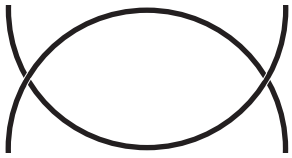

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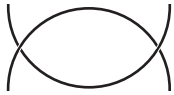

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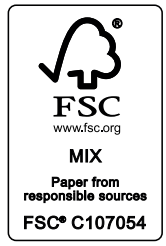

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The *AANZPA Journal* is published by the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA). It has been established to assist in the fulfilment of the purposes of AANZPA through the dissemination of quality written articles focused on psychodrama theory and methods and their application by practitioners in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The opinions and views expressed in articles and reviews are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the perspectives and recommendations of the journal editor or AANZPA.

The Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA) is an organisation of people trained in psychodrama theory and methods, and their application and developments in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The purposes of AANZPA include the establishment and promotion of the psychodrama method, the setting and maintenance of standards and the professional association of members. Ordinary members of the organisation are certificated as Psychodramatists, Sociodramatists, Sociometrists and Role Trainers, and as a Trainer, Educator, Practitioner (TEP). Members associate within geographical regions, through the *AANZPA Journal* and electronic publication *Socio*, and at annual conferences.

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the 2019 edition of the *AANZPA Journal*, which includes seven articles and three book reviews.

In the first article, David Oliphant presents a welcome exploration of J.L. Moreno's spirituality and theological thinking. Traditional theology had presented God as 'object', but now Moreno had 'role reversed' with God and understood this as part of the unfolding of God's subjectivity in history. From this perspective, God no longer needed religion because he had entered the secular world fully, as spontaneity and creativity. David explores some of the implications of this shift and highlights the centrality of our 'responsibility' as co-creators with Moreno's God, which is the spontaneity-creativity of the universe.

Charmaine McVea's paper brings a focus to the therapeutic agent in corrective experiences in psychotherapy. In this regard, she draws a distinction between Greenberg's focus on the activation and processing of emotions, and Moreno's emphasise on spontaneity. Presenting illustrative material drawn from research, she proposes that the psychodrama paradigm has a unique contribution to make in this field. This is because spontaneity constitutes both an outcome of corrective experiences as well as a catalyst that contributes to the emergence of those experiences, specifically through the development of action insight and corrective interpersonal experience during psychodrama enactments.

The third offering, from Walter Logeman, is concerned with the application of psychodrama principles and practices to couple therapy. In particular, it explores Moreno's philosophy of encounter, that meeting of two, 'face to face and eye to eye', which lies at the heart of psychodramatic couple therapy as the author has developed it. Drawing on illustrative material, he demonstrates the way in which the psychodrama structure of warm up, action and sharing apply in a couple therapy session, with the encounter presented as the action phase, while also describing the application of doubling, mirroring and role reversal to facilitate that encounter.

In the fourth article, Jenny Postlethwaite poses this question: What effects might emerge through embracing a psychodramatic approach when working in heavily conserved organisational systems and cultures? Having incorporated Morenian methods in a long running mentoring programme in two Australian universities, she collaborated with her academic companions to explore the question in terms of the evolution of the programme and its impacts. They identified the outcomes for the mentors and mentees as novel and impactful, providing them with a springboard to integrate a new relational capacity into their rational world and sparking spontaneity capable of shifting the wider university paradigm.

Proposing the stage as the first instrument of psychodrama, Moreno

designed it with four levels: the audience, the warm up space, the action space and the balcony. In the fifth article of this edition, Cushla Clark provides examples to illustrate her notion that a psychodramatist who maintains consciousness of the structure of the Morenian stage, including improvising the different levels when physical constraints are present, is able to enhance a protagonist's warm up to spontaneity and produce a full and satisfying dramatic enactment.

In the next article, 'The Thinking Heart, The Loving Mind', Patricia O'Rourke describes the ways in which she applies a psychodramatic approach in her therapeutic reunification work with parents and babies in the child protection system in Australia. This paper was developed from a keynote address delivered to the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA) Conference in Brisbane in January 2019.

Following on, natural horsewoman Kate Tapley invites us to view the horse as an auxiliary for life. Through her work training riders in natural horsemanship from a psychodramatic perspective, she has noticed that horses, unerring sentients that they are, act as auxiliaries by mirroring human beings' inner experience with immediacy and authenticity, and following only those riders who prove themselves willing to enter their here and now world of being-ness and presence, as 'true leaders'. The article presents the application of this approach during a natural horsemanship workshop and the positive outcomes in terms of leadership development, healing and wholeness.

Three book reviews are included in this edition of the *AANZPA Journal*, two of them psychodrama classics republished by the United Kingdom's North-West Psychodrama Association. Rollo Browne reviews *The Future of Man's World* (2013 Edition), Elizabeth Synnot reviews *Psychodrama Third Volume: Action Therapy and Principles of Practice* (2012 Edition) and Penny Beran offers a review of, and personal response to, *The J.L. Moreno Memorial Photo Album* (2014).

This is the sixth and last edition of the *AANZPA Journal* under my editorship. In the process of producing these six editions, I have kept psychodrama practice in mind by employing, to the best of my ability, the techniques of doubling, mirroring and role reversal in my dealings and relationships with contributors, editorial guides, helpers and you, the readers. I trust that the *AANZPA Journal* will continue its mission of stimulating and revitalising readers interested in psychodrama theory and methods and their contemporary applications in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia.

Bona Anna,
Editor
December 2019

At the beginning was action, at the beginning was the group, says Moreno (p.65).

Jacob Levy Moreno, born in Bucharest in 1889, was to become famous world-wide for the development of the science of sociometry, the method of psychodrama, and his pioneering work in group psychotherapy. … The philosophy and theories developed by Moreno are not only fascinating, but ultimately much more coherent than he made them appear. Many of his concepts and ideas survived him and are now part of the psychological vocabulary, but his scientific works are often mixed with autobiographical fragments and personal claims, as he admits himself in *Preludes to the Sociometric Movement* (1953) where he concludes, 'There is no controversy about my ideas, they are universally accepted. *I am the controversy'* (p.xi).

René F. Marineau in J*acob Levy Moreno 1889-1974: Father of Psychodrama, Sociometry, and Group Psychotherapy* (1989)

Exploring J.L. Moreno's Spirituality and Theology

David Oliphant

Abstract
J.L. Moreno's theological thoughts are not always taken seriously, even by those devoted to other aspects of his work. Yet clearly, they were foundational for him on any reasonable reading of his life. Creation and history are God's stage for God's psychodrama and Moreno got to be part of this in a very big and direct way, or so he believed. He role reversed with God and understood this as part of the unfolding of God's subjectivity in history. Traditional theology thought of God as 'object'. Now it was clear through Moreno's experience that God was to be thought of as 'subject'. God now no longer needed religion because he had entered the secular world fully, as spontaneity and creativity. This article explores some of the implications of this shift and highlights the centrality of our 'responsibility' as co-creators with Moreno's God, which is the spontaneity-creativity of the universe.

Key Words
co-creators, God, J.L. Moreno, psychodrama, responsibility, spirituality, spontaneity-creativity, subjectivity, theology, values

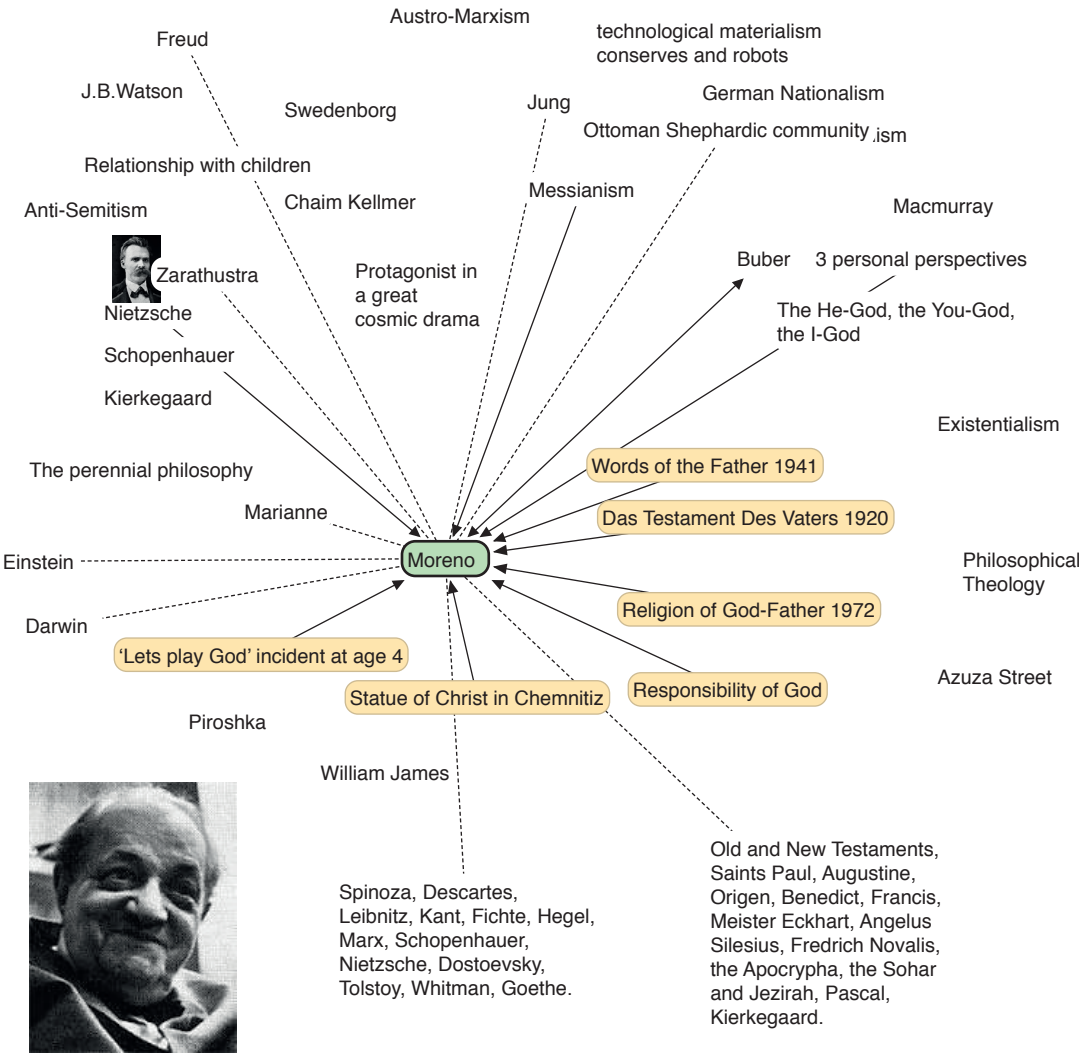
Introduction

I presented a workshop at the 2019 annual Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA) Conference in Brisbane under the title, Exploring J.L. Moreno's Spirituality and Theology. I was invited to prepare a written form for the *AANZPA Journal.* Here it is! It is the beginning of an exploration of Moreno's spirituality and theology and I hope to write more under the title, J.L. Moreno's Theology of the Godhead.

I have been a psychodrama 'camp follower' and trainee for nearly twenty years. The original motive for this involvement was a woman, would you believe, like so many callous youths attending church youth groups! My motive now is JL himself, certainly his psychodramatic techniques but even more so his writings, particularly where he references God and the philosophy underlying psychodrama. But also, personally, JL has taught me not to be frightened of my own megalomania, my love of the big picture and the fervent hope in my breast that I can be part of that big picture somehow. This has been so helpful. JL took his spiritual and religious megalomania

J.L. Moreno's Spiritual and Theological Atom

"Role reverse with me and put yourself entirely into my position." (1969a, p. 5)



Ideas that Developed Early
1.The all inclusiveness of being
2. All existing things are by nature good and blessed.
3. Concept of the moment as a category itself.
4. Notion of the situation
5. Spontaneity and creativity as the guides of ethical conduct, rather than social rules of cultural conserves.
6. Encounter

Nietzsche denied religion, God and Christ and the whole western metaphysical tradition
Moreno secularized them.
Otherwise their projects have important similarities especially around the revaluing of values.

