



Ebony Nichols: The Africanist Aesthetic in Movement Observation



Ebony T. Nichols M.A., R-DMT, CAT-LP is a somatic mental health and wellness practitioner, registered dance/movement therapist, and Creative Arts Therapist (LP). This presentation explores embodied resilience from a strengths-based lens utilizing the Africanist Aesthetic as a tool for movement observation. Reflective in the African tradition of storytelling, combined with contemporary narrative dance/movement therapy, we examine movement frameworks through social location to minimize the challenges of introducing predominately Eurocentric theoretical frameworks and movement observation.

TOP EMBODIMENT TIP: Breathe before you make a choice.

Cultural Self Awareness: **We Have to be Aware of our Conditioned Way of Seeing**

- Become more aware of your surroundings simply by aligning with your current physiology (breath) and the way that you're looking; notice new things.
- Can movement observation be applied from a non-white, non-euro centric viewpoint, in a way that benefits black indigenous people of color?

African Dance Diaspora: **Possibility for a Preservation of Culture**

- African diasporic dance denotes dance traditions passed down to African descendants during the slave trade and other forms of displacement.
- Explore movement patterns as they relate to the African diaspora.
- The African aesthetic as an observation tool and descriptor of movement quality. Dance movement therapy and somatic-based practices.

Vocabulary of Movement: **Nonverbal Communication as a Way to Preserve Culture**

- Oral tradition or embodied dance was the only way to preserve culture through slave cultures.
- When written history isn't possible, embodiment speaks volumes.
- The African diaspora's movements and aesthetics have been fundamental to forming a Neo-American identity.

Embodied Resilience: **It's Not that "This Happened to You", It's that You Were Able to Grow and Change from It.**

- A response or resistance and an act of resilience, which says that *"We've experienced all of this, but we are still here. We've developed our own formulas."*
- Healing of intergenerational trauma is possible.

Resources

- ❖ **Website:** [Ebony T. Nichols](#)
- ❖ **References:** Dr. Brenda Dixon Gottschild



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