmatic frameworks become important" (in Hare-Mustin and Marecek, 1990, p142).

Furthermore, in terms of theory this allows me to "play [with] ideas free of authoritative paradigms" (Lather. P., in S. Kvale, 1992, p96), since this allows for **theory** which is **grounded in practice** and not the other way around. This emphasis on practical knowledge by no means excludes theory but forms the foundations for it, but as Gergen recommends a Postmodern approach calls for a closer relationship between practice and theory (in Kvale, S.1992). For me, this means contextualising on the levels I have described above.

Consequently, as a dance movement therapist operating from a postmodernist position I aim to "elucidate the taken for granted of everyday life [and] furnish people with options or alternatives" (Gergen, K., in S. Kvale, 1992, p27). In the context of DMT I believe this means urging practitioners to look at fixed meanings of ourselves, indeed at the 'paradoxical rules' of gender which are pervasive in our social lives.

What is required however is a "scholarship of critique that constantly sensitizes us to the taken for granted and its imprisoning effects" (Kvale. S, 1992, p26) and in terms of the exploration of gender in the research study sensitizing, for me, has meant a dance of repositioning rather than being restricted by the crushing weight of dualistic representations. I believe that for dance movement therapists an exploration of a constantly changing improvisation vocabulary in an egalitarian context is a pertinent, interesting and exciting way to address the similarities, differences and paradoxes of gender since it provokes both participant and practitioner to constantly reconsider fixed meanings which allows for the randomness and indeterminacy of our everyday lives. Perhaps the usefulness of adopting a 'gender-sensitive' approach in DMT will set the pace for an acknowledgement of a Postmodern age thereby extending the boundaries of the profession, since we have the invaluable tools to do so.

Footnotes

1. The 'research data' was analysed using revised grounded theory method (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1995); this is a method of analysis devised for the social sciences. See Allegranti, B. (1997) Unpublished Manuscript, Roehampton University, for full analysis and transcripts. Available in the DMT department and the Roehampton University Learning Resources Centre.

2. There is less research on the tendency to ignore or minimise gender differences in the 'beta bias'. It can be exemplified by Sandra Bem's theory of psychological androgyny (1976) where a psychological balanced state



is achieved in the integration of only positive feminine and masculine traits (in Tong 1989).

3. Chodrow and other feminists have asked “does the former developmental model make room for both male and female experience or does it make the man the measure of women ?” (Shienberg and Penn, 1991,

4. There is much current feminist literature for example Segal (1987) and Lather (1990), which suggests that replacing androcentric (male biased) with gynocentric (female biased) arguments is no longer adequate for our understanding and research on gender.

5. Sheinberg and Penn (1991) propose the need to open up new conversations about gender and the clinical techniques suggested are “gender questions [and] gender mantras”.

6. The spiral model allows for a fluid approach to understanding gender and it reflects the Jungian model of integration of anima (feminine soul) for men and animus (masculine spirit) for women. However, in movement terms these qualities are characterised by “animus...reason, clarity, strong, quick [and] direct whilst anima...intuition, mystery vision, light, slow [and] indirect” (Lewis, P. 1986, p212). I believe that integration of a variety of qualities is an important principle but there is an indication that these definitions maintain stereotypical associations.

However, Chaplin (1997) acknowledges that Jung was a man of his time and unconscious of his own sexism therefore he does not locate his gendered descriptions in a historical context. In her approach she also considers the importance of not just looking ‘inward’ but also looking outwards at the organisation of everyday life in other words the social context or larger system that the person is in. Thus, when ‘borrowing’ from a Jungian model this points to the usefulness of adopting symbols as ‘stories’ or ‘narratives’ rather than absolute truths.

7. Participants’ verbal dialogue was recorded, transcribed and presented as ‘research data’, subsequently analysed using revised Grounded Theory method. See Allegranti, B. (1997) Unpublished Manuscript, Roehampton, for full analysis and transcripts.

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Beatrice Allegranti MA DMT SRDMT, supervisor, performer, choreographer, filmmaker and Co-ordinator for the part-time MA DMT Programme at Roehampton University London.