A theory of God must be attained first and is indispensable in order to make the life of any particle of the universe significant, whether it is a man or a protozoon. JLM.

Moreno's theory of God is that God is Spontaneity-Creativity and that S-C is distributed throughout the universe. All individuals are capable of accessing spontaneity and hence potentially creative in all they do. Nolte

into the secular world of psychiatry and the development of action methods. I took my megalomania into the world of spirituality and theology and the church. I ended my active career in the church calling myself a 'secular religionist', hardly on a par with JL's achievements, mind you. My suggested spiritual and theological atom for JL was displayed in the conference workshop and accompanies this article.

JL and God

JL references God throughout his work. Gems can pop up quite unexpectedly. But the two primary works are *The Words of the Father* (2011) and The Religion of God-Father (1972). *The Words of the Father* is a foundational text, which JL referred to all his life. Having recently graduated from medical school, he was working as the local doctor in Bad Voslau, a spa town near Vienna, and had formed a relationship, initially emotional and spiritual and later intimate, with a young woman named Marianne. It was in this setting, in 1920, that JL wrote 'the words of the father' in red pencil on the walls of his house, following an ecstatic experience. His son Jonathan's description of the event is the most helpful I have read: "Altogether, the physical and emotional setting stimulated J.L.'s messianic tendencies to new heights. Recalling his epiphany in Chemnitz, he and Marianne began to hear a "Voice." Night after night they waited for it. At first it was subdued. Finally, it came more clearly than ever and seemed to transport J.L. to a new level of consciousness. *I walked down the hill, up the hill, stimulated by the scent of flowers and the silent air wanderings of the nightbirds. I was marching through space and space was marching through me, on and on and on, no stop. Millions of other people were marching through space at the same time, on and on and on, no stop. It was as if the universe was in movement in an unlimited number of dimensions. Wherever I turned a new dimension would open up. I saw sky, stars, planets, oceans, forests, mountains, cities, animals, fishes, birds, flies, protozoa, stones, and hundreds of other things. Then I saw each opening its mouth, each man, each tree, each stone, each particle of the universe shouting in unison: I am God, The Father, The creator of the universe, These are my words, The words of the Father*" (Moreno, 2014:70).

JL joined the chorus and shouted, "I am God, the father, the creator of the universe". He had role reversed with God, entered God's psychodrama. I think the wonder of it was that he did not lose his own identity in that moment. JL took on God's identity, and he played with this for the rest of his life. There had been previous important religious and spiritual experiences, but this was the big one. It marked the end of his religious phase, which had pre-occupied him for many years as a young man, and began the secular phase of his life, "becoming a philosopher, a scientist, trying to continue through group psychotherapy, psychodrama, sociometry, and encounter groups – that to which I had dedicated my

previous, religious life"(Moreno, 1972:213). In 1941, he published *The Words of the Father* in English, with a good deal of commentary that may be more important to the enquirer than the actual 'Words'. He subtitled it *The Psychodrama of God*, which was omitted in the latest edition available through Lulu.

The Religion of God-Father is the last piece that JL ever published. It was included as a chapter in *Healer of the Mind (*Johnson, 1972), two years before his death. There is a poignant, bitter-sweet quality to this essay, which I warmly commend to everyone interested in Moreno. In it, he affirms key aspects of *The Words of the Father,* but behind this lies a deeper sense of coming to himself: *I am profoundly aware of having hardly touched on the Father-God concretely. I have remained amorphous as a living God. I do not want to diminish and to belittle the efforts which I made during the plastic years of my adolescence…. But I have failed so utterly in turning the moment in the world's needs… I must admit humbly that my megalomania is shattered. Nothing is left but the crown and the throne. The body is dead* (Moreno, 1972:213).

How could you not but love the man? Mind you, JL did not hold back in claiming a grand meaning for his experience that enabled *The Words of the Father.* He saw it as the third great unfolding of the Godhead. The first was the 'He-God' of the ancient Hebrews, the second was the 'You-God' of Jesus, and the third was his experience of the 'I-God'. This was now 'God-the-Father' speaking directly to his creation, through his creation: *The Godhead above the clouds, the God reaching into outer space and who is invisible has lost his meaning. The God who is the God of love has been betrayed so many times by men that something had to be added, a God which does not come from the Thou, but who comes from within our own person, through the I, through me* (Moreno, 1972:199).

The analysis of JL's experience, and the unfolding of the Godhead in terms of the three personal pronoun perspectives, may be an original contribution. It is now certain that Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (1996) owes much to JL's earlier reflections on encounter (Moreno, 2014:65). It is also certain that, at about the same time JL had his life changing experience, the young Scottish philosopher John Macmurray was beginning to analyse religion, history and life in terms of the three personal perspectives. He went on to write a major philosophy of action (Macmurray, 1958), which put into philosophical terms what JL was building on the psychodramatic stage. In our own time, the American thinker Ken Wilber built Integral Theory around the three personal perspectives. Reading Wilber (1996) is a bit like reading the sequel to JL's *Words*, inviting us all, both great and small, into the psychodrama of God but without any actual reference to psychodrama.

JL and the Zeitgeist

I think that within JL's historical context, his experience and the reflections that arose from it have an interesting and significant place in the history of ideas. It seems to me that he was well and truly positioned within the zeitgeist of his time and contributing to it. For instance, for JL subjectivity was central but without devaluing objective science. It was concern for the human subject that saw him turn sociology into sociometry. And it was God's subjectivity that also interested him intensely: *In this book, God is not represented as an object, an essence, a substance moulded* (sic) *after the image and within the experiential limits of man. Here God comes forth alone and in full earnestness, creating and experiencing, with all the subjectivity of a real being. This is, however, not the subjectivity of an ordinary, fallible, imperfect being, but that of the Absolute Creator of the world. … Subjectivity is an indispensable premise to the most important function of God, that of being the creator of our universe and of many more universes than ours* (Moreno, 2011:10).

JL wrote *The Words of the Father* in 1920. Remember that only five years earlier, in 1915, J.B. Watson had begun publishing his ideas on behaviourism which, at least symbolically, marked the pinnacle of scientific positivism. Subjectivity need not be considered, even in the scientific exploration of the psyche. Now JL was making subjectivity indispensable, at least in the social sciences: *My God-universe pattern became the blueprint, the ontological guide after which I modelled sociometry, the idea of a society in which our deepest selves are realized. It is from my theological analysis and experiments that I drew the inspiration and the certainty to forge ahead in to realms which are entirely secular, materialistic and down to earth* (Moreno, 1949:236, quoted in Nolte, 2014:233).

For theology, God as Subject was a new idea as well. Traditional theology tried to see God as Object, even when dealing with Spirit. After all, wasn't theology the mother of the sciences? God as Object entrenched the theological fallacy, that is, the objectification of metaphysical ideas as true in and of themselves, apart from experience, and serving to justify hierarchical institutional structures. There is no role reversal in the theological fallacy, but instead the use of the idea of God for the purposes of power. Interestingly, JL never used the concept of Spirit. In fact, there are only one or two uses of the word in his main works, both quite incidental. But spontaneity and creativity are central: *We can say with greater certainty than ever that the supreme power ruling the world is Spontaneity-Creativity. It has created a rational cosmos which coexists interdependently with man's perception of it but amenable to his intervention as long as he knows and abides by its rules* (Moreno, 1955:373). Moreno's theory of God is that God is Spontaneity-Creativity and that spontaneity-creativity is distributed throughout the universe. All individuals are capable of accessing spontaneity and hence potentially of being creative in all they do (Nolte, 2014:236).

Spirit has also fared badly within the Western theological traditions. The famous church historian, Adolf Harnack, referred to the Spirit as the orphan of the Trinity. But JL was not going anywhere near the Trinity. The emergence of the I-God is a return to the Father, not the distant Father of the Hebrews, but the immediately present Father of Creation, "a new God of light and life" (Moreno, 2011:7). Hegel's concept of Spirit was a watershed in philosophical and theological thinking in the West, something institutional theologians have never fully absorbed or come to terms with. JL's vision of spontaneity-creativity is as big, but although JL read Hegel, he does not seem to have linked the two. My thesis is that the term Spirit had too many religious associations for him and, following his transcendent experience in 1920, he was determined to end his fascination with religion and embrace secularity. He now had God without religion and spontaneity-creativity to better describe his vision: *In all history, two kinds of religion have appeared: religions with a god and religions without a god. Here in the Words, a new situation is presented. Here is God, Himself, without a religion* (Moreno, 2011:171). It is worth noting that Ken Wilber (1996) has fully re-instated the concept of Spirit in his theory. In my view, his concept could alternatively be described as spontaneity-creativity.

JL and Nietzsche

It is also interesting to think of JL in relation to Friedrich Nietzsche. No thinker influenced European culture more in the first few decades of the twentieth century. JL was aware of Nietzsche's reach and the way in which his ideas differed significantly from other philosophers. Whereas science, and especially Darwinian evolution, had questioned the factual basis of Western thought, Nietzsche questioned and attacked its value base. It was of course institutional religion that 'bore the brunt' of both attacks. With Nietzsche, nothing was left of religion, God, Christ or even metaphysics as the basis of Western values. From this completely nihilistic position, he built what he called a revaluation of values based upon his ideas of the Overman (Superman) and eternal recurrence. No more vulnerability and compassion, but rather strength and celebration in the spirit of Dionysus. Life is the will to power: *The old precept: "Love thy neighbour" became its opposite, "Be hard – love yourself!" and he claimed it to be a higher value* (Moreno, 2011:175).

But whereas Nietzsche proclaimed God dead, JL secularised him, took him out of the hands of institutional religion and re-conceived him for a new world. Life was not the will to power but the will to create, and we are all called to be co-creators with God. The difference between these two great thinkers, in JL's mind, could be seen on a continuum with spontaneity-creativity at one end, and conserves, the products of spontaneity-creativity, at the other: *The highest value of spontaneity and creativity, the top-value on any*

axiological scale, is the Godhead. It establishes a frame of reference for every possible type of living being – animal, man or superman – for every type of action, work or performance, for every possible type of cultural conserve – memorized matter, the book, or the motion picture. The scale has two opposite poles: the maximum of spontaneity at one pole and zero spontaneity at the other, with many degrees of spontaneity between the two, every degree representing a different quotient of spontaneity. This is an axiological scale: the ideal exponent of one pole is a totally spontaneous creator, and the ideal exponent of the other, the total cultural conserve (Moreno, 2011:174).

Both JL and Nietzsche were concerned with the revaluation of values. Value for JL was to be found in spontaneity-creativity while for Nietzsche, it was located in the conserves, a Beethoven symphony or a Wagnerian opera for instance. One valued creative action, the other what had been created, the act versus the conserve, the will to create versus the will to power: *Man has created a world of things, cultural conserves, in order to produce for himself a semblance of God. When man found himself failing in his struggle for maximum creativity, he divided from his will-to-create his will-to-power, using the latter as a devious means by which alone to achieve the aims of a god* (Moreno, 2011:182).

However, both men saw a very challenging future for the human race. JL's fear was that the conserves, and especially robots, would stifle and disarm our capacity for spontaneity-creativity. For him, it was vital that spontaneity-creativity kept ahead of technology. Nietzsche held a similar fear, that the Last Man, that is, humanity surrendered to the mediocrity of the mob, would prevail over the Overman, the hero for life, who had emerged from the abyss of his earlier nihilism.

JL, a Modern Day Paul?

