

Section: Modern PPT practice

POSITIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY AND ART



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Abstract

Art therapy and positive psychotherapy have common points of contact, but differ significantly in their respective theoretical and practical concepts. Both are independent therapeutic methods that require extensive training or further education. Art therapy works preferably with artistic media, whereby psychodynamic processes are integrated depending on the therapeutic orientation. Conversely, Positive Psychotherapy has related approaches in a distinct form to art therapy. This applies above all to the creative process of the procedure. Both methods overlap at the point where psychological conflicts are expressed through artistic means or stories. While artistic therapies focus on this process, Positive Psychotherapy is a psychotherapeutic procedure in its own right. In this article, the approach to art therapy is presented against the background of the resource-oriented practice and theoretical approaches of Positive Psychotherapy.

Keywords: positive psychotherapy, receptive art therapy, art psychology, neuroesthetics, Nossrat Peseschkian

"Stories, fairy tales, myths, artistic productions, poetry, etc., are - besides the value they have, I art pour I art, for themselves - media and tools of a folk psychotherapy and of a "folk pedagogy" with which people helped themselves long before psychotherapy developed."

- Nossrat Peseschkian

Introduction

Positive psychotherapy is not only a new, independent method but also a framework model in which elements and techniques of other psychotherapeutic methods can be applied (cf. Peseschkian and Remmers (2013, p. 18). Thus, it is obvious to integrate applications

of receptive art therapy or iconotherapeutic approaches into the creativity-oriented, psychodynamic and transcultural framework of Positive Psychotherapy.

A literature-based and case-based study is presented here that highlights the intersections of positive psychotherapy and receptive psychotherapy. Basically, the work is based on the work in outpatient psychotherapy and the work in the framework of inpatient psychiatric treatment. Here, museum visits were regularly carried out with patients. The aim was to activate resources and cultural participation.

Methodology

In Positive Psychotherapy (PPT), literature and poetry, as well as creative writing, are used

to contribute to the patient's self-exploration. Hamid Peseschkian (2002) has described the connection between positive therapy and bibliotherapy very clearly using the example of the treatment of a patient with borderline personality disorder, who wrote over 500 pages during the entire course of therapy. The process of creative writing also supported the self-analysis function here. Early psychoanalysis (Freud) and complex psychology (C.G. Jung) repeatedly explored literary and artistic works. In the oriental stories, which are repeatedly taken up in PPT, these are concrete learning opportunities for the patient. From the cultural tradition the oriental stories were - and are still today - always a piece of knowledge mediation. They convey a pictorial way of thinking where everyday language is insufficient to achieve solutions to problems. "When the psychological pressure of suffering is so great, when entering into a conversation becomes difficult, then art/music/literary contemplation offers a possibility. It creates something unifying, enables communication, and can lead to opportunities for relief (catharsis) that are part of the therapeutic process" (Franzen, 1997, 2012). Wilhelm Salber (1999, p. 13) describes that the psychic can only be understood by relating it to art: "Art and the psychic exist only in back-and-forth movements, in the transition from one into the other, in additions and refractions". To understand the other in his creation, to really understand the meaning of creativity, presupposes a process of artistic and therapeutic reflection, which understands art also in an aesthetic dimension and psychic efficacy, and conveys itself symbolically. "Personal experiences and messages of the unconscious reveal themselves in symbols. Literature and art have the great gift of conveying this symbolic experience to us" (Franzen, 2009, p.8). On the one hand, working with art opens a bridge to the unconscious, and on the other hand, the inner psychological experience is given a possibility of expression through the purposeful engagement with creative processes.

The guidelines for art therapies (DGPNN, 2019) include 1. the recovery, Maintenance and promotion of health and health behavior, e.g., through the promotion of resources, increasing the willingness to perform by increasing self-motivation, developing one's own goals and improving the ability to self-structuring and

concentration skills, as well as improving the quality of life through stimulation and access to relaxation, enjoyment and recreational ability, as well as positive affective experience. 2. stabilization and strengthening of self-regulation, e.g., through regaining a sense of self and reality reference, development of modal and integrative perception, development of affective competences, strengthening of self-efficacy and control, and development of action skills, and 3. development of psychosocial competences, e.g. by expanding interpersonal communication and verbalization skills. communication and verbalization skills through the interlinking of nonverbal and verbal interactions, as well as increasing emotional sympathy and vibratory capacity.