Cultural Connections

Rosa Shreeves, SrDMT

Since 1993, I have travelled in Mexico and lately in Guatemala, pursuing a fascination for indigenous dance within the context of the culture. I have met and moved with many people and sometimes taught and performed in their communities sharing from our different backgrounds. My whole perception of what a dance is has broadened, whether it be of a literal dance or one that through my perception and imagination becomes a dance even if movement is not the main ingredient of what I perceive. There is moreover a way in which different aspects of the culture are interdependent and not only preserved but remain a living force in the community. I have learnt so much from these experiences which have impacted on my work and on a personal level, often in very indirect and mysterious ways. In the following extracts from my journals I bring together experiences of my inner and outer journeys and begin to rediscover how writing itself uncovers memories and deeper meanings in the intimate meeting of mind and body.

Extracts from my Personal Journals:

*Antigua, Guatemala, a beautiful, Spanish colonial city, flanked by three volcanoes and famous for its history, colourful markets and artefacts.
Friday 31 March 2006*

THE JADE NECKLACE:

The woman was sitting on the steps of the ancient church. I remember her long, black, braided hair, her colourful huipil (blouse) and falda (skirt), the ubiquitous costume of the Mayan Guatemalan women. The woman begins to display her beautiful jade necklaces, extolling their virtues in soft articulated Spanish, at the same time explaining the historic significance of jade in her own culture.

For her Mayan ancestors jade represents the life that gives strength to the world. The colour green denotes the centre direction and has ritual significance; many of the funeral masks are made of jade.

After a while she gently negotiates a reasonable price and sells me two necklaces, but this is more than an ordinary transaction. As I give her the money, she says, "I don't have a bag for the necklace so I will give you this bracelet instead." Such unexpected generosity touches me.

For a while we talk and exchange a few details about ourselves. Her name is Dona Luisa. She lives alone. Many of her relatives were killed in the disastrous mudslides of 2005 and she is poor. She cannot afford to rent a stall in the market. I feel moved by our contact and how our conversation flows

back and forth. There appears to be no goal; our buying and selling is completed and now the curiosity and delight of our relationship is in the foreground.

I notice the warmth and relaxation in my body and an awareness of her and the gentle, timeless quality of the communication between us. This is our slow dance.

I recollect a poem from the Toltec people of ancient Mexico:

Como es mi cancion? es un pedazo de jade puedo cortalo es mi cancion	What is my song? It is a piece of jade I can cut into it It is my song
---	---

Mira! Look!

Estoy haciendo un collar con cuentas de jade	I am making a necklace with beads of jade
---	--

Es mi cancion es de jade. Gerez 1984:6	It is my song it is jade.
--	------------------------------

This encounter with Dona Luisa reminds me of the wisdom that may emerge as we take time to be in the moment, to quieten the mind allowing inner space and attention to what is emerging.

Although for me inner quiet is affected by but not dependent on external circumstances, I wonder whether here far from the habitual constraints of London life, it is easier to access a sense of calm and spiritual dimension within.

In Guatemalan society too there is the hustle and bustle of everyday life and the ubiquitous world of internet and commerce. There is also great poverty, frustration and sometimes violence, but Donna Luisa's warmth and grounded quality typifies many of the people I met on my travels; people economically poor but rich in spirit.

Rigoberta Menchu writes of Guatemalan indigenous society as:

'A world in which the sacred and the profane constantly mingle, in which worship and domestic life are one and the same, in which every gesture has a pre-established purpose and in which everything has a meaning within that culture, everything is determined in advance; everything that occurs in the present can be explained in terms of the past and has to be ritualized so as to be integrated into everyday life, which is itself a ritual'.



Menchu 1998: xii
Patzcuaro, Michoacan, Mexico
 18 March, 2000

LOS VIEJITOS

The old men's dance, Los Viejitos, in Mexico, is often performed by young boys. It shows in movement and fast exciting rhythms the dance of those who are aging but retaining their passion and energy for life. The meaning varies in different areas. It often depicts a rite of passage; a transition from youth to old age.

The dancers wear straw hats with ribbons and a white hood over a red faced, one toothed, wooden mask with rope hair; a white shirt and a cream poncho patterned in wine and blue colours, a sash and white trousers and on their feet wooden soled sandals.

Holding walking sticks they begin a follow my leader dance, creating a serpentine floor pattern with hops, skips and stamps increasing in speed as their feet beat out intricate, loud, exciting rhythms. They separate, come together, each takes a turn to perform in bursts of explosive movement, leading to tottering steps, slowing down, old men again, before the next surge of energy.