It is worth noting, I think, that there was a similar shift in values, or revaluation, between Judaism and the ideas of Jesus and Paul in the New Testament. Moreno understood that the Law in Judaism was the cultural conserve that gave and still gives Jews their identity, and against which all things are to be measured. Jesus in his preaching of the Kingdom of God, and Paul in his emphasis on the Holy Spirit, proposed the other end of JL's continuum, that of spontaneity-creativity, as the basis of our values and directions in life. Perhaps it is not too ridiculous to suggest that JL rediscovered the teachings of Christ and Paul for our own time, our secular modern world. The church has long since fallen back into Law, while at the same time placing the Spirit in the orphanage, as I have mentioned. Perhaps JL has the key to unlock Spirit from the orphanage and bring it back into the centre of our lives as spontaneity-creativity.

JL and Responsibility

For JL, responsibility is the key to co-creativity with the spontaneity-creativity of the universe: *The universe is continually becoming and so is God; being the result of millions and millions of forces which fill the cosmos, he is in becoming. You and I are the parts, contributary forces, rivulets, to establish one day that moment when the words of the Genesis will become true… Co-creativity … and this infinite creativity which is true on all levels of existence, whether it is now physical or social or biological … ties us together. We are all bound together by responsibility for all things, there is no limited, partial responsibility. And responsibility makes us automatically also creators of the world … Responsibility is the tie which we share and which brings us into the cosmos … And so I saw the cosmos as an enormous enterprise, billions of partners, invisible hands, arms stretched out, one to touch the other, all being able, through responsibility, to be Gods* (Moreno, 1972:200).

Again, I think JL speaks to the hour. World War II marked the climax of the crisis of institutional religion in the West and the divine law it 'upheld'. In the vacuum, human rights, which had been bubbling away in Western culture since John Locke and the US Declaration of Independence, were proposed as an alternate basis for universal law, and in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was promulgated by the United Nations. The implications of this huge social and cultural inversion are still being experienced. One thing seems clear. An emphasis on human rights is not necessarily conducive to social cohesion and unity, however important they might be. As a response, in 1998 a group of retired elder statesmen, including Australia's Malcolm Fraser, drew up a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities that was accepted by the United Nations. But response so far has been minimal. The dialectic between rights and responsibilities might well be the world's most crucial debate. There is much at stake, from climate change to race and gender and everything in between.

JL was not content to leave spontaneity-creativity as a general concept. In the commentary to *The Words of the Father*, he began to unpack it as The Theology of the Godhead. He dares to think the unthinkable, the subjectivity of God the Creator. But why not, we may ask, once God as Subject steps onto the psychodrama stage. I am leaving that unpacking, I hope, for another workshop and subsequent paper.

JL at the End

As I have noted, 1972 was the year of JL's last published writing. It was also the year of his last visit to a psychiatric hospital, when a former patient asked JL to call on her. Jonathan Moreno (2014:251) presents a firsthand record of the occasion, written by Jo Powers who was a therapist working at the hospital: *He greeted his former patient warmly and sat with her on a large*

comfortable couch in the center of the room. I stood back, standing directly opposite them across the room. J.L. was completely comfortable and was warmly inquiring how his former patient was and how her treatment was progressing. That particular tableau in itself was enjoyable to watch but what followed was very mind-blowing. As he talked with her, slowly other patients drew near to him and began to sit on the couch, sit on the floor at his feet, or to draw chairs near to him. He introduced himself to this growing group, shaking their hands, listening to each, patting their hands, smiling, and reassuring. His charisma and therapeutic engagement were remarkable—I, a witness from ten paces away. As a young man and a student who was learning about group work, I was amazed at how he related so comfortably with all the patients, how he addressed them, how he engaged them, and how attuned he was to the whole group. He was completely comfortable and living in the "moment." He was completely comfortable with a group of acutely ill patients. He showed no discomfort with psychopathology; on the contrary, he exemplified compassion, empathy, and encouragement to all who joined him in this group "encounter".

I struggle to read this passage without tearing up. Remember, it was that same year, 1972, that JL had declared, "I have failed so utterly in turning the moment in the world's needs … I must admit humbly that my megalomania is shattered. Nothing is left but the crown and the throne. The body is dead". But for all his struggles, it was as if his theology and spirituality had at last become fully embodied as he sat amongst these patients in the hospital. In his brokenness, and his complete ease with it, God, the Universe, the Whatever, had found another human home. He died two years later.

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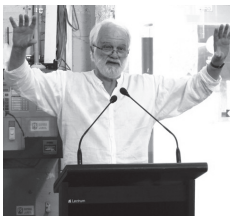

David Oliphant is a retired blackberry and lantana farmer on the far south coast of New South Wales, where he lives with the psychodramatist Angela Young with whom he has for many years run courses in pastoral and spiritual care training. David has dabbled most of his adult life in philosophy, theology, spirituality and religion. He can be contacted at <davidoliphant123@gmail.com>.

Spontaneity or Emotion as the Catalyst for Change

Corrective Experiences in Psychodrama

Charmaine McVea

Abstract

Corrective experiences are a common factor in effective therapies, often having profound transformative effects. While Greenberg proposes that the activation and processing of emotions produces corrective experiences, Moreno emphasises spontaneity as the therapeutic agent or catalyst of change. Drawing on research, Charmaine McVea argues for the greater efficacy of spontaneity. She proposes that spontaneity not only constitutes an outcome of corrective experiences but also contributes to the emergence of those experiences, specifically through the development of action insight and corrective interpersonal experience during psychodrama enactments.

Key Words

action insight, corrective experience, emotion, emotion-focused therapy (EFT), Greenberg, Moreno, psychodrama, psychotherapy integration, research, social atom repair, spontaneity, transformation

The field of psychotherapy integration explores the common underlying factors that produce therapeutic change[1]. Investigations in recent years have focused on the transformative effects of corrective experiences, identifying these events as common factors in most therapies while also acknowledging the range of different explanations for their efficacy. Some explanations emphasise emotional processes as having greater value, while others focus on relational or behavioural processes (Castonguay & Hill, 2012). Although spontaneity is often mentioned in these explanations, it is typically regarded to be an outcome of the corrective experience and its central contribution to the emergence of the corrective experience is not explored. The psychodrama paradigm has a unique contribution to make in this field, with its focus on spontaneity as both an outcome of therapy and a catalyst of change during therapy.

1 If you are interested, refer to the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration website: <https://www.sepiweb.org>.

To make the case for the central place of spontaneity in corrective experiences, research into protagonists' change processes when addressing painful emotional experiences (McVea, 2009; McVea, Gow & Lowe, 2011) will be reviewed, with a focus on two questions:

(i) What does a comprehensive analysis of protagonists' change processes reveal about the relationship between spontaneity and corrective experiences in psychodrama?

(ii) Are corrective experiences in psychodrama equally well explained by an alternative model of therapeutic change?

The second question challenges us to consider if the spontaneity construct adds to our understanding of corrective experiences, or if they can in fact be explained by an alternative model. Greenberg's (1996) emotion-focused model is used as a point of comparison because it is based on an experiential-humanistic approach that might be expected to have some kinship with psychodrama, and because this model has established investigative tools (Greenberg & Foerster, 1996) that make a research-based comparison possible. A clear point of difference between the emotion-focused model and the spontaneity model emerges from the research, with the development of spontaneity over the course of a psychodrama enactment leading to a corrective interpersonal experience that is profoundly transformative.

Corrective Experience and Transformation

Alexander and French (1946) coined the term 'corrective emotional experience' to refer to a moment in the therapeutic relationship when a formative, emotionally charged experience is re-created in such a way that previously intolerable emotions become tolerable and a new response emerges. The generic term 'corrective experience' is now often adopted in the literature when relating to different therapeutic explanations for these events. For an in-depth discussion, I recommend *Transformation in Psychotherapy,* in which Castonguay and Hill (2012:5-6) define corrective experiences as ones where, "a person comes to understand or experience affectively an event or relationship in a different and unexpected way.… (including) events that are emotional, relational, behavioural, or cognitive. … not just typical helpful events in therapy but … surprising or disconfirming of past experiences and often (having) a profound effect".

The Emotion-Focused Orientation

Greenberg and Elliott (2012) propose a humanistic-experiential perspective that emphasises the affective component of the corrective experience. Their explanation is exemplified in emotion-focused therapy (EFT), where the activation of primary adaptive emotions is understood to promote therapeutic change (Greenberg, 1996, 1999, 2002). Of particular relevance to this current review, Greenberg (1999) argues that allowing and accepting emotional pain is at the core of corrective experiences, and that the central

task in all therapies is to assist a person to move towards, rather than avoid, emotional pain. In his research, he found that the first step in moving from avoiding to allowing emotional pain is to express the secondary emotions such as shame, guilt and hopelessness that mask the pain. Then, therapeutic weeping, defined as 'an intense form of the expression of distress/sadness' (Greenberg, 1999:1471), is a marker that the person is allowing the experience of emotional pain. With this emotional release, the person identifies maladaptive beliefs that have been maintaining their problematic functioning and recognises unmet needs at a visceral level. Greenberg views therapeutic weeping as a transformative process that alters the person's internal pain-inducing structure, producing affective and motivational change, a change in perception of self and others, relief and self-affirmation. In EFT, this internal trans-formation of emotion, leading to the transformation of maladaptive responses, constitutes a corrective experience.

The Relationship between Emotion and Spontaneity

A significant difference between Greenberg and Elliott's explanation, and the psychodrama paradigm, lies in the emphasis on emotion compared to spontaneity as the therapeutic agent. To understand the difference between spontaneity and emotion, let us consider how the term 'readiness' is used to define each phenomenon. On the one hand, emotion promotes a person's readiness to respond in a particular way (Frijda, 2004). A person feels loving and has an impetus to move towards the loved one; a person feels afraid and the impetus is to run or freeze. Spontaneity, on the other hand, is a readiness to respond in the moment, as required by the situation and with the flexibility to create a new response as the situation changes. While Moreno (1987) is emphatic that spontaneity is neither an emotion nor a component of emotion, he considers that the production of feeling assists the development of spontaneity. Feeling provides salient information to the person about the significance of their experience in the moment, and this influences the direction of their spontaneous response.

Spontaneity as the Catalyst for Change

In identifying spontaneity as the catalyst for change in psychodrama, Moreno (1980/1946) relates it to free will and sees it as directional and purposeful. "Warming up to a spontaneous state leads up to and is aimed at more or less highly organized patterns of conduct" (Moreno, 1987:42). This means developing the ability to respond with flexibility and vitality in the moment, which requires the strengthening of interpersonal connections and a sustained warm up to the present relationship. The purpose of a psychodrama enactment is to warm up to 'the spontaneous state' so that creativity is enhanced, and progressive roles are produced and integrated. From this perspective, spontaneity is the transforming agent in corrective

experiences or, to use the psychodrama term, in social atom repair. In line with spontaneity theory, Clayton (1993) identifies the core principles of social atom repair as being the development of a larger perspective of the social system and greater flexibility in response. In his view, this is achieved through greater consciousness of the values of other people, so that this consciousness is integrated into the individual's warm-up (Clayton & Carter, 2004). This process brings "different aspects of (self) into harmony" so that old warm ups move into the background, a corrective emotional experience is developed, and progressive roles are strengthened and produce a catharsis of integration, "a sense of opening out and including other elements outside of oneself" (Clayton & Carter, 2004:324-337). The emphasis is on warming up to the system, so that spontaneity is produced in the context where role development is required.

Corrective Experiences in Psychodrama: Findings from Research

Let us now turn to a review of research, where the investigation of protagonists' change processes has supported the spontaneity explanation of corrective experiences over the emotion-focused explanation. The research involved a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of 14 protagonists who participated in psychodrama workshops focused on addressing the effects of painful emotional experiences (McVea, 2009). This analysis drew on recordings of psychodrama enactments as well as protagonists' and directors' recall, allowing for a deep understanding of the context, process and impact of protagonists' experiences. Each psychodrama enactment was then reviewed a second time, applying Greenberg's and Foerster's investigative tools, to test the EFT 'allowing and accepting emotional pain' explanation of corrective experiences.