There are now many randomized control trials (RCTs) on the effectiveness of art therapy with different, also clinical, groups of subjects (Ganter-Argast, 2019). In addition, the current state of research also includes systematic reviews (Miake-Lye et al., 2019) and even the development of quantitative rating instruments in Germany (Schoch, 2020). In a meta-analysis by Uttley et al. (2015), it was shown that in 10 out of 15 studies, the treatment of patients with mental illnesses with art therapy had a treatment of patients with mental illness with art therapy had a significant positive effect. Control groups, waiting list patients, or treatment as usual (TAU).

Four studies showed an improvement in mental health but no significant difference from the control group. Significant difference from the control group. Even in the WHO report of 2019

some RCT studies with art therapy were mentioned. The study situation illustrates, that there are already some quantitative studies in evidence-based research on art therapy. art therapy, but that there is still room for further development, especially in the area of especially with regard to effect factors. Existing research has identified several impact factors of art therapy that can have a positive effect on a person's psyche. Examples positive feelings, positive influence on self-esteem and social behavior, self-esteem and social behavior, promotion of self-exploration and self-expression, communication self-expression, communication, understanding and clarification models, integration, symbolic thinking, creativity (Strauß, 2019), procedural activation and Resource activation (Grawe, 2004). These factors

can be supported by a healthy and stable patient-therapist relationship (Petersen, 2002). These factors need to be further explored and developed in art therapy research. explored and developed in art therapy research.

By looking at the design created in art therapy (compare Reif, 1999, p. 70), a countertransference reaction can be triggered. "This countertransference is influenced by the existence of the image within the shared environment of the therapeutic encounter. Feelings are influenced by the image and so it can arouse a felt reaction in the viewer. The embodied image influences the countertransference by awakening a countertransference in both viewers: in the artist/client as well as in the therapist" (Schaverin, 1992, p. 121). The individual effect of the picture and the experience of the therapeutic relationship are combined in the aesthetic countertransference: "The therapist's countertransference to the art object is an aesthetic appreciation in which the eye wanders over the depicted picture. In addition, the therapist looks at the effect of the features in the picture as a whole and extends this to a consideration of how this relates to her experience of the therapeutic relationship. She looks within herself to observe her response to both image and person."

The extensive transcultural background of positive psychotherapy made it possible to understand artistic and literary creation as a form of universal language (Fromm). Communication occurs through interaction with a work of art, literature or visual art and finds its way into a psychotherapeutic setting.

Especially where a patient's ability to communicate is limited, the receptive use of art provides a visual entry point into contemplation and insight. In Nossrat Peseschkian's case, it is primarily the receptive use of oriental stories. However, these aspects can be transferred to the visual arts. Here the receptive work with visual art can help to dissolve restrictions of verbal communication. In this sense, receptive means working psychotherapeutically with the contemplation of works of art. Directive and non-directive procedures alternate. The whole context speaks of an interpersonal aspect, whereby media support the psychotherapeutic process. Viewing images trigger visual stimuli, which stimulate sensory perception. This happens in particular over the form and color

perceptions. The inner imagination and resources are activated. A psychological process is set in motion and one's own creative potential can unfold. According to Nossrat Peseschkian (1994, p. 106), every human being first experiences himself and his environment directly through the senses. The seeing, or the visual perception is a part, an important sense with which the world is experienced. A sense through which communication also takes place. Creativity is of great importance in the context of positive psychotherapy.

2.1. Art as a resource

Health is more than the absence of disease. According to Antonovsky's salutogenesis model, health depends on a sense of coherence - a feeling of confidence in the comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness of events, relationships and life situations (cf. Jork and Peseschkian, 2006, p. 300). The ability to use intuitions and imagination as resources and thus to design the near and distant future in an optimistic and meaningful way (cf. Franzen et al 2006, p. 111) are particularly artistic characteristics. Contemplation of art also offers an access route to buried resources. Thus, in recent psychoanalytic concepts, Christopher Bollas (2005, 29) describes that the search for symbolic equivalents of early intense affective experiences continues in adulthood through museum visits, among other things. Works of art offer such a subjective experiential space in which mental efficacies can develop and a psycho-aesthetic experience (Salber, 1999, p. 39) becomes possible. Also, for self-psychologist Ernest Wolf (1996, p. 79), an adult needs a self-supporting experience with real objects, such as art, literature, music, and religion, ideas that, by being available, can be self-objects for that particular adult. "The subjective aspect of a relationship with an unconscious object, mediated by the presence of a symbol, is crucial to its ability to serve as a self-object function" (Wolf, 1996, 79).