This dance underlines the importance and mystery of aging and dying within a society that over the centuries has celebrated it and imbued it with a richness of symbolism and ritual in a huge variety of art forms. The dead are remembered and visited in particular on The Day of the Dead, on November 1st. each year.

Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico. Sunday 14 March 1993

Monte Alban is the ruin of the ancient capital of the Zapotecas, founded about 500BC, which later was abandoned and became a burial place.

Climbing steadily to the top of the pyramid, walking slowly across the huge ball court and treading with thoughtful feet on ancient ground, becomes a dance of salutation to antiquity, through movement connecting to past and present.

MONTE ALBAN

What I like best
 Is to leave the crowd
 Behind

And go out on the
 Hillside to sit
 In the sun

Reflecting on cactus, red flower
 Pale leaf and dried grass
 Where perhaps some

Two thousand years ago
 A zapotec sat on
 This very rock
 Not knowing that his
 House and grounds would be
 Climbed over by the
 Curious feet of his
 Descendants

I look back through
 Time
 Touching the past
 Where I too will lie
 In the future.

First published in Resurgence Magazine 1994

The serpentine pathway from birth to death and beyond is surely our universal dance.

In addition my Guatemalan project has involved me in many encounters with both Mayan people and those who are working to improve the education and empowerment for the indigenous population.

Common Hope, a charity in Antigua, sponsors children's education. Anyone interested in knowing more please contact me.

Telephone 020 8995 5904 or
 email: rosashreeves@rosashreeves.plus.com

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Brief Reports from the Field

Letter from New York, August 2007, Alyson Nehren

Greetings from New York City to all ADMT-UK members!

It is with great excitement that I bring news about a new Dance Movement Therapy DVD that is currently being produced by the New York State Chapter of the American Dance Movement Therapy Association (NYS ADTA <http://www.nysadta.org>), and separately, an update around prerequisite training toward LIMS® Certification in Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals (CMA).

After three wonderfully enriching years in London, a corporate move to NYC last autumn gave me an opportunity to connect with both the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies (LIMS®), located in New York City's pulsating Theatre District, and the energetic NYSADTA Chapter. In early 2007, I began working with a great team of local DMTs on a very exciting film project whose seeds were planted at a 2005 NYS ADTA Public Relations Committee meeting.

In remaining congruent with the PR Committee's mission statement, discussion turned toward creating a DMT film that would be beneficial within a variety of contexts including being of interest to individual DMTs, educating mental health professionals about DMT and its benefits, and stimulating student interest. Chapter fundraising, a gracious donation from an anonymous source and most recently, a generous grant from the Marian Chace Foundation of the American Dance Therapy Association has enabled the film project to proceed and take shape.

Moving Stories: Portraits of Dance/Movement Therapy includes individual interviews with and in-session footage of three exceptional DMTs: Ted Ehrhardt, Joan Wittig and Dr. Suzi Tortora. Additional historic and contemporary scenes of dancers and DMTs through the years includes footage from the first-ever New York City Dance Parade held in May 2007.

May I add that the response to the DVD has been phenomenal?! Support and encouragement have been offered, and requests for historic photos of pioneering DMTs in action have been appreciatively met by many esteemed DMTs including Janet Adler, Mimi Berger, Elissa White, Sharon Chaiklin, Christina Devereaux, Susan Kleinman, and many others.

The film committee of Maria Clausen, Deniz Oktay, Cara Gallo, Debbie Stone, Meghan Dempsey, filmmaker Sekiya

Dorsett and yours truly have been working diligently to have the DVD signed, sealed and delivered in time to showcase it at the September 2007 ADTA National Conference in Brooklyn, New York. Please visit the ADMT-UK website in early autumn for ordering information.

As a DMT/CMA, I have introduced the work of Laban and Bartenieff to students in DMT programmes including Columbia College, Goldsmiths College, and Instytut DMT in Warsaw, Poland. As a clinician, the somatic, theoretical and analytic foundation of my practice is LMA. As a human, my relational work, empathic capacity and compassion continue to become enriched through the integration of LMA into my life experience. There are few words that adequately describe the depth and quality of experience one is privy to during CMA training . . . suffice it to say that it is life enhancing, with staying power!