Protagonists identified two types of corrective experiences during the research, one centred on action insight and the other a corrective interpersonal experience that builds on Clayton's description of social atom repair. Both types meet Castonguay's and Hill's definition of corrective experience, as quoted earlier. In the following sections, these two types of corrective experience are described and illustrated. As we will see when we look in more detail, even when the components of the EFT model are present, the spontaneity perspective provides a fuller explanation of the corrective experience.

The Corrective Experience Through Action Insight

Action insight events in psychodrama are those where a protagonist gains new and surprising insights during an enactment. Kellerman (1992:86) describes action insight as stimulating "the integration of emotional, cognitive, imaginary, behavioural and interpersonal learning experiences". During the psychodrama workshops in which the research took place, processes were identified that illuminated the protagonists' experiences

leading up to and during action insight events. Action insight only occurred when the protagonists experienced the enactments as if they were happening 'here and now'. As their warm ups deepened, there was a sense of accuracy, a sense that they were relating to the original painful scenes and experiencing their original responses. These responses typically included secondary emotions such as shame, guilt and inadequacy as well as maladaptive beliefs, both of which are described in EFT. Through role reversals and from the mirror position on the edge of the stage, the protagonists re-experienced the events from a variety of different perspectives, which prompted primary adaptive emotions such as sadness, distress, hurt and fear, again fitting the EFT model. From these different perspectives, the protagonists developed a more attuned awareness of the original events, warmer responses towards themselves in the scenes and positive regard for their abilities to cope in restrictive environments. There was an emotional release as each protagonist arrived at the moment of insight and experienced a bodily felt awareness of the impact of the painful events, then and now.

In the following example of an action insight event, the protagonist Ray is feeling 'stuck' in his career and unable to make decisions or follow them through.

Ray: *I want to go somewhere. I want to succeed. I want to get more out of life, so all this indecision has got to stop!*

Director: *Set out the choices you have.*

Ray: *I can't. I can't. It's an old childhood feeling, a feeling of my parents pushing me somewhere and I don't want to go there. It's a sort of paralyzing fear, the feeling of lack of choice.*

Director: *How old are you?*

Ray: *It feels about 7.*

Director: *Choose someone to be you when you are 7 and set out your parents pushing this 7-year-old.*

Ray sets the scene whereby the father places his hands on the 7-year-old Ray's shoulders and physically pushes him in one direction, while the mother stands alongside the father.

Ray as father: *Okay son, this is where you're going and this is what you're going to do.*

Ray, as the 7-year-old, faces his father, looks blank and moves backwards in the direction he is being pushed, silent and without resistance.

Ray as mother: (leaning towards 7-year-old) *Listen to your father. This is what's best for you.*

Ray as 7-year-old: (pleading) *I don't want to go there. Don't say that. I don't want to.*

Ray stands on the edge of the psychodrama stage with the director, as the auxiliaries re-enact the scene.

Ray: *You poor boy.*

Ray puts his head in his hands and cries. After a little, he approaches the 7-year-old again and sighs.

Ray: *You poor boy. It's not fair. It's been lonely, and it's been scary, really scary* (crying more).

Ray as 7-year-old: *Yeah, but I can't accept that. I can't accept the compassion. I hear the words but I just* (bends over), *phew! The pain. It's almost like I don't deserve it. I've got to earn the compassion.*

Through this psychodrama enactment, Ray realized that he had been functioning from a belief that he must earn the right to relate to his own feelings about life choices. Gaining this new perspective, he experienced the emotional release as an expression of adult compassion for the seven-year-old boy. This new emotional expression was a catharsis of integration. Interestingly, action insight events such as this typically incorporate the components of the EFT model identified by Greenberg and Foerster (1996). In this example, there was the expression of secondary emotions of helplessness and anxiety, and then of primary adaptive emotions of pain, loneliness and grief. As this emotional expression unfolded, the protagonist experienced a bodily felt awareness of the maladaptive belief that had been guiding his actions, and he began to transform this belief as he responded with compassion to his seven-year-old self.

However, there are two features that suggest that while the EFT model may go some way to explaining the corrective experience of action insight, as illustrated above, it is not sufficient to explain the full transformative experience. Firstly, the protagonists' reports of their experiences during action insight events pointed to the importance of processes that produced larger perspectives and greater flexibility of response. They identified as central their ability to move around and interact with the social system that they had concretised upon the psychodrama stage, to gain different perspectives through mirroring, doubling and role reversal, and to incorporate new responses from auxiliaries. Indeed, auxiliaries who enacted the positive regard of friends and mentors had a particularly positive effect on the protagonists, assisting them to warm up to progressive adult functioning in the here and now, and to develop self-acknowledgement and self-acceptance. All of these aspects are central to the spontaneity rather than the EFT explanation of therapeutic change. Secondly, while corrective

experiences centred on action insight produced greater self-awareness and some relief for protagonists, they did not produce a sense of resolution or transformation. In the example above, the protagonist developed greater acceptance of past choices and the way in which the parental dynamic impacts him in the present, but this did not produce a change in the underlying dynamic. However, in many of the psychodrama enactments during the research, an action insight event formed a significant aspect of the warm up to the more transformative corrective interpersonal experience.

Social Atom Repair: The Corrective Interpersonal Experience

The most transformative corrective experiences identified in the research were social atom repair scenes, where previously unmet interpersonal needs or act hungers were fulfilled, and which protagonists later identified as having profound and lasting effects in their lives. In essence, these were corrective interpersonal experiences, and the research findings suggest that they emerged from the gradual development of the protagonist's spontaneity during the course of a psychodrama enactment.

In the psychodrama enactments that resulted in these corrective interpersonal experiences, spontaneity development was evidenced by a gradual freeing up of the protagonists' responses leading up to the social atom repair scenes. This freeing up occurred as the protagonists experienced different perspectives of self, others and the environment. The development of spontaneity typically followed three phases. Firstly, as described in the previous section, deep re-experiencing of the original dynamic led to action insight that produced acknowledgement and self-acceptance. As a result, the protagonists became more motivated and hopeful of finding new responses to their presenting problems, even though they could not yet generate new responses. Then, a transitional event occurred, in which the protagonists warmed up to progressive roles that they had already developed in their lives, and effectively addressed challenging relationships on the periphery of their core painful emotional experiences. I term this transitional event 'activating resourcefulness', because it involved warming up to and strengthening already existing progressive roles. The process of activating resourcefulness warmed the protagonists up to their competence, and this seemed to free them to approach their core painful emotional experiences with greater self-confidence. Finally, the protagonists generated new responses that produced corrective interpersonal experiences, or in psychodrama terms, social atom repair.

Two examples of corrective interpersonal experience are described here, one addressing uncomplicated grief in adult life and the other addressing complex grief from childhood. Action insight and the activation of resourcefulness appear to be pre-requisites for the generation of corrective interpersonal experiences and are therefore included in the descriptions.

Julie: The Death of a Much-Loved Brother, Husband and Father

Julie's brother, Bill, is rushed to hospital where he is pronounced dead before family members are able to join him. Bill's family is shocked by his sudden death and struggle to relate meaningfully with one another. Now, Julie wants to re-establish her connection with family members and become a positive influence in Bill's children's lives. In the psychodrama's first scenes, she re-experiences a day of teenage adventure with Bill and her other siblings, and then sets out her family system now that Bill is dead. Both these scenes produce action insights in that Julie is struck by how much she looked up to Bill and relied on him to show her the way to embrace life. She experiences an enormous gap in the family now that he is gone. The next scene emerges from the concretisation of the family system. Julie and her sister, Michelle, have not been in contact with each other since Bill's funeral. This scene, in the surplus reality of an imagined future conversation as the two sisters walk side by side along a beach, encompasses a rupture in their relationship, a sense of strain.

Julie: *I don't want you to feel like you're second best, that the only way you got to be important is because Bill has died. I have always wanted to have a relationship with you and I love you as you are.*

Michelle: *I think some of that is the choices I make in my life. I miss Bill too.*

Julie: (cries) *I like you as you are. There is a heap I can learn from you and I enjoy every day I spend with you.*

This future-focused enactment involved the activation of resourcefulness as the protagonist warmed up to a role that was already well developed in her relationship with her sister. She experienced herself relating easily and effectively in a challenging encounter and realized that she had the capacity to have a meaningful, if confronting, conversation. Both participants expressed openness towards each other, their tele was positive and a simplicity and grace emerged in the enactment. As she spoke with her sister, the protagonist warmed up to the positive and loving relationships in her family life, and she felt more hopeful and resourced. She was then ready to confront the frightening scene of her brother's death.

At the beginning of this work, Julie had related the family's distress regarding the lack of opportunity to be with Bill and touch him after he died. The director remembers this and weaves the unmet need into the creation of a social atom repair scene. Bill has collapsed and died and is lying on the bedroom floor. Julie, Bill's wife Diane and his two young children, Sally and Ricky, are sitting around him on the floor.

Sally: *Wake up Daddy! Why doesn't Daddy wake up?*

Julie: (speaks gently) *We can't wake him up. He's peaceful now. He didn't have to suffer. He's at home with all of us.*
Diane: Cries quietly.
Director: *Does anyone touch him?*
Julie: *It's ok to touch him. He's not cold or anything.*

Sally and Ricky gently reach out and touch Bill and stay in this position. Julie leans against Diane and they both weep.

Sally: (cries) *My daddy! My daddy!*
Julie: Cries.

As she entered this scene, the protagonist was already warmed up to the strong positive relationships in her family and to her capacity to respond well with the people she loved. With her spontaneity high, she generated a fresh and vital response in the situation. She was able to fully experience her grief for her brother and at the same time, respond in a comforting way to her sister-in-law and the children. She was conscious of herself and her family experiencing now what they had missed during the original event, and she felt herself stepping into a more significant place in the children's lives. The protagonist's crying marked a catharsis of integration in the form of an expression of grief alongside the fulfilment of unmet needs, that 'sense of opening out and including other elements outside of oneself' (Clayton & Carter, 2004:337). The second example of a corrective interpersonal experience relates to complex grief and a history of family trauma. It illustrates the same processes, but in a starkly different enactment.

Jane: Complex Grief When a Young Child's Mother Dies

When Jane is 6 years old, her mother dies when a car hits her as she walks along the road at night. Jane's early life is dominated by her father's violence towards her mother, and her mother's death is never discussed within the family. In this environment, Jane's fantasies about the death flourish. She carries a sense that her mother chose to die to escape Jane, and she is haunted by images of body parts strewn across the road. She steps forward to be a protagonist in a psychodrama, with the purpose of having an adult-to-adult conversation and telling her mother how her death has affected her throughout her life. In the opening scene, Jane is unable to express herself and realizes that she cannot focus because she is concerned about her father's violence towards her mother. This is the action insight scene, where it becomes clear that early reparative work is required. The drama moves to a new scene, where Jane's resourcefulness emerges. On the stage, the auxiliary who is enacting the role of Jane as a young child hides while her father verbally attacks her mother. On the edge of the stage and accompanied by a double, Jane watches her parents fight and the child hide. The scene is

repeated with increased intensity. The double, attuned to the protagonist, makes an intervention that 'brings Jane to life'.

Auxiliary as father: (yelling at Jane's mother) *You are such a stupid, ugly woman.*
Auxiliary as mother: Screams.
Double: *No! That's not right! That can't happen!*

Jane sits up straight and looks more alert.