Panofsky explains the process of accessing the work of art as an intuitive aesthetic recreation. According to Panofsky, works of art are both manifestations of artificial "intention," and also natural objects that are sometimes difficult to isolate from their material surroundings and are always subject to the material aging process. "Thus, when we experience a work of art aesthetically, we

perform two entirely different acts, which psychologically, however, merge into one experience: we establish our aesthetic object both by recreating the work of art in accordance with the 'intention' of its creator and by freely creating a complex of aesthetic values that we give to a tree or a sunset" (Panofsky 1975, 32). Complementing this, Aby Warburg describes re-creative experience rather as a phenomenological process of "empathy" following Friedrich Theodor Vischer (Schindler 1999, p. 12) and distinguishes between "thought-image" and "art-image." Horst Bredenkamp also speaks of the "power of images" (Bredenkamp 2012, 55) and concludes that "no philosophical school has been more inspired by living images than that theory of empathy founded by Friedrich Theodor Vischer, his son Robert, and Theodor Lipps, with the aim of allowing the same empathy to operate in the turning to inanimate matter as it does toward living persons. The forms of understanding for the other or the other are in this sense consequences of the aesthetic disposition to see in the artifact not inanimate substances, but the recipient and responder of one's own sensations" (Bredenkamp 2012, p. 121).

Empathy can be defined in relation to art as a feeling of empathy or as an initially spontaneous, unprejudiced involvement when viewing a work of art. In this process, subjective psychological qualities, such as intuition, are called for. It is a matter of grasping thoughts, desires, feelings and fantasies. According to Johanna Franz (2007, p. 67), art triggers intuitive, empathic experiences in us and shapes our thinking.

Therefore, it is precisely the empathy with the work of art that is an important prerequisite for understanding the "meaning-content" and absorbing something of the "psychic energy" of the work of art. Important for the whole process are:

- To experience and understand one's own ideas, feelings, memories, perceptions, opinions, and fantasies from the past as one's own personality part in relation to the work of art.
- To learn something about one's own aesthetic point of view in order to reflect symbolic understanding also from an artistic point of view.

A relationship is formed between the work of art and the viewer, which makes it possible to relive the artistic-symbolic content:

- How do I experience these worlds of images?
- How do I perceive this sensory experience?

Only a real engagement with the work of art or the art space enables a corresponding experience. Here, the participants are first asked to relax, to arrive, and then to engage with the work of art in peace. The task is to immerse themselves in the artwork and really take time for it. This works similarly to the "Slow Art" concept (Schäfer 2017), where museum visitors are guided to take their time with an art object in order to enter into a dialogue with the art. Here, the focus is then on questions about the work, questions about the interaction with the work, and even questions about the visitor's own person and life about the experience of the work. The therapeutic process goes beyond this, however, as it is necessary to intervene in a regression-controlling and resource-oriented way into the background of the respective mental illness.

A work of art offers such a self-object experience. In this sense, the work of art becomes a supportive self-object and enters into a relationship with the self. It supports the unfolding and unburdening possibility of the self.

Neuroaesthetics is also increasingly concerned with the stabilizing influence of works of art. In addition to the neuronal foundations of the creation of art, aspects of the reception of art in particular have moved into the focus of research in recent years under the catchword of neuroaesthetics (cf. Dresler 2009, 25). In summary, it could be stated that the objective aesthetics of works of art can be distinguished from their individual subjective evaluation and that this difference is reflected in the way of looking at underlying neuronal activity (cf. Dressler 2009, 27). Here Kersten (2009, 42) confirms in the context of his neuropsychological research that the increased attention, the immediate emotional effect and the metaphorical meaning of the pictorial works are of particular importance in the perception of art. For Schurian, art is further characterized by its autopoietic effect: "As 'poiesis' literally puts it, it is the creative force that falls to and emanates from art" (Schurian, 1993, p. 7). This refers to conceptualizations such as the conscious experience of art, which can be attributed more to phenomenological psychology. Without the perceptual and emotional participation of the

viewer, art is incomplete. In the interaction with viewers and artists, not only is a two-dimensional image on a canvas transformed into a three-dimensional image of the visible world - the viewers also interpret quite individually what they see on the canvas and thus assign meanings to the image (cf. Kandel 2012, 230).

