

The Internal Instrument

A Conversation with Lynette Clayton

Dale Herron and Lynette Clayton

Lynette is a Distinguished and Founding Member of ANZPA and initial member of the Board of Examiners who, in 2006, was awarded membership of the Order of Australia (OAM) for "services to psychology, particularly the application of psychodrama as a clinical tool, and to the community through the Uniting Church in Australia". With Max Clayton she brought psychodrama to Australia and New Zealand in 1971. She retired from training psychodramatists in 1999 and lives in Perth, WA.

Dale Herron, Psychodramatist, TEP is a past Director of the Auckland Training Centre for Psychodrama. She spoke with Lynette on 18 June 2007, Auckland NZ.

Dale: In 1974, as you know, I began my psychodrama training with you and Max Clayton in Auckland. So here today, can you speak about how you began your warm-up to psychodrama in your journey?

Lynette: Hello, psychodrama trainees and psychodrama community. I am starting today with a statement that perhaps is familiar to you: that all of us who work with others need to develop an internal instrument. It may be a psychotherapeutic instrument; it may be a socioanalytic instrument, it may be a consultation instrument, it may be a role training instrument, but it is an instrument that guides us. As part of the developmental process we have a very personal motivation and my personal motivation for entering the work came as a 16 year old.

I went to a school that was very community oriented and the head mistress put me in charge of a group that was to do social service. One thing we did was to prepare an afternoon outing to a mental hospital, a grey stone building on a

hill. A group of us brought our baked goodies along and were all prepared to do our items and we went into this building and were shown around. What we experienced was shocking. There were babies in cots stacked into a room with a woman looking after them. There were adults eating off enamel plates without any cutlery, a ward of hydrocephalic children who could not lift their heads. These shocking images stayed with me and they are things you would not see today because of the scientific and social advances in housing the intellectually disabled away from the mental hospital systems.

This experience became a personal motivation that directed my initial university studies into the area of psychology. After I finished my basic psychology degree I went to work in the education system. That brings in the second concept I want to talk about and that is that all of us in developing this instrument have our own mentors during the process. We learn from the people that we see and from teachers. My initial placement was with a man called John who taught me first of all to observe and to try

to work out what was happening with and for the child. In the background was always the idea that children might need special care and attention and to be directed to special services such as educational facilities or child and adolescent psychiatric services. I was to work out what were the needs of this person, how they were functioning intellectually as well as emotionally. I learned that very loving families keep very disabled children on their farms or in their families for a lifetime and these carers serve in a very devoted way.

When I was in the States I really tumbled into psychodrama in that when we went to Washington DC, a wise professor in California had said to me "Either train in psychoanalysis at the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute or train in psychodrama". I was accepted for an internship year and then a residency year in psychodrama and studied at St. Elizabeth's hospital full time. After this, I was accepted onto the staff of the hospital as a psychodramatist training the six trainees who came each year. These were all paid positions.

At St Elizabeth's Hospital I was encouraged to specialize in the area of the psychotic deaf and was again challenged because this meant working with very basic sign language and without verbal communication. I had the experience that one had to apply psychodrama in a very different way with a very different group of people. I am encouraged to see that in Australia and New Zealand this has happened significantly over the years. As people develop the basics of their instrument they then take it off and use it in many different areas. A body of literature has developed through the ANZPA journal and people writing theses.

My mentors during my training process were James Enneis, one of Moreno's initial trainees along with Dick Korn, Hannah Weiner, Leon Fine and others. Don Clarkson and Norm Zinger, who specialised in systems theory and organizational analysis and consultancy as well as classical psychodrama on the stage in the

psychodrama theatre at St. Elizabeth's, were my specific supervisors. Jim Enneis developed the central concern warm-up that was written about later by Dale Buchanan who took over as head of the St. Elizabeth's programme.

Dale: All those mentors in the USA were older, male and American. What was the transition like for you to Australia, and your own work setting in those days for the practice and teaching of psychodrama? As I recall, it had an impact on the writing of the ANZPA Standards and Training Manual as well?

Lynette: Returning to Australia I found myself running psychodrama groups in an isolated setting, firstly in a psychiatric day centre and later in a psychiatric hospital. This involved running a group each morning and in the late morning working individually with adolescents and young adults and at times their families. Usually in the hospital it was this age group that was sent to the psychodrama groups. Being in an isolated setting meant I had to think through issues of applying Morenian theory in the Australian context. This meant thinking for myself. As I had learned to write up groups I had taken during my first year of training I had a framework for supervising myself. I can now appreciate that it is the internal supervisor who is part of the internal instrument. The internal supervisor is a composite of those people who have been our mentors. They assist us in our spontaneity and creativity in the particular area where we are applying our understanding.

Dale: As I recall your practice and teaching of psychodrama had an impact on the writing of the ANZPA Standards and Training Manual?

Lynette: In the 1970's there was no training manual and one of the first things that had to be done was to write the Training Manual. The early training manual was divided into psychodramatist, sociodramatist and role trainer in order to meet the legal requirements for registration and indemnity insurance for psychodramatists. This was not necessary for

the sociodramatists and role trainers. Slightly different requirements were written for each area. The whole however was based on systems theory and role analysis. Systems theory is very difficult to pick up. Systems theory is based on the assumption that everything is in constant movement in relation to everything else so that an individual or organization is in constant movement during their interaction with the outside world.

