



## Dance Art and Psychopathology

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**Editorial**

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### Abstract

In this article, the link between dance art and psychopathology is established, and at the same time, a master class is taught about hysteria and its clinical and psychodynamic interpretation, aimed primarily at residents of the specialty of Psychiatry, psychologists and students of Medicine and Psychology.

**Keywords:** Dance Art; Clinical Psychopathology; Psychiatry; Clinical Psychology; Medicine

### Introduction

This article, whose fundamental objective is to show the relationship between art-dance-psychopathology, becomes a tribute to the sacred memory of the prima ballerina assoluta Alicia Alonso (1920-2019), on the 104th anniversary of her birth, and a master class, directed —specifically— to psychiatrists, clinical and health psychologists, residents of the Psychiatry specialty, as well as Psychology and Medicine students.

In the 1980s, the award-winning plastic artist, graphic and scenic designer, Ricardo Reymena, laureate of the «Felix Varela» Order, granted by the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba, asked this chronicler to search for a neuropsychic entity that would adapt to the exceptional histrionic potential of the excellent ballerina, who had decided to revive the ballet Lydia, more than three decades after its world premiere, which occurred in 1951.

After making an exhaustive review among the great neuropsychic entities, and without losing sight of the masterful technical-interpretive conditions that would identify Alicia Alonso in any national or foreign scenario, I chose hysterical psychosis as the ideal nosographic entity for

Alicia to lend her footing. and soul to the character of Lydia, in that choreographic-dramaturgical context par excellence [1].

Why hysterical psychosis? To answer this question, it is necessary to characterize—from a conceptual perspective—what hysteria is. According to the Cuban Glossary of the International Classification of Mental Diseases, 1 hysteria is the expression of a psychic condition, in the course of which frequent emotional changes and alterations occur, which are usually accompanied by convulsions, paralysis and suffocation. Or in other words as a state of intense psychic excitement, caused by an abnormal circumstance or situation, which conditions the outbreak of exaggerated reactions, and causes the person to project onto the surrounding environment - through crying or shouting - their unhealthy affectivity, which gives said psychopathogenic state a markedly dramatic nuance. Hence, hysteria can present two essential clinical manifestations: twilight and conversion. In the first, there is partial or total awareness; a sign that can confuse doctors, and consequently make them formulate a diagnosis of epileptic syndrome, while, in the second, the clinical picture can suggest to doctors the presence of neural disorders of organic-cerebral pathogenesis or secondary reactions to the use of antipsychotic psychotropic drugs.

Hysteria presents three types of psychological functioning in the person who suffers from it. According to the analytical interpretation, it is possible to define the psychopathic type as an expression of a personality disorder, marked by conflict with the other or non-self, and by extension, with the socio-familial environment where the subject carries out his or her usual activities; the neurotic type, as an intrapsychic dilemma that the ego faces, and that leads to an ego (consciousness)-superego confrontation (ethical-moral code that regulates the behavior of the individual in society, and that responds to the regulations imposed by social programming-cultural); and the psychotic type, as the total break with the external environment, which results in the replacement of the reality principle by the pleasure principle.

On the other hand, one might wonder why the honorary member of the International Dance Council (CID-UNESCO), who had given an inimitable interpretation of the character of «Giselle» in that jewel of universal dance, did not reply to the madness of which the innocent German peasant by deception of the Duke of Silesia?

The only plausible explanation is that Alicia - a faithful lover of science - sought specialized advice, because, in the case of «Giselle», the psychosis suffered by the protagonist of that romantic ballet is reactive to a loving-sentimental frustration, while in the case of «Lydia», the psychological ailment that the girl suffers is the result of a mental illness of an endogenous nature or a biochemical? neurophysiogenic alteration? Psychiatry, as a biomedical specialty that studies mental disorders, has not been able to elucidate—until now—the pathogenesis of most of the major nosographic entities.

With support in these theoretical-conceptual and methodological coordinates, the brilliant dancer, as Cuban as she is universal, developed the choreographic-dramaturgical design of the ballet Lydia. On the stage of the «García Lorca» room of the Gran Teatro de La Habana, which has carried her illustrious name since 2015, Alicia captivated island and foreign lovers of the «art of the tips», as well as colleagues from the specialized press that covered that revival, in which he stood out for the perfect balance he achieved between academic technique, theatrical interpretation and the intellectualization-spiritualization of those two primordial elements in which the dance art is structured.

That interpretation, little known in the fertile intellectual and spiritual production of Alicia Alonso in the field of universal classical dance, demonstrated - in spades - that she had not only immortalized historical figures of that artistic manifestation: «Giselle» and «Carmen», but also to «Lydia», an insular maiden who lived in the shadows as a result of the mental condition she suffered, and that the «Lady of the Dance» with that ballet gave her a beam of light.

Eternal glory to the soul of Alicia Alonso, who sleeps eternal sleep in a «magical» world full of music, dance, poetry, light and color, where the spirit of those who—in the words of Martí's genius—«love and found»!

## Reference

1. Havana Psychiatric Hospital (2003) Cuban Glossary of the International Classification of Mental Illnesses (GC-3). Havana: Editorial Orbe.