In more recent approaches, which are primarily based on the current results of brain research, Stern goes even further and acknowledges the time-based arts and artistic non-verbal therapy methods as groundbreaking for psychotherapeutic treatment because they possess specific knowledge in the mediation of forms of vitality (Stern 2011, p. 116), i.e., they focus on the dynamic properties of experience. In this sense, Stern confirms the theoretical approaches of a depth-psychologically-oriented art psychology.

It can be assumed that the processes of "experiencing art" are very distinct, which is also supported by current research in neuroaesthetics. For example, the perception of emotions in art is partly through imitation and empathy (cf. Kandel 2012, p. 519); it engages the brain systems for biological movement, the mirror neurons, and the Theory of Mind. We activate these systems automatically without having to think about them. A great work of art provides us with a deep unconscious pleasure that can nonetheless evoke conscious feelings" (Kandel 2012, 519). This is quite consistent with the James Lange theory of emotion, and is also confirmed by recent studies of the emotional brain. Semir Zeki (2010, 25) also demonstrates a significant capacity for abstraction that can be triggered by a viewing of artwork. The viewer is accompanied in (depth psychological) receptive art therapy on the background of his current conflict. The work of art offers the possibility of introspection. Imagination enables a deepening of this experience. Only then does a symbolic understanding, a self-object experience through art become possible, for no work of art can be adequately experienced in the sense of Clemenz (2011, p. 14) without sensation, without affect. Affects necessarily enter into the perception of form, just as, conversely, form necessarily influences and alters our affects under certain circumstances. Moreover, affects constitute part of the form itself: They are fused into the artistic form and thus transformed. Affects thus become part of the "aesthetic idea" (Kant) of the artwork. In particular, the transcendent quality of

aesthetic experience is given prominent importance in Leikert (2012, p. 127). This moment of transcendence as a cathartically altered experience is central to the considerations and is an important basis (cf. Franzen 1992,1997) for the effectiveness of receptive art therapy procedures (Franzen 1997). For Klaus Matthies (1988, p. 83) it is obvious to relate "the worlds of feeling that all the arts contain (from which the arts proceed, to which they refer) with the worlds of feeling of everyday life, as they are especially significant in therapeutic view and intention." "Moreover, he determines a double meaning of catharsis, since it is involved in the fact that "aesthetic enjoyment (aesthetic experience) has a substantial spiritual part. (...) In this sense, catharsis is an important "purging" process: process of reappraisal, purification, renewal" (Matthies, 1988, p. 90).

In a work of art, in fact, all emotional experiences are inherent - and those experiences which seem to find their way to the viewer are perhaps the most distant from him (Hecht 2014, 7). "Works of art, because of their complexity, are able to provide a rich palette of associations and reactions for patients" (Sarbia, 2015, p. 193). The forms of interaction, those mutually constituting patterns of relations between the symbolic object or the symbolic process-the work of art-the producing subject-the artist's personality-and the receiving subject-the viewing person-that can be observed in front of the painting are analogous to the therapeutic as a cognitive process in the scene in front of the work of art (Engelhardt, 2021, p. 15). Indeed, it is so. When looking at his art space, it is possible to participate in it through an aesthetic experience.

On the one hand, imaginings have the surplus of meaning in common with works of art due to their symbolic quality; on the other hand, they represent a special "product" with a beginning, an end and certain stylistic features - such as striking breaks or a clear narration. The process of imagining, with its moments of emotional density, the primary process, the kinesthetic-sensual experience and the corresponding altered sense of time of the patient is related to the "flow" processes known from creativity research (Bahrke u. Nohr 2013, p. 16). At the same time, in the context of therapy, the image offers the possibility of opening up the patient's experiential spaces.