Auxiliary as father: *I don't care!*
Director: *If that's true Jane, put words to it for yourself.*
Jane: *Yeah! That can't happen. You guys stop that.*
Auxiliary as mother: *Careful, he'll hurt you!*
Jane: *I'm not frightened of him.*
Director: *Is that right?*
Jane: (voice stronger) *I'm not frightened of him. I've stood in front of him to stop him hurting my little sister. Yeah!* (crouching and moving towards her father).
Director: *You're an adult now. You don't have to be a little child anymore.*
Jane: *Yeah!* (standing up, hands on hips, facing her father, looking him in the eye) *Stop that!*

As the scene ends, Jane feels more resourced and warmed up to herself as an advocate for the child, a clear determined boundary-setter. She looks at the child who is still hiding and begins to feel concern for her. Now, the scene of the death is staged. Auxiliaries are chosen to be Jane's mother and the car. Jane sits on the floor at the edge of the stage holding an auxiliary who is enacting her 6-year-old self, while her mother walks along the road. The car appears and makes a loud noise as it hits Jane's mother, who screams and falls to the ground.

Jane: (looking at the scene) *I'm feeling a bit like crying. I feel sad* (looking down at the child and stroking her head). *I'm looking after you.*
Auxiliary as 6-year-old: *Is her body all over the road?*
Jane: N*o, she got knocked and fell to the side of the road. She didn't even get run over.*
Auxiliary as 6-year-old: *Is that my mummy?*
Jane: *Yeah, but it's all right. It's frightening, but I'm going to look after you.*

Jane reverses roles with her 6-year-old self and the enactment of the accident is repeated.

Jane as 6-year-old: *It's scary and I, I suppose I'm only little too.*
Auxiliary as Jane: *You're only tiny.*

The 6-year-old Jane cries while she is held and comforted by the adult Jane.

Jane: (crying, with her arms around 6-year-old Jane). *It is sad. We can be sad together. We're not ever going to get what we wanted from her. … I'll listen to you. I'm with you and I'll nurture you.*

The production of this scene was important, including setting up the auxiliaries to enact the accident in a way that was meaningful for the protagonist. The auxiliary enacting the 6-year-old child spontaneously offered material that was relevant to the scene, and this added to the crisp production and the warm up of the protagonist. The protagonist, now well warmed up to her spontaneity through the action insights and activation of resourcefulness that emerged from the previous scenes, initiated the corrective response to the child with minimal intervention from the director. Deeply affected by the enactment of the accident, she spontaneously turned her attention to the child and responded to the child's needs. As an adult, she began to double the child, and it was with this adult caring that the child was able to warm up to her loss. Reviewing the scene later, the protagonist's reflections were resplendent with moments of 'opening out and including other elements outside of oneself' (Clayton & Carter, 2004:337). In witnessing the 'psychodramatic accident', she had realized that her mother did not abandon her. She also actively learnt from the auxiliaries during the drama, noticed the group members' acknowledgment of her mother's death during the sharing and experienced the caring of this new community.

The examples of corrective interpersonal experience offered above constitute social atom repair, whereby a previously unmet interpersonal need or act hunger was fulfilled, and new progressive roles were developed. The action insights and resourcefulness that emerged in the earlier scenes led to greater spontaneity and flow in the later scenes. The protagonists and auxiliaries, now accessing their spontaneity, generated a greater proportion of the production and minimal intervention from the director was required at these later stages. Expressions of mutually positive relationships followed, in which the protagonists initiated the longed-for responses.

Interestingly, protagonists identified corrective interpersonal experiences as having the most transformative impact of any of the events in their enactments. Yet, when tested against Greenberg's and Foerster's measures for 'allowing and accepting emotional pain', they did not fit the EFT explanation of corrective experiences. One reason for this might be that the two models place spontaneity at different points in the therapeutic process. As noted earlier, Greenberg (1999) proposes that 'allowing and accepting emotional pain' produces affective and motivational change, a change in perception of self and others, relief and self-affirmation. In contrast, the spontaneity explanation advanced through this research understands that these same conditions are produced before the corrective interpersonal

experience can emerge. As Clayton proposes, when spontaneity is high, old warm ups move into the background and progressive roles are strengthened and produce a catharsis of integration (Clayton & Carter, 2004). The therapeutic weeping in the social atom repair scene is more fully understood as a catharsis of integration rather than as a marker of the internal experience of allowing and accepting emotional pain.

Spontaneity's Efficacy in Producing Profound Corrective Experiences

These are several features of the corrective experience in psychodrama that suggest that a focus on spontaneity rather than emotion is more likely to produce profound transformative effects:

1. The processing of emotions appears to be an element of action insight events, but while these events assist protagonists to develop a more hopeful and compassionate attitude to themselves and their situations, they do not on their own produce lasting change. These events are more usefully understood as part of the process of building spontaneity in the protagonist's system and contributing to the protagonist's motivation to create something new.
2. The depth of experiencing of the original event is essential to the emergence of insight. Conflictual responses fall away, and the protagonist becomes more unified, while the gradual development of spontaneity means that spontaneity emerging at one stage contributes to greater spontaneity in the next stage. For some protagonists, the increased spontaneity that comes with insight leads to a quick resolution, and the development of a new and adequate response. For most, the spontaneity that comes with insight is not adequate to produce social atom repair and unresolved act hunger remains. When resourcefulness is activated, the protagonist 'wakes up' to their capacity for effective action and increased confidence energizes the protagonist to move to social atom repair.
3. For a corrective interpersonal experience to emerge in a psychodrama enactment, the spontaneity of the protagonist and auxiliaries needs to be high enough that they take a greater part in producing the scene themselves. The protagonist's responses become increasingly free flowing and the director's interventions become increasingly minimal. The social atom repair that occurs in these scenes is most transformative when the protagonist initiates the reparative relationship.
4. Acceptance of self in the moment is linked to greater spontaneity in psychodrama enactments, as illustrated in the scenes above. An expression of a positive relationship to self immediately precedes the emergence of all new responses.
5. Emotional release in the corrective interpersonal experience scene

can be understood as a catharsis of integration. This catharsis contains powerful emotions, such as grief, fear and pain, that were present during the original event, along with the experience of the new relationship that emerges. The protagonist recognises a new experience of self and the relationship.

Spontaneity or Emotion: Why Does It Matter?

The way in which we conceptualize the therapeutic process affects what we focus on as practitioners. If we orient to emotion, we will prioritize emotional expression. If we focus on spontaneity, we will look to the protagonist's warm up and produce the social and cultural system to which they are relating, so that they deepen all aspects of their warm up. We will orient to elements of the system that generate greater spontaneity.

The development and integration of a transformative relationship is the corrective experience in psychodrama. It is not imposed or structured by the director but emerges from the protagonist in relationship with the director and auxiliaries, as spontaneity increases. The model of spontaneity development that is set out here is not all encompassing. It is based on the experiences of 14 protagonists and four psychodramatists, working with the specific theme of painful emotional experience. The model does, however, offer insights into the efficacy of spontaneity in generating corrective experience during psychodrama enactment, especially in the form of action insight and in the social atom repair of a corrective interpersonal experience. Spontaneity emerges as both a catalyst of change during therapy *and* an outcome of that therapy.

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Charmaine McVea (PhD, TEP) is the Director of Training at the Sydney-Canberra Campus of Psychodrama Australia and a member of the Board of Examiners of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA). She is interested in the contribution that psychodrama theory and practice can offer to our understanding of the common factors of therapeutic change. Charmaine can be contacted at <cmcvea@powerup.com.au>.

Encounter

The Heart of Psychodramatic Couple Therapy

Walter Logeman

Abstract
This article is concerned with the application of psychodrama principles and practices to couple therapy. In particular, it explores Moreno's philosophy of encounter, that meeting of two, 'face to face and eye to eye', which lies at the heart of psychodramatic couple therapy. Drawing on illustrative material, the author shows the way in which the psychodrama structure of warm up, action and sharing apply in a couple therapy session, with the encounter presenting as the action phase. He also describes the psychodramatic techniques of doubling, mirroring and role reversal as they are used to facilitate the encounter.

Key Words
begegnung, couple therapy, doubling, encounter, love, mirroring, Moreno, natural groups, psychodrama, relationship, role reversal, spontaneity, synthetic groups, tele

> *On begegnung/encounter: ... seeing and perceiving, touching and entering into each other, sharing and loving, communicating with each other in a primary, intuitive manner, by speech or gesture, by kiss and embrace, becoming one—una cum uno.*
>
> J.L Moreno in *Psychodrama Third Volume* (2012:29)

In recent years, I have been applying psychodrama to couple therapy. There are delightful moments when I realise the ways in which psychodrama philosophy and techniques apply in a couple therapy session, for example, when a couple deepen their connection by taking turns at being protagonist and auxiliary, or when the rich tradition of encounter springs to mind as a couple are fully present, 'face to face and eye to eye'. Such insights sharpen the work. I have come to think of couple therapy as a 'group' process, which follows the psychodrama structure of warm up, action and sharing, with encounter as the action phase, the drama at the heart of the process. In that sense, couple therapy can also be thought of as a form of spontaneity training.

The integration of psychodrama and couple therapy has led to a course, Psychodramatic Couple Therapy Training[1], which embodies psychodrama practice as it shapes and enlivens couple therapy.

J.L. Moreno developed the philosophy of encounter well before he developed psychodrama, describing the highest form of encounter as "the supreme essence of existence" (Moreno & Moreno, 2012:29). Equating encounter and life, he juxtaposes them both with theatre, which he sees as mere deadening re-enactment. "I was opposed to the theatre because of my extreme affirmation of life" (Moreno & Moreno, 2012:29). In his view, theatre and life "are extremes, opposites", and dancing between these opposites is psychodrama, which "leans toward the encounter as its master guide" (Moreno & Moreno, 2012:28). Encounter is a poor translation of begegnung, the word Moreno uses in the original German. Begegnung has a broader meaning that includes the idea of an authentic loving meeting, which the English does not quite carry. Can such exquisite existential encounter be taught or facilitated? Moreno's clear response: For encounter, "there is no specific therapy available. For it there is no therapy necessary. It is a form of therapy in itself" (Moreno & Moreno, 2012:31).

However, that is not the end of the matter. Moreno was a strong advocate for new forms of therapy to 'treat' intimate relationships. In his view, intimate relationships have a "co-unconscious and a co-conscious", that together form an "interpsyche" (Moreno, 1961:234-241). "Forms of treatment are necessary which are able to reach the interpersonal syndromes as deeply, if not more so, than it would a single person. "Interpersonal therapy" represents a special category; it might well be classified apart from individual and group psychotherapy" (Moreno & Moreno, 2012:53). Psychodramatic couple therapy that 'reaches deeply into the interpersonal syndromes' can rightly be understood as involving facilitated encounter. A facilitated encounter[2] may sound like a paradox, but it could be said that at the end of successful facilitation, the encounter begins. Sometimes techniques vanish, and we see the emergence of presence and love, perhaps rightly called true encounter. Furthermore, it is useful to add a distinction that Moreno makes between a 'natural group', such as a couple, and the 'synthetic group' that meets for most psychodrama sessions and training[3]. As the partners in a natural group face each other, encounter one another, every expression in every moment has an impact on their lives.

The application of psychodrama to couple therapy brings together psychodramatic concepts and methods, Moreno's rich philosophy of

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1 See <https://psychodrama.org.nz/couple-therapy-training/>.

2 Ann Hale (no date) uses the term 'facilitated encounter' in a handout entitled Paradoxical Double-Bonding Role Reversal.

3 "I differentiate between natural group, like the family, from synthetic group like therapy and training groups and further, the encounter group which is neither, although it has elements of both" (Moreno, 1957:348).

encounter and his notion of working with interpersonal relationships. A psychodramatic couple therapy session follows the structure of a psychodrama session, with warm up, action and sharing phases, and identifies participants as protagonist and auxiliary. The techniques that are used will be familiar to psychodramatists, but they may not be anchored to positions on the stage as in classical psychodrama. However, each partner learns to mirror, reverse roles and double, often in a verbal form[4]. Concretisation and enactment are used to strengthen the couple's ability to listen well and express vulnerability. The work of the session is for the creativity of the couple to emerge. And as with all psychodrama, the couple bring their 'therapeutic tele'[5] and spontaneity to this endeavour.

