

The four current Biodanza System development trends. Eulogy of Diversity. By Eliane Matuk

Since when I met Biodanza first time, more than thirty years ago, two main developments, different from Rolando Toro Araneda's one, were already shaping.

One of these developments was embedded by those Biodanza teachers who were applying the methodology by freely improvising, without considering the methodology criteria which have been elaborated by Rolando Toro for structuring the exercises and for selecting suitable musics, with full coherency to his Theoretical Model.

The second development was represented by Cezar Wagner's initiative, at that time director of the Nord-Est Biodanza School in Fortaleza, Brazil, aiming at assimilating Biodanza to a political ideology.

Both these tendencies were disassociating themselves from Rolando Toro Araneda's Biodanza System.

The first one because the distortion of the Biodanza System identity is the result of a musics selection and exercises development without no reference to the methodology criteria.

The Biodanza System is structured as a "system" (system as meant by the Theory of the Systems) whose identity comes from the exact correspondence between its components, that is between the theory and the methodology.

Such a correspondence is granted by the methodology criteria: according to them, the musics are selected and the exercises are structured.

From their end, the methodology criteria are elaborated according to the Theoretical Model and represent the link between theory and methodology.

In accordance to the Theory of Systems, when these criteria are ignored, the result can be either the distortion of the system identity, and the related decrease of its effects, or the death of the system itself.

The second trend, that is the politicization of Biodanza, is antithetical to those features which, *a priori*, belong to the Biodanza System itself, that is the theoretical and the methodological choice by Rolando Toro Araneda: Biodanza is not

ideological and is non-denominational, that is it can't be connected to any ideology, neither political nor religious.

Some years before Rolando Toro's death, a third development trend was born in Europe, which is represented by Embrace.

This group of Biodanza teachers proposes to consider the above-mentioned trends as equivalent to the Biodanza's creator theory and methodology, which means these two trends would have the same value of the System as created by its founder.

Because of an incomprehensible fear of discussion, Embrace group members deny the differences under a rhetoric unity shout, and try to understand those differences by including them instead of confirming them as differences into a dialogue option, which would be the only way to respect them as differences and to respect their existence.

Till Rolando Toro's death, on 16th February 2010, these three tendencies were showing themselves with discretion.
After his death, they started to explicit much stronger.

Across the last two years, these three tendencies have been differentiating themselves clearly from Rolando Toro Araneda's original proposal.

This way, we can say the current Biodanza development context is set by four main trends:

- The proposal by Rolando Toro Araneda, Biodanza creator, which is scientifically based and is represented by the Methodology Counsellorship, the group of Rolando Toro's assistants founded by himself during his life.
- The free improvisation, represented by CIMEB net (the Committee for the Investigation of Biodanza musics and exercises), a group self-established after Rolando Toro's death.
- The politicisation of Biodanza, linked to the Fortaleza Biodanza School, in the Nord-Est Brazil, represented by Cesar Wagner, Ruth Cavalcanti and their collaborators and followers.

– The standardisation of the three above-mentioned tendencies, represented by Embrace group, a proposal which seems based on the denial of the differences, and which is, according to me, similar to the typical globalisation process.

Along his entire life, Rolando Toro Araneda respected the choices made by those who opted for the new development tendencies different from the scientific nature of his proposal.

At the same time, he never changed his path, and continued his research by going ahead with the Biodanza System development coherently to his Theoretical Model and its methodology criteria.

Such a development has been the non-stop and update scientific base, in tight connection with science developments.

I fully agree with Rolando Toro's Biocentric Principle; in tune with many years of self-dedication to the study of his theory and methodology (more than half of my life), I can always remember the postulation of the Biocentric Principle he defined and proposed, according to which the respect for life is *a prioripoint* of reference for the cultural values development.

The Biocentric Principle proposes the appreciation of the diversity as life expression, because life expresses itself through diversity.

The Biocentric Principle is a starting point to structure the new perceptions and the new sciences of the future with modalities which refer to the existence: priority to the living; physical determinism considered as illusory; progressive giving up of the linear thinking to be replaced by a topological perception and by the poetics of the similarity; disqualification of those philosophies which look for a single truth, as behind each truth another one is hidden. [1]

From the Biocentric Principle point of view, the presence of more tendencies represents an expression of diversity.

In my view, the differences among various tendencies are to be appreciated, underlined and respected.

In the flattening which denies the differences, I see a risk for diversity to be neglected, an impoverishment of the current and future Biodanza development.

In addition, to uniform involves the risk for Rolando Toro Araneda's development modality to disappear, and this is the modality where system components – theory and methodology – are in a perfectly coherent relationship, which is set by the

methodology criteria as outlined, studied, elaborated and tested across many years of experimentation and research.

This is the modality of reference for all the tendencies, which originate and could originate from it in the future.

It's the spring, the key-parameter.

If and when this would disappear, the other tendencies would happen to be without point of reference for future developments.

According to its creator, Rolando Toro Araneda, Biodanza is *a transparent transgression of the consumption society alienation musts* [2].

Rolando Toro wished to develop a proposal, which could liberate the human being from the alienating mass culture effects, and this is one of the important Biodanza values.

Looking at Embrace specifically trying to uniform the development tendencies, I wonder if the planet globalisation process pressure will become so strong to paradoxically condition Biodanza development as well.

Anyway, it seems other factors are contributing to this trend, for instance the qualitative training difference among Biodanza teachers, which sometimes is very far from the deep study of Rolando Toro Araneda's theory and methodology.

From one hand, the teachers who received a different training have no responsibilities for this process; from the other hand, the choice to make the reference modality disappear is a non-sense according to me.

Already in the 50's the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss [3], contemporary of Rolando Toro, resigned in front of the on-going globalisation and referred to it by an agricultural metaphor:

We can do nothing more. Civilisation is no more than a fragile flower that, to hard develop, it was necessary to protect in some hidden corners in the field of wild species as well, no doubt frightful for their growth, but at the same time allowing the variation and the reinvigoration of the seeds. The human species crystallizes itself into the mono-culture, it gets itself ready to produce the mass-civilisation, like for the beet. Its table will exclusively offer this meal.

Like the unique flowers of the Amazon forest happen to risk to disappear, because of the mono-culture promoted by globalisation, in the same way the unique flowers

of Rolando Toro Araneda's Biodanza System risk to disappear because of Biodanza globalisation process.

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(Translating by Silvia Signorelli)

[1] Rolando Toro, "Biodanza", Red edizioni, Milano, 2000, p. 49

[1] Rolando Toro, "Das System Biodanza", Tinto Verlag, 2010, Seite 78

[2] Rolando Toro, *Op.cit.*, p. 21

[3] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Tristi tropici", Il saggiatore, Milano, 2008, p. 31