

**Soul and spirit in dance movement psychotherapy: A transpersonal approach, by Jill Hayes, London and Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2013, 240 pp., £22.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781849053082**

I must begin this review with a reservation: I do use movement and dance as therapeutic tools in my Dramatherapy practice, but as I am not a Dance Movement Psychotherapist many terms in this book were previously unknown to me. This reservation is necessary because Soul and Spirit in Dance Movement Psychotherapy. A Transpersonal Approach is multidimensional in terms of theory and thus a demanding read. Jill Hayes explains her method as clearly and as much detail as possible. Her approach is, however, complex and “woven from many ideas, from Jungian and post-Jungian theory and practice, from animate ecological phenomenology, and from embodied mindfulness and other contemporary spiritual somatic practices” (p. 191) and this demands a lot of knowledge.

The book begins with a detailed summary of the Transpersonal approach in Dance Movement Psychotherapy. Hayes introduces many fundamental terms, such as: “soul spirit”, “centre”, “flow”, “depth”, “transition” and “journey”. Because the author consistently uses this specific terminology, the second half of the text could be unintelligible for readers not in possession of a deep understanding of these concepts. The terms “bodysoul” and “bodymind” are particularly interesting. Hayes disagrees with the common division of the body and soul or body and mind and she perceives them as an indivisible whole. The loss of connection with the wholeness causes many disorders in mental and physical health. Hayes also reminds us about the important role of soul in the human life and its influence on human health, which is often ignored in medicine, even by mental health specialists.

It is practically impossible to describe the scope of subjects covered by the book in such a short review, because it is extensively insightful. Hayes presents the theoretical grounds of her method, as well as an in-depth description of the practical application of the Transpersonal method. Hayes underlines that it is very important to connect theory and practise in Dance Movement Psychotherapy, and she does just that in this book. As Hayes states:

Researching, re-perceiving and re-conceiving Dance Movement Psychotherapy from a transpersonal perspective is essential for a vision of healthcare which integrates the known with the unknown factors in wellness. There is much we do not see in medical science, much that we do not understand. (p. 191)

In my opinion, this is both a strength and a weakness of this study. Hayes mixes very poetic language with scientific terms, which makes her disquisition obscure. As a matter of fact, this fault was predicted by Hayes. She writes:

Both practice and researches, in the field of mental health, are required to produce visible or quantifiable evidence as proof of the inner health of the person. The problem with this is that much healing is invisible and unquantifiable. It simply cannot be rendered in abstract language and certainly not encompassed by tick box terms. But it can be articulated through poetic language, which has not lost the soulful, somatic imaginative involvement with the invisible, emergent, energetic and psychic processes of healing. (p. 196)

The only problem that I see with this book is that it tries to connect research with poetry and sometimes falls into ambiguity.

This is particularly noticeable in descriptions of case studies. They contain some reflections about the therapeutic process, but they also include many stories, poems, pictures and photos. However, this allows the readers a deep understanding of this method and the changes that occurred, and above all it shows the Transpersonal Approach in action. Thanks to the constant reference to the introduced terms and terminology, we can see a close relationship between

theory and practice in Dance Movement Psychotherapy. These descriptions demand, however, not only a lot of attention and commitment, but also incredible imagination. They are sometimes tiresome, over-poetic and devoid of clarity.

However, this reproach is not intended to discredit the book nor its author. Hayes describes the theory of her approach in a comprehensive way and presents the possibilities of applying it in a psychotherapeutic practise. The book is in itself an illustration of oppositions that Hayes mentions, of the conflict between quantifiable evidence and the unquantifiable process of healing. On one hand, the author tries to be clear and precise and on the other, we can see how difficult it is for Hayes to share her experience using the academic discourse only, without losing the poetic sense. Hayes deserves all the more respect for this. This book might be interesting for a Dance Movement Psychotherapist and for any Creative Arts Therapists, as it not only provides an explanation of an inspiring approach but it is also an attempt to describe the indescribable. Jill Hayes' *Soul and Spirit in Dance Movement Psychotherapy. A Transpersonal Approach* is a demanding read but worth the commitment. I recommend this book for those therapists who wish to learn more about the Transpersonal approach in Dance Movement Psychotherapy, but also for those who would like to ask themselves new questions, go deeper in their reflection and demand new challenges from their therapeutic practise.

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