2.2. Impact factors & creativity

The integration of aesthetic possibilities of experience into the therapeutic process simultaneously enables a mirror function. In this mirror function, identification occurs. Associations are reinforced. In the scenic/symbolic contemplation of the work of art and the associated associations, of contradictory parts of movement, the unconscious meaning is experienced as it were. It is important to understand the distinction between manifest and latent meaning, i.e. the external and unconscious sides, of the work of art. Pictorial representations make their contents appear closer to the ego and thus facilitate identification with them. Detached from the immediate world of experience, works of art help to create a more distanced relationship to one's own conflicts. Sonja Pöppel (2016, pp. 240-246) has summarized the factors of effect of receptive art therapy accordingly in her dissertation:

- relaxation, relief, conflict management
- Mobilization/Activation/Motivation
- Triggering healing forces in the viewer
- Promoting communication skills/building rapport
- Promotion of the perceptive ability
- Promotion/change of self-perception and perception of others
- Improvement of the ability to concentrate/endurance
- Stabilization/identity formation
- Promotion of design activities and creativity
- Promotion of self-esteem
- Promotion of cultural participation/socialization

In addition, art forms that can simultaneously convey movements or inner images have an intense psychological effect. Accordingly, they can be used to deepen the imaginative experience and stimulate creative processes. The visual engagement with the artwork also leads to a relief of unconscious feelings, which intensifies the activation of resources at all conscious and unconscious levels, and allows a self-object experience. The art experience takes place in a relational space. Only here does the aesthetic-symbolic experience take place with the following efficacy factors:

- Mirror function.
- Model function.

- Containing.
- Depot effect.
- Verbalization of experience content.
- Symbolic experience.
- Promotion of Creativity.

Since aesthetic conditions are neuronally appropriated and neuronally represented (Menzen, 2017, p. 136), we also need neuropsychological foundations for understanding the effective factors of receptive art therapy procedures. For example, Merlin Donalds (2008, p. 11) points out that all the symbol tools which our brains work with are imported from culture. Thus, symbol formation requires intensive acculturation; that is, for this to occur, individuals must grow into the culture of the society that surrounds them (cf. Donald 2008, p. 161). For Donald (2008, p. 278), symbols emerge from the tension between the two sides of a cognitive symbol system, namely between the form of the symbol itself and the levels of meaning to which it is attached and on which it in turn acts. This also refers to collective experience and the meaning that artists, in particular, convey in their artworks so that the viewers' inner images widen and change, become looser and more open (cf. Hüther. 2005, p. 17). C. G. Jung understands that the archetypal recourse is also the secret of the effect of art: "The creative process, as far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in an unconscious revival of the archetype and in a development and shaping of the same up to the completed work" (Jung G.W. 15 vol., 1995, p. 95).

Many artists have, therefore, not only drawn attention to the socio-psychological scene of their time in their works of art, but they are unconsciously able to draw on archetypal symbols through their deep sensitivity. The art historian Franz Meyer (1989, 126) assumes that the will of the artists to use the work of art as a symbolic operator and the recourse to old symbolic images are attempts to activate the power of mythical, holistic thinking and to make it fruitful for our time. But above all, the personal relational experience is processed in the work of art as if in a container. This connection can also be explained in terms of the Containing concept by Wilfred R. Bion (2016) and transferred to art. In this very broad understanding, works of art can also be reflected as containers: "A painter's landscape painting contains a wide variety of sensory and emotional impressions to which the artist was exposed while viewing the landscape.

The painting is the materialized result of the containing process" (Crepaldi, 2022, p. 13). It is created through a subjective process. Which is also triggered in the viewer, from which something new and unique then emerges and becomes a supporting, subjective reality. Ultimately, the researcher is also enmeshed with his or her prior cultural experiences, for interpretive research is an encounter and relational event, a profoundly sociocultural practice, Straub (2022, p. 134). Without my own engagement with the artistic object, I cannot participate in the experience. The result is creative ambiguity.

From the perspective of Gestalt psychology, Rudolf Arnheim explains that the organization of visual forms in the work of art always refers to

basic experiences of human existence. For Arnheim (1991, 106), true aesthetic experience is not limited to the passive reception of a work of art, but occurs in an active interplay between the artist's work and the viewer's reaction. Viewing a work of art or experiencing an art space support the verbalization of experiential content. A creative dynamic is encouraged. Working with creativity and symbols is empathic explaining rather than interpreting. The explanation should be accepted and understood by the client, it cannot be interpreted in the opposite direction of his current self-experience. At the same time, the symbol can say something not only about the current state and process of the self, but also describe past and present object (person) relations.