Specifically, the psychodramatic couple therapy session begins with a warm up to clarify a theme, to establish a frame and to develop the couple's readiness to connect, even while fear and anger may be present. At this stage, the two partners mostly express themselves to the therapist, clarifying their concerns and the impact on the 'third entity', their relationship. Metaphors for the relationship can be useful here, such as a 'sinking ship' or a 'toddler learning to walk'. At some point, one person emerges to lead the interaction and work for the 'group' as its protagonist[6], while the other takes up the auxiliary position. The action phase or encounter that follows can involve the voice, the breath, the eyes and the body posture of each participant. Sharing concludes the session, with its aim of integrating developments. The director adds a structure and discipline to the session, with the aim of developing spontaneity. If all goes well, we see moments of spontaneous depth and true encounter.

Let us now turn to a psychodramatic couple therapy session. The illustration below involves a fictitious couple based on my work with many couples. It has been abbreviated to highlight the essence of the work. It also employs some psychodrama language, whereas in practice everyday language, such as 'listener' and 'therapist', is used.

Jack and Anna: The Warm Up Phase

It is astonishing to know that spontaneity can be trained. We can learn to overcome old imperatives to fight or flee, and instead express heartfelt truth and simply be ourselves. These reveries, playing on my mind as I peruse the notes from the previous session, are interrupted by the noise of an intense argument in the corridor. Jack and Anna have arrived for couple therapy.

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4 In *Psychodrama Second Volume* (2011:65), Moreno writes, "All my interactional techniques, including role reversal, double, mirror, etc. ... can be used within the strictly verbal systems of psychotherapy…".

5 Moreno mentions this in *Psychodrama First Volume* (1977:315), where he describes his realisation that the therapeutic agency is not the therapist but the tele between the group members.

6 See Logeman (1999), The Group And Its Protagonist: The Relationship Between the Individual and the Group.

Anna and Jack let fly with accusations and judgements, escalating as they compete for the harshest invectives. "Stop!" I say within seconds, as I place my arm between them. My cry leads to a split second of silence. I am determined to be with each of them, no matter how determined they are to be against each other. I trust that they can say everything with the same vitality that they experience through shouting. Anna and Jack are familiar with my functioning as a double and know that they are free to accept or reject my expressions.

First, I sit next to Jack, slightly behind and lower than him. I sink into Jack's being and let his thoughts and feelings flow within me. I express them with sound: "Ahhhh! Ohhhh!" I can see that the woman in front of me is angry. I feel heartache and I let another, more fragile "Ahhhh" come forth. I see a small shift in Anna's eyes and I find myself saying, "I love you so much!" Immediately I move to Anna's side. I find myself looking into the man's eyes, which are momentarily softer. I say, "I am in so much doubt and pain. I can't stand it anymore". I move back to my own chair. While doubling Jack and Anna, I felt the coping impulses to fight and flee as well as their more vulnerable experiences. I have chosen to express the vulnerability as they already know how to cope by blaming the other. Now there is a shift in Anna and in Jack. They take a breath together. Tension drops. They look directly at each other.

Anna: *I want to talk about what happened Saturday night.*
Jack: *Tell me about your hurt.*

Anna has made a request, and in that sense has become the protagonist. Jack is willing to listen. He is her auxiliary. To conclude the warm up, I direct Anna and Jack to concretise the resources that they will need to do this work.

Director: *Think of someone or something from the present or the past who will sustain you and the relationship as you do this work together. When you have found that resource, choose a cushion (indicating a pile of cushions) and place it so you can see it and let it sustain you.*

Anna chooses her Nanna, and Jack identifies the wind on his face beside the sea. These resources can be drawn on and amplified during the session. The warm up phase is now complete. The next step is the action phase which, in psychodramatic couple therapy, I view as the encounter.

Jack and Anna: Encounter as the Action Phase

Director: *Let Anna know you are with her.*
Jack: *I am with you.*
Anna: *On Saturday, I waited till nine o'clock. You told me you would be there. You are never there. You just go out as you please. I've no idea where you are. You are not a teenager.*

Anna's tone is sharp. She is almost pointing her finger. She is angry. I feel the pain at the root of the anger and move rapidly next to her and look at Jack.

Director as double: *When you did not turn up, I thought you were completely unreliable. I felt alone, lost, desperate.*

From the corner of my eye, I sense her subtle nod.

Anna: *I just don't know where we went wrong…*

The more significant a relationship is, the greater the possibility for earlier unmet needs to surface. I suspect that this is the case for Anna. As her double, I assist her to express this viscerally disturbing experience in a way that Jack can hear. I name this doubling, in the classical psychodramatic sense, because I experience myself as Anna and speak in the first person from a position slightly behind her. I trust that the doubling will lead Anna to speak from her experience, without blame. Now the question is, can Jack be with her? It is difficult to step into the other's shoes when the other is full of rage directed at you! To listen to the partner's hurt is almost impossible when they perceive you as the source of their pain. Can Jack recover from what he has no doubt experienced as a personal attack and navigate a path through his own resistance? Can he be Anna's auxiliary? Can he continue to hear Anna?

Jack: *You hate it when you don't know where I am. We have gone wrong somewhere.*
Director: *Yes. Well done!*

I have returned to my chair. Jack is now mirroring Anna, as he has learnt to do in a previous session.

Director: *Tell him what you feel.*
Anna: (crying) *I'm scared I'll be alone. You're never there for me.*

Amid the tears, the pointing finger of a blaming fighter: "You're never there for me". I see that Jack feels the impact of the accusation. I have a choice. I can assist Anna to delve deeper into the fears beneath the accusations, and thus cease blaming Jack. However, I choose to double Jack to help him stay attuned to Anna, to see the pain behind the blame. I sit with him and express, in a soliloquy, my sense of his intentions.

Director as double: *I don't like being told I'm never there. It's not never. Right now, I'm here with Anna. I can do that.*

I am connected to Jack and have entered his world. His breathing tells me that he has accepted my doubling and reaffirmed his intention to listen to Anna. I return to my chair and encourage Jack to look at Anna and tell her what he sees.

Jack: *I can see how you don't like being alone.*

Jack has become a mirror[7]. In my experience of directing couples, an effective sequence at the start of the interaction is mirroring followed by role reversal, that is, stepping into the other's shoes and validating their values, and then doubling the underlying experience, which leads to deeper intimacy. This sequence is different from the understanding of these concepts in the spontaneity theory of child development[8]. Moreover, the way in which the couple enact the techniques may not involve the usual positions on the stage as in classical psychodrama. However, the therapist or director has usually provided plenty of classical doubling.

Anna: *I want you to know how painful it is when you just ignore me.*

Blame has crept in again with the words, "You just ignore me", which obscure Anna's feelings. I wonder about her unmet need, what it is she sees, thinks and feels with that word 'ignore'. I sit next to Anna and help her to express her experience.

Director: *I think you ignore me when…*
Anna: *When you go out and don't text me and turn up at all hours.*
Director: *Then I think…*
Anna: *Then I think you don't care about me.*
Director: *And I feel…*
Anna: *Worthless, alone.*
Director: *I yearn for…*
Anna: *I yearn for someone who will think of me, keep my needs in mind.*

In this sequence[9], the wisp of guidance is enough. Anna accepts my lead lines and completes them herself. Perhaps the best word for this is a coaching double, as it is both coaching and 'being her' at the same time. As I enter Anna's world, I see that the coaching is accepted. Once more, the focus turns to Jack. He has already mirrored Anna. Is he now able to step into her shoes? I return to my own chair.

Director: *Let yourself step into her shoes.*
Jack: (taking a moment to reflect) *I get how you would feel alone if I don't keep you in mind.*
Anna: Nods.
Director: *Are you with her?*
Jack: *You want to trust I'm on your side, that I'm reliable.*
Anna: *I can't trust you. I want to trust you.*

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7 Kellermann describes mirroring in some depth in Lets Face it: Mirroring in Psychodrama (2007:91).

8 See Moreno, 1977:47.

9 I learnt the sequence, 'see, think, feel, underlying universal need' from Marshall Rosenberg's 2003 book, *Nonviolent Communication* (Kindle Locations 678).

Jack has tuned into Anna's experience and put words to her fears, fears that she has not yet spoken and may only be vaguely aware of. At the same time Anna's expression, "I can't trust you. I want to trust you", is a subtle accusation. It implies what she does not say: 'You are not trustworthy'. Jack turns away, bursting to say something. Has Anna been well enough heard? For now? I look at Jack. I decide one more step might be useful.

Director: *What do you imagine Anna is thinking when she says she wants to trust you? Tell her.*
Jack: *You think that if we can't sort this out, it could be the end of us?*
Anna: *I don't want that.*
Director: (offering a lead line) *And then you feel…*
Jack: *Then you feel scared.*
Anna: *Yes. I hate it when we come so close to splitting up. I'm terrified of us splitting up.*
Jack: *You're terrified.*
Anna: *Yes.*

Jack is doubling Anna, not in the classical form of standing next to her or using the term 'I', but by expressing her fear. His accurate doubling leads Anna to clarify her experience. She is terrified. At this point, I decide upon a 180° turn. I commend Anna and Jack for their efforts with one another so far, Anna for showing her vulnerability and Jack for doubling Anna and helping her to express her feelings. I now suggest that they switch roles, that Jack become the protagonist and express himself to Anna.

Director: *Take a deep breath. Look at each other.*
Director: *Anna, you are now entering Jack's world. What do you see as you look at Jack?*
Anna: *He's gone somewhere else.*
Director: *Can you find your curiosity and find a way to be with him? Take your time … let him know when you are with him.*

Anna takes a moment and their eyes connect. She is with him. She has tuned in with Jack.

Director: *Can you see where he's gone?*
Anna: *He's angry and holding it in.*
Director: *Say that to him.*
Anna: *You are angry.*
Jack: *I want to be independent. I resist being trapped. That does not mean I don't love you.*
Anna: *You don't want to be trapped. You want to be independent.*
Director: *And…*
Anna: *And you love me.*

Anna is listening, which assists Jack to express himself. He is without malice and that makes it easier for her to continue to listen.

Jack: *I love what I do. I'm with people all day. That's how I achieve what I do. I get involved. I hate it when you keep calling and texting, especially when you barged into that meeting the other day.*
Anna: *You hate it when I hassle you by texting and barging in on you.*

Anna has achieved the mirroring step and I commend her. Can she go further? Can she role reverse with Jack and then double him, speak for him so he experiences her with him?

Director: *When I step into your shoes and see the world through your eyes*...[10]
Anna: (taking a moment) *It makes sense that I am intruding on your space.*

I see by Jack's eyes, breath and a movement of his head that Anna has made sense of his experience. She has stepped into Jack's shoes and role reversed with him. Can she now double him?

Jack: *I don't want to live in fear of you controlling every move I make.*
Anna: *You are scared I'll control you. You want me to trust you.*

Yes, Anna is doubling Jack. Immersed in his world, she is able to put words to fears that he may be unaware of. And we are back with the word 'trust'. Trust is such a bundle of thoughts and feelings. Can Anna help Jack unpack them? In an open neutral inviting posture, she waits for him to say more.

Jack: *I want to tell you to back off, but I think you will take that the wrong way.*
Anna: *You are scared I'll take it the wrong way if you tell me what you want.*
Jack: *Yes.*
Director: *Stay with him. You are scared…*
Anna: *You are scared I will reject you.*
Jack: *It's more that we will have a standoff.*

As the therapist I wonder, what does he want instead of the standoff?

Director: *You want…*
Anna: *You want to feel connected to me.*
Jack: *Yes.*

Anna reaches out to touch Jack. This is progressive movement, and I encourage them to fully experience their encounter.

Director: *Experience her touch Jack.*

Jack takes a moment to experience Anna's touch more fully.

