

Article

Potentialities of Visual-Literary Therapeutic Concepts in Ecopsychology and Neuropsychiatry

Višnja Bandalo ^{1,*} 

¹ University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

* Correspondence: Višnja Bandalo; Email: vbandalo@****.hr; PhD, Research Associate

Abstract

Introduction: The paper focuses on the neuropsychiatric perspective through environmentalism as an epistemic tendency in the domain of visual arts therapy, whilst also keeping in view science studies and clinical implications. The objective of this presentation is to enhance mindfulness of the relationship to the environment through art therapy, as well as to raise awareness of eco-psychological opportunities through artistic and literary expression. **Materials and Methods:** In the paper will thus be observed from a thought-based angle and practice-driven research approach psychologizing tendencies in modern nature-themed paintings as well as deriving literary aspects with the intent of showcasing elements of bio-empathy. **Results and Discussion:** The attentiveness is shown to the category of preconscious connected to verbal images as memory-residues which get filtered through artistic visual thinking and subsequent literary expression reflecting positively on the brain regions and the whole of the nervous system. The scope of this presentation is to elucidate from a psychodynamic angle the somatization phenomena, showing therapeutic work in articulating pre-verbal sensations which can be greatly improved by art-making, and used in clinical practice. **Conclusions:** This presentation will document that visual cultures related to human impact on the environment produce a vision that transposed on medical terrain may prove effective. Therapeutically minded, this solution-based approach at the cutting edge of innovation seeks to suggest ways to release blocked perceptivity caused by incurring traumatism and stimulate positive neurocognitive restructuring in the sense of achieving greater resiliency with an emphasis on the overlap between research theory and artistic moments.

Keywords: art therapy, ecopsychology, imaging, neuropsychiatry, visuality

1. Introduction

Eco-visual language and relational self in a therapeutic environment

If what is involved in the concept of care is to make a difference, suggesting at the same time the idea of protection, in the present paper these visual-literary inter-artistic parallels are conceptualized and illustrated in their potentialities and further fertile proliferations by putting on display chosen modern painted art, relevantly impregnated with a constellation of bio-planetary concepts, finding space in literature. Introductorily, such artworks to which I will refer exemplarily in my paper regarding the imaging component, pertain mostly to a cultural range that spans from the modern period initiated in 1800, particularly in the impressionist manner, through realism, modernism, and avant-gardism up to our immediate contemporaneity. These art pieces are today non rarely exhibited in the global context in the numerous world museums, having a universalizing stamp.

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Moreover, since what is termed Anthropocene, implying an impelling connection of geological agents and of what is human-induced, necessitates climate literacy [1], Eco-Art constitutes a growing tendency in the visual arts, becoming intricated with fundamental aspects in art studies and literary critique, as well as in general historiography and natural philosophy, as shown in the reflection by Linda Weintraub *To Life! Eco Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet* [2]. Nonetheless, the pinnacle will be reached in the 1990s and 2000s, and an ever-increasing ecological interest continues until our contemporary times.

Furthermore, within the discourse of planetary ecology, the medical considerations about neurological realms and their categorization within neuropsychiatry will be evidenced. In other words, in thinking and designing how to care about the environment it will be highlighted how that refers in relational terms to psychological opportunities that can be harnessed through art-therapeutic aspects.

2. Material and Methods

Path to eco-psychologically minded artistic self in neuroscientific perspective

For behavioral neuroscience [3], in building up a brain psychologically apt to uphold various dimensions of reality and sustain itself, the act of artistic creation engaging multi-sensory experiences can prove to be of utmost importance since it implies the strengthening of the memory by using previously existing functional neural pathways and surging of the new ones when it comes to bodily sensations and procedures.

Hence, from a behavioral perspective in the neuropsychiatric sphere, by targeting phenomena within the human body and extending beyond, the unraveling of various layers of memory of different sensory types, among which primarily of emotionally tinted imprints of the past, through artistic activities from the visual field, and subsequent reflexive writing, may be considered stimulating in so far as helping to recognize one's emotional states and develop more adaptive responses.

Engaging in artistic activities and analyzing them, as well as participating in their decryption and interpretation as a viewer, may have plentiful positive impacts regarding interpersonal psychology. It enhances one's intuitive capacities and aids in adapting to change, thereby increasing resiliency.

On the other hand, journaling about visual observations allows for the resurfacing of one's unconscious self with its affective moments, proving useful in getting a better internal feeling of reality and stimulating inspiration as an instinctual flow of energy.

Simultaneously it can be observed how greater connectedness to the natural environment and awareness of the science of Nature might improve the healing work [4], and both instinctually and cognitively positively impact one's self-talk, emotion regulation, attachment system, and other segments that might be trauma-related to prevent re-enactments of traumatism and bring instead to the place of cognition.