For those of you planning on applying to an LMA certification program, interested in a refresher, or simply wanting a taste of what Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals are about, read on. London offerings in the three pre-requisite short courses required for application to the CMA programme are being considered. Each introductory course would run over a designated weekend and explore LMA, BF or Anatomy & Kinesiology. For additional information about LIMS®, LMA/BF and the CMA, to express interest in the pre-requisite trainings, and to learn about the trans-Atlantic user-friendly *Modular Program* please visit www.limsonline.com

Thank you and be well,
Alyson Nehren MA, DTR, CMA, RSMT/E, SrDMT

TAKING A NEW DIRECTION: From National Health Service Care to Providing a Personal Service

Sarah Holden, SrDMT

As some e-motion readers will know, I have recently left paid employment working within the National Health Service, based at Springfield Hospital in South West London. This has been a big wrench after working there for 30 years, even though during that time I have seen many changes to the NHS, the hospital and its organisation as well as in my job and its responsibilities.

I started work in Springfield Hospital at a time when it provided the in-patient psychiatric facilities for St. George's Hospital (otherwise based at Hyde Park Corner and in Tooting). When Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative



Government introduced privatisation of hospitals we became part of the new 'Pathfinder' Mental Health Trust and split from St. George's. In this new era the Trust joined with other smaller mental health units as well as building and extending specialist services. These developments continued when the Labour Government returned the Trust to public ownership and we became South West London & St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust, serving five London boroughs and providing care for many people referred from much further away.

Over this period my work changed enormously. I started working one day a week in 1976 as someone who was recruited to 'do some movement and dance' with the patients. I had no job description and was paid as an untrained Occupational Therapy helper. I was asked to 'do a bit of teaching literacy' in the afternoons too. I imagine my interest in taking on this work, (apart from the initial objective of finding an extra day's work to finance the purchase of a car), was born of an as yet barely recognised discovery of my emotional world through moving and dancing. As I noticed the way people attending the hospital responded in movement sessions, I began to realise the uncharted and untapped potential of working in this field. Thus, began a long journey.

At this time there was no profession and no training in the UK. I started forging links with psychologists, psychotherapists and any other professionals with whom I could discuss my discoveries, often over the lunch table, and gradually was encouraged to take forward this new way of working. The developing links were not only made within the hospital but also via numerous other learning opportunities in psychiatry, psychotherapy and a variety of movement traditions, and amongst the few people who I had begun to find were also treading a similar path. I had made contact with an American Dance Therapist, Dr Joanna Harris, and, through her, found a connection to Helen Payne and a small number of other people using movement and dance in the field of mental healthcare.

The rich years that followed saw the birth of our professional association 1982 a plethora of weekend workshops and eventually the first training courses. Because of the substantial clinical experience I had gained within the NHS, I was asked to sit on the National Council for Academic Awards committees that accredited two of these courses 1988, 1989 and have subsequently supported many, many students during their training. These early professional training courses formed the solid base enabling us to draw up ADMT's first professional register in 1996 and it has been a great joy to see so many new, younger therapists taking forward the work that I and senior colleagues began in this country so many years ago.

Alongside these developments in ADMT was the steady growth of my professional career in Springfield Hospital.

Very soon after starting work I had been moved on to the Art Therapy pay scale. My contact with the Psychotherapy Department led to my training as a Group Analyst, which proved to be a very helpful foundation to my work, as well as an entrance into my own personal therapy.

I had made links with several isolated Art Therapists working in the hospital, in particular Alison Barnes, alongside whom I have worked over many years. Together we began to build a department. We planned carefully to provide a good and more responsive service offering 1:1 therapy and group work especially designed to suit the varied needs of the service users. We worked hard to establish the multi-disciplinary links that would help us communicate with our colleagues and became recognised as a distinct professional group.

Eventually we recruited Music Therapists, Dramatherapists and a Psychodrama Psychotherapist; all of us met together regularly, enabling us to intensify our sharing of experience and support via clinical presentations, supervision, discussions around Evidence based Practice and the management of important issues such as evaluation, confidentiality, referral systems etc. This made the department an excellent beginning for the many trainees who were on placement with us.

We had, by then, a 'hub and spoke' service consistently offering specialist peripatetic work on in-patient adult wards for acutely ill patients, including two High Dependency Units and a refer-in service based in our specialist equipped rooms for people living in their own or community homes. We had therapists working with the National Deaf Service and over many years, in Drug Dependency, Eating Disorders, Older Peoples' Service, Rehab & Continuing Care, Mother & Baby Service, Personality Disorder Services and Forensic Services. There were a number of groups run in community venues and many patients were seen out of normal working hours.