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10 The couple are familiar with my prompt, which is drawn from The Motto in the introduction to *Psychodrama First Volume* (Moreno, 1977).

Director: *Let your body express how you feel*.

Jack chuckles, stands up and hugs Anna.

Director: *Slow down. Take in what you are receiving… Notice what you are giving*.

The encounter is the therapy in this moment and I sit back in my chair. Anna and Jack are present with each other. They have moved from blame to authentic expression of deeper feelings, from external circumstances to what I call the level playing field of fear and pain. She is terrified of the relationship ending and he is afraid of a standoff. Paradoxically, this expression of vulnerability is the pathway to love and connection. In experiencing this intimacy, Anna's and Jack's ways of being are both novel for them and adequate. In psychodrama terms, this is a moment of spontaneity. Encounter is some-times just such a "simple moment, one flash of true, genuine spontaneity which emerges from a real person" (Moreno & Moreno, 2012:29). I now propose that we move to the third phase, sharing.

Jack and Anna: The Sharing Phase

In the sharing phase of a classical psychodrama session, the audience members share their responses which assists them to integrate their learning. Meanwhile, the protagonist listens and integrates the value of the work. In psychodramatic couple therapy, the partners have shared their responses during the session. However, a sharing phase can be satisfying here as well, to highlight significant moments, integrate learning and make the transition from therapy to everyday life. As in all psychodrama, the director is active in producing good sharing[11].

Director: *Tell each other how that was for you. Listen to each other*.
Anna: *I did not know you wanted to be connected like that. It was good to see you open up*.
Jack: *You really listened to me so carefully*.

I think Anna will benefit if she knows specifically what she did that led Jack to experience such careful listening. I offer a lead line.

Director: *I love it when you…*
Jack: *I love it when you sit still and wait for me to find what I want to say. Thank you.*
Director: *How does the connection now relate to the beginning of the session when you were fighting?*[12]

11 See Tom Wilson (1984), *Sharing in Psychodrama as a Directed Experience*.

12 In the powerpoint presentation, Learning to Life (Anna & Logeman, 2017), one guideline for the sharing phase of a psychodrama session recommends linking resolutions to the 'common syndrome' that emerged during the group warm up.

Jack: *I need to remember to listen. I want you to know I'm working on it. I want you to trust me.*

Anna: *I want to trust you.*

Director: *What is one thing you might do differently?*

Anna: *I want to figure out why I get so scared. It's to do with my mother not being there for me.*

Anna is in touch with her childhood experience, and this is a warm up to the next session where the work may take the form of a drama with Jack as a witness and companion[13].

Jack: *I will text you when I'm late.*

Jack has proposed a behavioural change. This can be reviewed, and possible obstacles faced, in future sessions.

Director: *Thank you both. It is a pleasure to be here with you. I'm touched by seeing your love come through.*

Conclusion

The application of some of the central features of psychodrama to couple therapy makes good sense, while envisioning the action phase of the session as an encounter enables the therapist to bring their training as a psychodramatist to the heart of the work. The three phases of psychodrama, warm up, action and sharing, structure a psychodramatic couple therapy session. The participants take turns as protagonist and auxiliary while the techniques of mirroring, role reversal and doubling take on a new form. The director is active during the warm up and the encounter, assisting the protagonist to speak from the heart without blame, and the auxiliary to mirror, reverse roles and double while simultaneously being impacted by the partner's expression. Quite an ask. We close the session with sharing to highlight the most significant moments, integrate the learning and look to the days ahead. The illustration provided in this article demonstrated the way in which this works in a natural group, where the couple were not re-enacting life during their encounter but living it in the moment. Ultimately, psychodramatic couple therapy aims to foster each person's spontaneity, creativity and self-direction, and for love to heal past hurts.

In my work as a couple therapist, I have come to realise why Moreno called his major work on sociometry and spontaneity, *Who Shall Survive?* I see the way in which violent and destructive patterns of interaction can impact negatively on couple and family dynamics through many generations. The transformation of these outdated patterns into new adequate ways of being with one another is essential to our survival.

13 Trainees learn to do this in Psychodramatic Couple Therapy Training. For more details, see the Manual (Logeman, 2019).

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Walter Logeman has a background in teaching, social work and psychotherapy, specialising in couple therapy. He works as a trainer at the Christchurch Institute for Training in Psychodrama and is a TEP and member of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA) Board of Examiners. Walter can be contacted at <walter@psybernet.co.nz>.

From Rational to Relational

Reflections on Embracing a Psychodramatic Approach in Academic Mentoring

Jenny Postlethwaite

Abstract
Many practitioners working in organisations will find themselves facing the challenge of heavily conserved systems and cultures. What might be the effect of embracing a psychodramatic approach in such contexts? Through the lens of a long running mentoring programme in two Australian universities, this article identifies the experience for the participating academics as novel and impactful, providing them with a springboard to develop and integrate a new relational capacity into their rational world. The positive effect is felt and seen within individual mentoring relationships and beyond, sparking spontaneity capable of shifting the wider university paradigm.

Keywords
academic mentoring, conserved cultures, mentoring, psychodrama, relational, spontaneity, university mentoring, vulnerability

Introduction

My 2008 introduction to working with academics was delightfully serendipitous – an out of the blue call from a social acquaintance at the local university, scrambling to find a replacement speaker for a session the following day with school and faculty academic leaders. The topic was organisational culture, one I was particularly warmed up to at the time, so it was an easy 'yes'. From that fortuitous beginning, I have gone on to work with university academics in a variety of contexts – team coaching, one-on-one coaching, development workshops, working with discipline groups struggling with conflict, soft skills training programmes and more.

Over the years I have observed and learnt a lot about the general culture of academia and its unusual organisational context. Many times, I have been informed by academics that they do not work FOR their university, but rather AT their university. This independence of mindset and identity exists within an environment where status and power are often a narrow function of intellect and knowledge; where the quality of

an idea is judged according to whether it can sustain peer critique; where a professorial demeanour of strength and certainty is a valued element of the cultural conserve[1].

Within that cultural context, a particular source of enjoyment and satisfaction for me has been an academic mentoring programme that I have facilitated for many years, first at the University of Newcastle (2009-2012) and later at Deakin University (2013-present). The programme calls on participants, both mentors and mentees, to step beyond their conserved role relationships; to move from a predominantly rational focus to a more relational one where the value that both parties gain is a function of the quality of the relationship they build, rather than simply a transfer of knowledge or experience from one to the other.

As it happens, since commencing the mentoring programme in 2009, I have been on a developmental journey of my own. I discovered psychodrama in late 2010 and set out as a trainee the following year, gaining accreditation as a sociodramatist in 2016. That journey has expanded my own valuing of relationship and capacity for intimacy, rebalancing my inner equation of thinking and feeling. I have come to more fully appreciate 'being' over 'doing' and to treasure psychodrama founder J.L. Moreno's recognition of the moment as a place of being, living and creating[2], the temporal stage on which his Canon of Creativity plays out. My personal evolution has had a tangible flow-on effect to my being and approach as a coach and group worker in organisations.

The continuous delivery of the mentoring programme over 11 years provides a singular mirror to consider how integrating a psychodramatic mindset and approach into the mentoring programme workshops has, in turn, affected the experience of participants and the programme outcomes. Although focused on a specific organisational context – working with academics in universities – this mirror may also spark the interest and spontaneity of organisational practitioners across a diversity of other work contexts.

To aid and collaborate with me in exploring the evolution of the programme, I engaged two companions, Professor Trevor Day and Professor Malcolm Campbell, in conversation about our experiences and perspectives of the programme. Trevor was the initiating sponsor of the programme at both Newcastle and Deakin, its guiding star. He has been a regular participant in programme workshops and the mentor/mentee pairing exercise. In the early years he was also a mentor in the programme. Malcolm has been a

1 For readers not familiar with the term "conserve" in a psychodramatic context, it refers to preserved norms and cultural heritage that accumulate over time. Elements of the conserve (in this case the model of professorial demeanour) are each a product of an initial act of creativity, but have subsequently become fixed in nature, lacking in spontaneity.

2 J.L. Moreno. *Psychodrama, First Volume* 4th Edition, 1985, Beacon House Inc. p.104.

stalwart of the programme at Deakin since its inception and a mentor for the first six years. In the latest round he has shifted role, joining the group who work out the mentor/mentee pairings. This has provided him with a different perspective in the workshops, focusing on the broader group of participants. Trevor's and Malcolm's reflections as sponsors and participants in the programme are woven through this essay, providing perspective into the culture and experience of academic life, and the challenges and joys of being called on to step from that largely rational world into the intimacy of relational mentoring.

Beginning with a brief overview of the programme structure, I move on to identify, from my practitioner's perspective, the key ways in which the facilitation of programme workshops has been impacted by the adoption of a psychodramatic mindset. Then, in conversation with Trevor and Malcolm, I consider the ways in which this approach has affected participants' experiences and programme outcomes.

Programme Overview

At Deakin, the programme is sponsored and runs within the boundaries of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and the Built Environment. Staff from the faculty office co-ordinate the programme and lead the task of pairing the mentors and mentees. Subject to capacity, the programme is available to all academics regardless of their organisational role or professional seniority. Participation is voluntary, and individuals may nominate to be a mentor, or mentee, or both. The only limitation placed on joining the programme is that all participants must attend an initial half-day induction workshop. The programme typically runs over a 12-month window, anchored by three rounds of workshops that I facilitate:

1. At the commencement of the programme an induction workshop, run separately for mentees and mentors, covers aspects such as understanding the mentoring relationship, mentoring roles and responsibilities, stages of the mentoring journey and key mentoring conversation skills. Participants are provided with a workbook which covers the key content. The pairing of mentors and mentees is completed after the induction workshops.
2. Midway through the programme, a joint workshop brings mentors and mentees together following their initial mentoring sessions, allowing them to share experiences, reflect, and build and cement new skills.
3. At the conclusion of the programme, a further joint workshop brings mentors and mentees together to share experiences and celebrate success.

How have things changed from my practitioner's perspective?

In 11 years, the programme structure is unchanged and the programme content, as concretised in the workbooks provided to participants, has seen only minor revisions. Over time though, my focus, the form of my interventions, and what unfolds in the workshops as a result, has shifted markedly. For Moreno, "psychodrama was a way to train people to be more spontaneous in their lives in a safe and controlled environment, then go out and try their new roles"[3].

Early On: *My mindset was more one of enabling participants to develop specific relevant skills. I enacted more of a didactic or teaching role.*
And Now: *Spontaneity training has replaced skills training and knowledge transfer as my anchoring purpose. My mindset is one of expanding each participant's capacity to more readily warm up to spontaneity and to move beyond their conserved culture of role relationships. In practice this means I am inviting and encouraging them to move beyond their habitual thinking-dominated roles, to warm up and bring attention to their and their mentoring partner's emotional world, as a means of developing new roles and a better integration of thinking, feeling and action in each of them.*

For example, in one workshop exercise one person shares a personal story with the group – something simple such as what happened for them last weekend. I ask the other group members to listen, not only to the content of the story but also for the emotions that are expressed, and to then crisply state their understanding of the essence of the communication. We play with describing this essence until we observe that the storyteller feels well seen. The group members are thus required to listen deeply, and also to look more consciously in order to see how the storyteller is impacted by what they, the listeners, offer. This rudimentary form of doubling of a work colleague is a new and impactful experience for most participants, calling on both the storyteller and the listeners to move to the edge of their professional reserve and take a risk in relationship with others in the workshop.

Another exercise involves fostering the skill of open questioning in the participants' mentoring conversations. In the early years, I would talk with the mentor group about the importance of open questions, then they would practice with one another. Now I have upped the challenge, directing them to ask their practice partner 10 open questions in a row, each following on directly from the response they have just heard. Although not a natural conversational experience, the exercise enables participants to become viscerally aware of the way in which thinking dominates their conversation. They consciously experience themselves ceasing to listen and withdrawing into their heads while they think through their next question. It is a shock to most to realise how much they struggle to stay in relationship with, and listen to, their partner.