3. Theory and Practice

Intercommunication of brain structures and mental representations: innovational theory and clinical aspects

Self-regulatory mechanisms as key pillars of mental wellness and emotional well-being in an individual can be strengthened through eco-art therapeutic exercises of visual stamp meant as widely and far-reaching as possible, originally resulting from painterly ideas already etched into the collective consciousness and producing literary evocative, cultural, and civilizational vision [5,6].

In this particular light, with reference to Sigmund Freud's seminal psycho-analytic theory on the multi-layering of the mind whose three strata id-ego-superego constitute the fullness of the mental apparatus [7,8], this paper aims at articulating theoretically the

functioning of the unconscious mind as being the closest to the natural world and innately present in the artworks sharpening ultimately the idea of selfhood.

Since the art delves into the unconsciousness, as its indispensable element, and in a non-invasive manner which nonetheless may be profound, it is possible in such a way to reinforce the core self and develop the auto-nurturing sense pulsing through the agency of the id with its libidinal investment, as shown in the volume by Freud, *The Ego and the Id* [9].

Art has potentially protective mechanisms embedded in it, which may also be consolidated through the channels of tradition, wherein lies the reason why it is not really solitary but always an interpersonal experience even if created entirely autonomously. Every monologue may be considered partially also a dialogue due to the atmosphere of intersubjectivity created by our thoughts. In such a light, every artwork calls for its reception maintaining essentially a multidirectional nature of every artistic enterprise.

Art forms serve as a means of organizing human experiences in a coherent even if playlike way soothing the core structure of personality and can thus be therapeutic since they don't have unilateral meaning.

Phenomenon recognized as artistic, which is in its nature already consolidated and arises from direct experiential situations, can aid in restoring one's sense of reality in its complexity, much like guided imagery.

4. Results and Discussion

Affect-related and insight-oriented cognitive cues: Intuitive awareness and psychosocial context

Placing oneself on the path of healing may mean doing inner and therapeutic work in articulating pre-verbal sensations before consciousness and organizing perceptive experiences as stated in the book by Sylvia Dolce *Art Therapy in Psychosomatic Medicine. Using Art and Guided Imagery to Promote Affect Regulation* [10].

Regarding the neurobiology of thought, emotions and body reflexes in the brain, as well as the greatly present epigenetic component since we memorize till our body cells, it ought to be observed that what is acquired through experiencing changes our psychical energies influencing our subsequent mental activities.

Furthermore, it is vital to conceptualize and analyze all the workings of the memory from the unconscious, which is also bottom-up, that is to say, instinct or affect-driven, and not only top-down or cognition-driven. It can be stated that we build our memories bidirectionality with the possibility of the unconscious layer of personality surging to the status of procedural traits from sensory inputs to the conscious mind and not only vice versa. Behavioral-experiential marks and emotional imprints which are strong enough to form a pattern cause the unconscious elements to appear cognitively in the form of recognizable aspects of procedural memory. In other words, just like we surge from our cells, our memories can pulse through our unconsciousness to our conscious mind in a continuous fluctuation bearing epigenetic mark. Artistic creativity may mimic such bodily procedures. Therefore, a trained mind just like a trained body will remember more mindfully when it comes to storing conscious perceptions and verbal images.

Metaphorizing incarnating the elements of nature, transposed from the domain of visual arts, and at the same time synaesthetically suggestive, can have calming effects on the nervous system, because effective both as for the conscious and unconscious levels of human understanding and perception, thus potentially creating a sensation of a continuum with the wholeness of the natural principle. It can be observed that such a mental attitude is also evocative of eco-art therapeutic methodology in alluding to the sense of interwovenness and thus resonating with the Nature philosophy [11,12].

It is those concepts that reflect also on the creation of biophilic design, such as already in premodern precursory iconographic examples, as for nature-oriented use of colors and

patterns. Various contemporary architectural artifacts also give a sensation of building in unison with the environment, as a growing tendency, producing a sense of greater unity in their attunement with the cosmic dimension present in the natural world.

From an ecopsychological standpoint [13], it is again the binding of elements of consciousness and unconscious that necessarily work together in producing art manifestations.

5. Conclusions

In envisaging these research themes, entailing environmental activism, and integrating medical approach [14], the ideas around humanity's relationship with the Ecosphere are thematized through visual communication, but also at the literary communicative level, which in addition to that might intersect with neurological and ecopsychological modalities.

Ecological art, as a very representative current in the pictorial and literary field in modernity, is here innovationally considered regarding exhibited artworks, and their respective literary conceptual tools, intersecting with medical science and practice, which take the form of knowledge production.

The scope of this paper is to show that plurisensory inputs and bodily imprints of unconscious memories can be in some way regained by the mindful brain through artistic exercise potentially helping to explore one's inner self and resolve traumatism to become psychologically grounded and at the same time ecologically aware, assuming the response not only of the conscious but also the unconscious mind in dealing with health-related topics.

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Conflict of Interest

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