Practical example

In this sense, the artistic symbol serves as a representative self-object of one's own self-experience (Kohut, 1977). Franz Marc expressed in his animal paintings the relationship to nature. The beauty of a shattering world (Meyer-Büser, 2009), was captured on an intense, felt level by Franz Marc before World War 1 literally tore these experiences of nature apart with its cruelty. In a kind of "close-up," Franz Marc captured the pristine spiritual dimension of nature in his paintings. The freedom of art, the freedom of thought, the freedom of nature. In the symbol of the cat, these freedoms appear alive: The love for oneself, felt mindfulness, freedom. The work of an artist such as Franz Marc emerged in this language of color and form from an introspection. This psychic energy is conveyed to the viewer. Franz Marc's "white cat" (illustration) offers a projection surface for an introspection and for imaginations that ultimately stand for "self-respect". His magnificent paintings, which have an almost magical effect, and which express his own loneliness and how he deals with it, are particularly suitable for reflecting feelings. Depending on the degree of sensitivity of the viewer, a need for harmony seems to be in the foreground here, which becomes effective in the entire composition of the painting.

One Borderline patient reported anxiety, fatigue, and depression at the beginning of therapy. "I often feel a sense of deep sadness inside me". She often felt completely overwhelmed. After a hospital stay, she "started cutting again." "I cut my arm with a razor blade two to three times a week because I can't stand the pressure." The patient reports difficulties with her job and she has experienced "a lot of violence." Often, she would sit at home and not know what to do. The patient appeared physically and emotionally tense. Her mood was clearly depressed. There was difficulty in differentiating affects. A weakness of the ego could be assumed. There was a general structural weakness and narcissistic vulnerability. The disorder was associated with marked limitations in social functioning. Preferential defense: splitting, denial, affect isolation and impulse breakthrough alternate; dissociations by self-injuries; identification with the aggressor. In addition to a conflict- and structure-related etiology, the patient also had a currently effective trauma-related problem, which was made clear by the acutely pressing memories. Structurally, developmental deficits according to OPD were mainly in self-control (outbursts of rage, self-injury) and self-awareness. The old mode of regulation and defense of one's own affects seemed to fall away after the overload. Genetically, the present conflicts could be linked to a markedly unfavorable family development. The assumption was that the patient had not experienced any sufficient stable affective regulation of states of tension and positive mirroring in her early contact with her biological mother. Early violent assaults and the associated traumatic experience in relationships could be assumed. In the current conflict situation with the lack of demarcation from former partners and the family overload, her own strong aggressions, resulting from a felt injustice, which she had also felt in her early family experiences, were not allowed to be experienced appropriately and so she turned against her own self. Thus, only within the framework of her structural deficits, she has the possibility to direct the pressing deep feelings of guilt as well as unrestrained rage

punishingly against her own self or her body or to dissipate them by means of impulse breakthrough in an affectively immature way, so that it came to the described complex decompensation. It was important to establish a stable therapeutic relationship in an atmosphere of trust, security and appreciation. This first led to a relief, on the basis of which a slow approach to the trauma suffered and finally a trauma treatment could follow. Very dosed reanimations of the traumatic event with the help of special trauma-therapeutic techniques, which had the goal of her being able to endure the memories, helped her to increasingly strengthen her ego and to improve her control. In addition, a basic resource-oriented approach seemed to be indicated for the patient. As protection of the self, the narcissistic withdrawal tendencies and the strong defense against unconsciously affectively occupied material still needed to be respected in the long term. In addition to the basics of catathym-imaginative psychotrauma therapy (Steiner and Krippner 2006), I worked with the resource-oriented approach of positive psychotherapy and repeatedly offered art images in the course of therapy in order to achieve a stabilization of self-esteem in the patient through a symbolic experience. We were able to anchor her personal interest and preference for cats in the therapeutic work on Franz Marc "The White Cat" (Franzen, 2009). She stated that she had been searching for an "inner safe place" for a long time. She found it in the painting by Franz Marc. She could finally imagine what such a place must be like for her. "Yes, this white cat, it lies next to me, it purrs, I can stroke it, it calms me, I feel its warmth, feel protected by it, as it were, and completely safe." This then helped her to balance herself in everyday life so that she no longer hurt herself. The picture thus fulfilled a mirror and model function.



Fig. 1. Franz Marc 'The white cat' (cat on yellow cushion) 1912) Marc, Macke and Delaunay. Exhibition at the Sprengel Museum Hannover 2009 (reprint rights available)

Discussion

The function of the use of stories, which can also be related to the work with works of art,

found in Positive Psychotherapy (Peseschkian, 2002), can be determined as follows:

In the mirror function, identification occurs. Associations are reinforced. In the scenic/symbolic observation of the work of art

and the associated associations, of contradictory parts of movement, the unconscious meaning is experienced as it were. Exercises in the functioning of art and the content of the unconscious meaning offer receptive art-therapeutic procedures, since the introduction to psychological connections can of course also take place through a picture or a poem. It is important to understand the distinction between manifest and latent meaning, i.e. the external and unconscious sides, of the work of art. Pictorial representations let their contents appear closer to the self and thus facilitate the identification with them. Detached from the immeasurable world of experience, stories and images help to create a more distanced relationship to one's own conflicts.