The department attracted many visitors, often from abroad including, on one occasion a whole Community Mental Health Team from Scandinavia. Also, many staff were (and still are) involved in ADMT committees and contributing to the professional training courses via teaching and supervision.

In March 2004 ADMT's application to the Health Professions Council for State Registration was processed, and my clinical and managerial experience gave me the necessary skills to join Bonnie Meekums and Penny Best in supporting Vicky Karkou and Susan Scarth, as Susan made the live presentation before an enormous HPC committee. Although this was voted through unanimously by HPC the application awaits finalisation from the Department of Health following a Public Consultation and parliamentary time.

The Agenda for Change within the NHS marked the



next huge milestone in employment of Dance Movement Therapists. The four Arts Therapies professions worked together with Amicus, to draw up a series of national job profiles that really acknowledged the breadth and depth of our work responsibilities as Arts Psychotherapists. This involved unstinting efforts from many people and was led by dedicated Art and Music Psychotherapists based in Sutton. As the process of matching individual's posts to the new profiles reached completion, the promise of recognition and realistic salaries was realised for some, but many other experienced staff were left feeling under-valued.

Recent times in our Springfield Department brought difficult new challenges when a major re-organisation of the Trust, prior to seeking Foundation Trust status, involved dividing our strong team into very small borough units. Despite the understandable reasoning of organising mental health care more locally this has involved, as in other professions and in other trusts, the loss of many posts, including some of our more senior Arts Psychotherapy posts and fewer opportunities to work as a team. Our small profession has found this hard to bear; when working together as a specialist group has brought such evident gains in depth of clinical thinking, co-ordination of evaluation and research, support of trainees on placement and development of new posts.

My role as Head of Department had been particularly demanding over this period and was clearly bound for change. The decision to move on was timely - though difficult to make, as so much of my career had been focussed around the Arts Psychotherapies in Springfield Hospital. It has been especially hard to separate from my colleagues/friends who continue to engage with the newly evolving management systems whilst providing, as always, sensitive and consistently high quality care to patients and sound support for their trainees. I do continue to have a role as a visiting consultant, facilitating a research project that will help to demonstrate the importance of movement in the psychological treatment offered to people with mental health problems. I would like to think that we shall see a swing towards valuing the skills of psychotherapists who integrate verbal and the non-verbal communications.

The next chapter of my professional life was not hard to predict. It had been gestating for many years. I wanted, above all else, to make my own movement psychotherapy space in which to extend my small private practice, away from the overwhelming pressures of management within a large institution. Of course the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence and, as many of you will know, setting up a private practice presents a steep learning curve. However, it has been an exciting time and the challenge has been to keep enjoying the making and using of my own space whilst learning to stay afloat on uncharted waters.

I am including a photo of my movement psychotherapy studio now that it has reached completion - and my recently established website, www.movementpsychotherapist.com, is

a measure of how little steps have come to lead in directions I might not originally have envisaged. How things develop and the lessons along the way may have to be the next instalment!

As with so much new progress in our profession, my part has been very small amidst that of the many others whose enthusiasm, effort and expertise have helped to establish the continuity and growing knowledge base of Dance Movement Psychotherapy. I am enjoying my next chapter and look forward to it providing another way to meet and work with many Dance Movement Psychotherapists, other health professionals and above all - 'people'.



My movement psychotherapy studio

Reflections on leaving my DMT post in Hackney

Tricia Mason

I have been working for 3 years as a DMT in the NHS in the Mental Healthcare for Older People service in Hackney, London and am in the process of leaving. I have managed to sustain 3 years of living in two places, Bristol and London (3days a week) and my endurance has now come to an end!

It seems a good moment to share some of my experiences and to place the post in its context in the DMT family. Marion Violets, initially through a student placement, inspired the creation of the post and with thanks to Andrew Kingston, Head O.T., for his support, it has since grown and developed.

I was appointed as a Snr 1, to manage two other Arts Therapists (Music and Art). Agenda for Change has been an unavoidable issue throughout, involving re-writing J.D.'s, initial banding (all three of us on 7), my appeal, long delays, negotiations, review, and is still unresolved.