The other concept that was behind the manual was that of role analysis. In each area of application we tried to think about the roles that were required for the internal instrument and to put these descriptions into simple words so they become functions rather than a reified way of behaving. When you think about roles as the functioning form the individual takes in a specific moment and specific place then in the next moment there may be a change even in that moment of observation. The manual is therefore a fluid instrument and I hope that it will always be fluid as it is remade to meet the requirements of the society and the context of training. It is important for trainers as well as trainees to understand the context in which psychodrama is to be applied in the workplace, whether this be an agency or in a private business. Trainers are mentors for trainees who come from many different settings. In my work I have always seen trainers as each having a unique set of roles. As the trainee develops the basic skills they will also develop a unique set of roles as they apply the method in their workplace.

Dale: What are your personal or special applications of the psychodrama method that you have written about?

Lynette: One of my first writings was the paper 'Neurotic Reactions'. This was written when I returned to university to finish a B. Psych. and then an M. Psych. It was a welcome break from doing the clinical work and allowed me to think about the basic assumptions of psychotherapy and where Moreno fitted with the general development of psychotherapy and

psychoanalysis. Two concepts of Moreno's that have now become accepted in the psychoanalytic area are that the child is spontaneous from birth and that the context into which the child is born and the attachments the child makes in that context are absolutely essential to determining whether there is a healthy or unhealthy psychological development. The paper 'Neurotic Reactions' was an attempt to separate personality functioning from psychopathology that develops as a result of the nurturance of the child. Using Arieti's work (1955) this paper also attempted to understand how the brain functions at different levels.

These ideas are updated now in a manual that has just come out called the 'Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual' (PDM Task Force 2006) and with Nancy McWilliams books 'Psychoanalytic Diagnosis' (1994) and 'Psychoanalytic Case Formulation' (1999) where she distinguishes personality style from the development of the person psychologically.

The other area where Moreno differed was his focus on the moment, the moment of change. The modern writings of Stern (2004) have integrated this idea into the psychoanalytic tradition. I was interested to see that Patricia O'Rourke wrote about attachment theory and the moment in the December 2006 ANZPA Journal. In the 2005 ANZPA Journal Judy Broom reviewed two recent books about levels of brain functioning. So I am pleased to see that the psychodrama community is being exposed to more recent ideas and my writings can be set aside.

My second series of papers was written to clarify Moreno's theory of personality.. Two of these papers were published in the American Journal of Group Psychotherapy Psychodrama & Sociometry (JGPPS): 'Personality Theory of J.L. Moreno' (1975) and 'The Use of the Cultural Atom to Record Change in Individual Psychotherapy' (1982). The third in the series Creative Genius and Integrating Principle was not published. These articles were my own thinking as I

returned to psychiatric services and began to work full time seeing people individually as well as conducting Spontaneity Training groups. I worked much more systemically encouraging other professions to conduct groups training the patients in life skills while they were captive in the hospital setting. This idea has been lost in Western Australia as rational economics has influenced treatment and patients have shorter hospital stays.

The paper *'The Use of the Cultural Atom to Record Change in Psychotherapy'* is based on systems theory. In each of the three gestalts of roles there is an organizing role that provides an identity at each level of development. The different levels are aligned with different levels of cognitive functioning and present in constant movement. These days I would add to that paper a series of developmental steps relating to awareness. These would describe the development of self: self awareness, self with agency, assertive self, integrated self, spiritual self. Most of our work in psychiatric services had to do with development of self awareness and self with agency that develops before the ability to assert oneself.

The article *'Creative Genius as Integrating Principle'* is an example of how disintegrated psychiatric patients can be and the importance of Moreno's catharsis of integration in developing a structure that enables a cohesive functioning self. Later papers I wrote on Moreno's Idea of Psychosis, on Structuralisation, and the Clinical Psychodramatist all pick up on the original ideas.

Dale: The next area of your interest seems to have been to do with training consultants in organizational development. Perhaps the interface of the inner and outer worlds and the application of systems theory occurs in a variety of settings.

Lynette: I was reluctant to write in this area. I worked with Warren Parry to develop a sociodrama curriculum and some handy

work sheets came out of this. Warren was also reluctant to write but produced some important work sheets on Conflict Resolution and other principles and methods of working in organizations. I did produce a chart of organizations that uses the modern language of organizations and describes four areas of the organization: the organization as it is created by upper management; middle management and job descriptions that bring the purpose into a form; the working group and its dynamics; and the outcomes. The consultant may be invited into the organization to effect change in any of these areas and may need to give feedback to other areas or the whole through the CEO. I did not write much about this because it was an evolving area.

Max has written extensively in the area of group work, role training and psychodrama as did Tony Williams. Anne Hale visited Australia and she is a specialist in the application of sociometry. The other area that I had no input into was in street theatre, Playback theatre and spontaneity training as it applied to creative drama. I felt sad that those who were so creative in these areas did not write a great deal but am sure that their work has had a great influence on the creative expression within psychodrama in New Zealand and Australia.

Dale: Perhaps your papers have been circulated or published. Where can people find them?

Lynette: A number of books that were written about group work in the 1960's and 70's have gone out of print. I put my collection of books and papers into the ANZPA archives and the archivist is Sr. Brigid Hirschfeld.

Dale: So, to conclude, can you make some observations from your vantage point now in life about the inner instrument at this time?

Lynette: The inner instrument is always developing and the expression of its development is often seen in the writings that come through

the Journal. I have become interested in Bion's writings particularly his ideas about dreaming and the brain function that he calls the alpha function (see Ogden 2005). Psychodrama has preserved a method that takes into account feelings and thoughts that bring about action. At its best it works in a flow that is akin to dreaming. It is in the writing in psychodrama though that there is reflection that can bring experience together and assist the development of language in the inner instrument.

Dale: Let me then, as we conclude, thank you for your reflective contribution to ANZPA and to me personally for making such an important part of my "inner instrument."

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