3.1 Model function

As in the work with stories in Positive Psychotherapy, works of art offer a model function by making a symbolic experience possible. I know from many personal conversations with clients that the use of artistic media has a supportive effect and leads to an improvement in communication, that they enjoy working with it and find it enriching not only in the situation of the therapy interaction, but above all they take this inspiration with them into everyday life and look for forms of creative engagement themselves. There is an unfolding of the ability to communicate more freely with each other in the group, and that is significant. This then also leads to a structuring of everyday experience. I have noticed, for example, that especially with psychiatric clients, the sometimes-indiscriminate consumption of media was reduced and an engagement with cultural offerings took place. After several sessions, I encourage the participants to bring their own pictures, music, literature or films that describe their current situation and awaken memories. Initially, the picture then stands as an example of a possible change; it represents the motivation to develop new positive life plans.

Conclusion

Creative methods can be used to build, activate or revive inner resources (Kruse, 1997, p. 47). The effective factors of creativity lie, among other things, in the change of emotions, that is, the therapeutic access to the emotional world of an individual in order to help him/her to get to know his/her feelings better, to make

blocked areas of feeling accessible again and to express him/herself emotionally (Kruse, 1997, p. 32). Art is an essential component of a personality and identity development in this process of shaping our relationship and the associated development of perception (cf. Sel, 2010, p. 69, Richter-Reichenbach 2011, p. 42). Thus, the artistic subject has molded, represented, inscribed his relational experience in his work of art, which the viewing subject can feel, relive, and read (cf. Engelhardt 2021, p. 14). It comes to a relational event, whereby designed and art are from the outset not the outflow of a subject simply standing for itself, "but testimony to an interaction, a communication: an interrelationship of this subject in its confrontation with someone standing beyond the I" (Schneider, 2017, 285).

The primary goal here is to broaden the patient's perspectives, which predominantly relate to the implementation and goal of a traditional psychotherapeutic concept. The view and the cognition of the patient as well as of the therapist shall thus be directed beyond the defined horizon of the actual area of mental suffering to additional, though external, but nevertheless crucial aspects" (Schurian, 2009).

Art can comfort and accompany, can take on an important function in life crises, encouraging, representing experiences and feelings. The work with visual art in psychotherapy contributes to stabilizing the meaning and value systems of the patients, promotes the ability to communicate and is a contribution to the structuring of everyday life. In this sense, Positive Psychotherapy has revived the cultural tradition of literary or artistic lore and endowed it with a garb from depth psychology.

The processes within Positive Psychotherapy are more complex from a psychodynamic point of view, as they are usually integrated into a guideline psychotherapy and oriented towards a psychoanalytically based procedure (depth psychology, psychoanalysis). Both Positive Psychotherapy and Art Therapy work with symbols and the symbolic level is of outstanding importance. Only the spiritual energetic content enables the symbol to function as a spiritual carrier of meaning and to be used in the conscious appropriation of reality (Hampe 1999, p.62). For the art therapist Ruth Hampe, the activation of inner images is essential for the aesthetic process (Hampe, 2009, p. 180). Through the activation of inner images, access to

self-experience can be stimulated and processed within the framework of a symbol drama. The aesthetic transformation as an inner-psychoic processing process in the representation of inner images thus becomes a resource and resilience factor (cf. Hampe 2009,181). This resource-oriented approach is found as a highlighted focus in art therapy. The clearest distinction between art therapy and positive psychotherapy lies in the active process of shaping. From the beginning, the shaping of the relationship leads through an art object. This is where art therapy differs from Positive Psychotherapy. While art therapy is on its way to learn from the depth dimension, the understanding of symbols and relationship design of Positive Psychotherapy for its own therapeutic work, a stronger integration of art therapy into the theory and practice of Positive Psychotherapy could be beneficial. This refers to overlaps and additions that maintain the autonomy of both art therapy and positive psychotherapy. Nevertheless, both methods can benefit from each other.

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