Alongside this has been changing structures, threatened closure of facilities and now a new management plan to locate us in psychology rather than O.T.

The thread of my DMT sessions has however continued unbroken, weaving a web around three different locations each week- a continuing care nursing home for people with dementia and challenging behaviour where I run a group and see two individuals, an acute ward environment where I run a group, and various community settings (e.g. day centre, supported living schemes, sheltered housing) where I run a series of time limited groups.

My anchor through all this has been my external clinical supervisor, Nina Papadopoulou, who gave me ground, container, vision, validity and much more, and for whom I am really grateful.

Some moments of great pleasure have been:-

1 Witnessing a Turkish Cypriot man of 75 dancing traditional movements in a 1:1 session, connecting with his masculinity, culture, joy and passion and sense of fun.

2 Dancing with a small group of Afro-Caribbean men, who have severe dementia, connecting with rhythms, harmonies, joy, and each other.

3 Being with an isolated, potentially aggressive woman with dementia and learning disabilities, witnessing, sensing, being available and gazing into each others eyes.

I was invited by one of our consultants, Sandra Evans to present my work at a National Conference on 'How to Manage Challenging Behaviour in People with Dementia'. Our slot was entitled 'Psychodynamics of Dementia Care'. I embodied some clinical material to the surprise and pleasure of the audience, and received many interested comments afterwards. Sandra has been a great supporter of the Arts Therapies and her book, 'Talking over the Years' contains a chapter by Marion Violets.

Another reference point for me has been the Person Centered approach to Dementia care, and chapter by Shustik and Thompson in 'Healing Arts Therapies and Person Centered Dementia Care'.

And so, I finish with thanks for the great opportunity to work as a DMT in the NHS and with good wishes to my successor.

P.S. After many delays this has now been re-banded 8A.
Tricia Mason

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Ed. Evans, S and Garner, J (2004) Talking over the Years. A Handbook of Dynamic Psychotherapy with Older Adults(p 197-213). Hove and New York . Brunner-Routledge.

Ed. Innes, A and Hatfield, K (2001) Healing Arts Therapies and Person-Centered Dementia Care.(p. 49-78) London and New York . Jessica Kingsley Publishers.





Book Announcements

Mindfulness and Mental Health : Therapy, Theory and Science

By Mace, Chris.

Being mindful can help people feel calmer and more fully alive. “Mindfulness and Mental Health” examines other effects it can also have and presents a significant new model of how mindful awareness may influence different forms of mental suffering. This book assesses current understandings of what mindfulness is, what it leads to, and how and when it can help. It looks at the roots and significance of mindfulness in Buddhist psychology and at the strengths and limitations of recent scientific investigations.

Practising Existential Psychotherapy : The Relational World

by Spinelli, Ernesto.

This new text by Ernesto Spinelli examines the unique qualities and possibilities of an existential approach to psychotherapy. Drawn from his own experience as an internationally recognised theorist, lecturer and practitioner, the book’s overall aim is to provide a thorough and accessible explication of existential psychotherapy in practice. Beginning with an overview of the theoretical underpinnings and distinguishing features of existential psychotherapy, the text describes and develops a three-phase structural model for its practice.



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8 February 2008

Lecture followed by practical workshop on the Fantastic Reality Protocol: the Treatment of Trauma. Professor Mooli Lahad, founder and Director of the Institute of Dramatherapy, and Director of the Community Stress Prevention Centre, Tel Hai College, Israel.

On 9 February Professor Lahad will run a whole-day intensive workshop on the Fantastic Reality Protocol.

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10 February 2008

The 7 levels of assessment drawn from the 6 Part Story Making method. One day workshop led by Professor Mooli Lahad.

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18 January 2008

One day course for experienced counsellors and therapists. Patti Wallace, Principal Lecturer in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Understanding and Working with Trauma

30 May 2008

Definition and presentation of PTSD. Birgit Kuypers, Senior Lecturer in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Understanding and Working with Personality Disorders

27 June 2008

Differentiating between personality disorders and neurosis. Anne Kearns, UKCP Registered Psychotherapist.

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Karkou, V. (1999) Who? Where? What? A brief description of DMT: Results from a nationwide study in arts therapies, e-motion, ADMT UK Quarterly, XI, (2), 5-10.

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