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3 Jonathan Moreno. Bellevue Literary Press Conversations Series: Jonathan D. Moreno & John Pankow, 2014. <https://blpress.org/news/blp-conversations-jonathan-d-moreno/#more-2450>.

During this and other workshop activities, I often coach participants in the moment to bring themselves forward in the group and in their expression to one another, drawing out a fuller and more integrated expression of thinking AND feeling. In contrast to the teaching-centred role I initially enacted, I am now standing beside rather than in front of participants.

Separate to the workshop content itself, the *experiences* which participants have in the workshops plays a key part in their individual development and the subsequent effectiveness of their mentoring relationship.

Early On: *While participants were actively engaged in learning activities during the workshops, the need to cover all the content tended to limit the time spent on any particular activity. Emerging opportunities to deepen the experience were often lost.*
And Now: *The quality and depth of each participant's experience in the room takes precedence over getting through the content. I allocate and consciously spend more time on group warm up and leverage what happens in the moment as a learning opportunity, rather than relying only on programmed exercises. Slowing down, doubling and mirroring participants, and calling attention to what may or may not be being expressed, means that participants' awareness and role development is enhanced.*

Mentoring is an activity inherently anchored in relationship. The nature and quality of the relationship lies at the heart of its success. If something new is to emerge, both parties must be prepared to be vulnerable in the relationship, to openly express their struggles, to be okay when not in possession of an easy solution or answer. "There's something about … shared vulnerability and the group exploration of the human condition, in all its emotional complexity, that seems to break down conventional barriers and foster intimacy."[4] Showing vulnerability is a particular challenge in academic culture, as the academic is definitely expected to know what they are on about!

Early On: *My emphasis was on clear communication of the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees.*
And Now: *Whilst still covering this content, my focus has shifted to the sociometry alive in the group. As many participants are not known to one another, I produce their fuller expression to strengthen their sociometric links. I encourage them to be curious about one another, to enquire openly. I model and invite a preparedness to be vulnerable in front of the group. I stress the mentoring relationship as a co-cration – not just a 'my job, your job' exercise.*

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4 John Pankow. Bellevue Literary Press Conversations Series: Jonathan D. Moreno & John Pankow. 2014. <https://blpress.org/news/blp-conversations-jonathan-d-moreno/#more-2450>.

Beyond the workshops themselves, I am involved in the mentor/mentee pairing exercise.

Early On: *I was little more than a spectator, as the faculty staff considered which mentor was the best fit for each mentee, based on the requests made by the mentee. Not knowing the individuals, nor particularly understanding the technical need implicit in their requests, I had nothing to add to the consideration.*
And Now: *I value tele, "Moreno's term for what might variously be called "rapport" in its broadest sense"*[5]*, as a key element in the pairing equation. I am a more active contributor to the consideration of potential pairs, based on my sense, observed and intuitive, of the actual and potential tele between participants.*

My perspective as a professional practitioner is well and good, but I am also curious as to how all this change is perceived and received by participants. In the following sections, I present excerpts from conversations with sponsor/participants Trevor and Malcolm, as we reflect together on the changes in, and impacts of, the programme.

What change have you noticed regarding the nature of what happens in the room?

Trevor: *If somebody said to me, 'so what has psychodrama contributed to the programme?' it would be hard for me to distinguish what are uniquely psychodramatic concepts as opposed to ones that were actually being applied before the psychodrama, which is not to invalidate any of it, but simply to say that you've got an overlapping theoretical frame.*
Jenny: *It's actually an excellent point to illustrate, because the content is basically unchanged over 11 years. It's tweaked, but it's basically unchanged. What has changed is how I facilitate it.*
Trevor: *Right*.
Jenny: *The biggest change has actually been in me rather than the content.*
Trevor: *Yes, and that shows. Again, there's different ways of looking at it. One could say, well, Jenny's been doing this programme for 10, 12 years, so of course she's going to modify and improve, but if I was asked 'what do you see differently in Jenny in terms of how she approaches it now?', it's particularly that ability to just hang there. Those pauses ... and it's not just a pause, it was sort of holding everyone there. And first of all, holding yourself there. That's changed a lot ... you're prepared to hang there despite the degree of discomfort on the part of the participants. And I think that that has an impact when you see other people do that, you know. You could talk about it simply as the power of silence to some extent. There's an element of that in there. You see other people doing it and yet still be very effective. It gives you courage to try that approach yourself.*

5 Tele: The Dynamics of Rapport. Adam Blatner. Revision of chapter in Psychodrama Since Moreno, 1994, revised and re-posted February 26, 2006. <https://www.blatner.com/adam/pdntbk/tele.htm>.

Trevor's reflection highlights the shift toward valuing the moment as the crucible of spontaneity and creativity, allowing the space for something new to emerge. Early on, my focus in workshop exercises tended to be more task and thinking oriented. For example, participants completed an exercise in their workbook to help them prepare for the first meeting with their mentoring partner. By contrast, in the latest round of the programme I introduced a simplified 'sticky moments' role training exercise where mentee Grace[6], enacted her first telephone call to her new mentor.

Jenny: *What I loved about that was ultimately Grace did all that work herself. She makes an offer and then it gets mirrored. And even as she's making it, she's saying 'No, that doesn't sound right. I don't like that'. She gets a few mirrors and she hones it and hones it and finally comes out with something that she feels really integrated around. I really enjoyed that the process enabled Grace's own wisdom to shape the decision she made about what she wanted to do.*
Malcolm: *The way you unravelled the activity, I think, was good for that group of mentees …. For me it was hearing the relief in Grace's whole being when she realised that it's not hard, and she only needs to be quite simple, because we often make things far more complex than they need to be.*
Jenny: *She really shifted role from having to somehow prove her worthiness, or illustrate her worthiness to the mentor, towards a light-hearted, 'Oh, I'm meeting a new person' and it was a really visual shift. And, as you said, in her whole being, she just softened and got really comfortable. And when that softening happened, her communication was clear and easy to follow.*

This role training approach provided some non-critical mirroring and an enacted, embodied experience, which enabled Grace to hear herself and make spontaneous adjustments. She was able to reach a point where she felt satisfied, her expression was crisper, and she was physically and emotionally calmer and aligned. With a more experiential approach now evident in the workshops, there are many more action-oriented moments such as this. One or two protagonists are working on behalf of the group, deepening the learning of all participants. Malcolm reflects on his own experience of this as both protagonist and group/audience member.

Jenny: *Are there particular moments that have stayed with you that capture or illustrate the novelty of the learning experience?*
Malcolm: *Well, it's all of those moments where you ask someone, or me, or whoever, to role play …. you're having to shift from 'this is what Malcolm would be' to 'this is what the role that you've given me would be'…. Those moments are the ones that stay with me in terms of the activities, having to be out in the front, sitting in that chair, having to ask somebody 10 questions that don't have a yes or no answer, and*

6 Name changed to protect confidentiality.

I find myself listening to myself and not what the other person says. Yeah. That's a real moment, that is a real moment. Other aspects are more subtle, I think. Having you come and stand behind and beside somebody and say, "Look at them, you're hearing the words, but is that what they're saying? Look at their face, look at their expression, look at how they're standing there". They are the moments that are most meaningful to me.
Jenny: *The heart of what you're saying for me is that it's about the immediacy of your experience when your attention is called to this moment, and what you're noticing externally or what you're getting aware of internally.*

How has this evolved approach impacted participant experience?

The majority of the mentor and mentee participants in the programme are from Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) disciplines. Trevor provides us with some insight into their professional world.

Trevor: *Academics are a strange breed. They must be able to focus down on an extremely narrow area, work at it for a very long time, to their own detriment and to the detriment of all those around them – obsessively focused. Historically in the STEMM area you very much were encouraged to divorce your IQ from your EQ … it's actually a way of focusing your energies.*

My hypothesis is that the action oriented, sociometric approach used in the workshops produces a developmental experience that is significantly different from the typical academic environment. Malcolm and Trevor agree, seeing the shift from knowledge transfer to development of self-awareness and emotional / relational capacities as the key point of difference.

Malcolm: *The mentoring programme is about building people's capacity, not teaching them something. I think that is the primary difference between what an academic would experience in other kinds of academic workshops. It's not so much about the content, but about developing me as a mentor and somebody else as a mentee. It's about developing their understanding of themselves.*
Trevor: *If your scientific training is to use one particular approach and suppress your emotional life to that end, you need to actually learn to be able to take off that hyper-rational hat and pick up this other, or in fact to be able to wear both hats together or move between the two seamlessly.*

In an academic culture where identity, success and status are predominantly grounded in intellect and critique, this shift in focus from knowledge and thinking toward relationship and feeling is unfamiliar and confronting for many.

Malcolm: *Quite confronting I think, to the group of academics I've seen in the seven years that I've been involved. STEMM academics, in the main, think in the objective world. They don't think in the relationship world. So, the confrontational part of what their experience is from this programme is about getting in touch with themselves, understanding themselves, which is probably new for many of them. ... I think the workshop is confronting because it's so unlike what they have experienced in the past. And even just little things, when as the facilitator you stop people and say, "Hang on, hang on, hang on. What are you hearing from the other person?" Well, people haven't had that before because they are mostly waiting for their next time to speak. So being pulled up and asked to reflect on feelings or facial expressions or intent or essence and all that kind of stuff, that's confronting for people. And you can see that, because people have to stop and think. Some of them are even unsure of what to answer. Even I'm sometimes uncertain about what's going to happen next, because the facilitation process is not scripted. There's an agenda but it's not scripted, so what happens from moment to moment depends on what happens in the room.*

Malcolm also highlights that their experience in the moment calls on participants to shift mindsets.

Malcolm: *It's the mindset Jenny. It's not just the experience, it's being asked to put your mind in a different space. It's about your being. Who I am, why I am.*
Jenny: *In that context, one of the things that I typically do at some point is produce a continuum about something. I want people to get out of their chairs and take a stand somewhere. For me this is an exercise in two things. One, it's a participatory thing. Rather than, 'I'm sitting in the group and not speaking' or whatever, I'm prompted to consider something. I have to consider the question and then I have to consider where am I going to put myself. Where to take MY stand. That's the first half of it. It's an invitation to participation.*
Malcolm: *Hmm.*
Jenny: *It also then makes visible what's often invisible in the group. Similarities or differences or whatever. What have you noticed about the effect of that on the group?*
Malcolm: *I've noticed as the year progresses, a change in the way the participants respond to that invitation. In the first training meeting, I suspect that there's a lot of group think, so you look around and see who's standing where, and they huddle. Whereas at the end of the programme people are more comfortable to go to the extremes, the positive or negative and there's not so much group think. And you get difference between mentors and mentees at the end of the programme. One is at one end of the line and another one might be at the other end of the line and they're comfortable being there and they're comfortable talking about it. So, I think the process of having to position yourself is a good one.*

The absence of technology in the workshops – no projectors, no screens, no devices, everything is live in the moment, relating to others in the room –

was also noted as significantly different to the usual workplace experience of participants. The new programme sponsor enjoys the 'digital detox' and likens her resulting experience to attending relaxing yoga classes. Apart from the absence of the distracting and isolating effects of technology, my sense is that her relaxation results from the slowing down and holding of moments, which provides her with a fuller experience of group life.

What value is the programme delivering?

As a result of the mentoring programme, strategic value is accumulating for individuals and for the faculty as a collective. Firstly, an ongoing expansion and flourishing of the sociometric wealth is evident.

Malcolm: *Well, you have opportunities to build the capacity of 32 people every year to be able to engage with others at the personal level. And from a faculty perspective you then have people who are more willing to share ideas, more willing to question others about how they're thinking, or why they're thinking rather than just take the 'yes/no argumentative, factual, that's wrong, clearly it's wrong' attitude. So, building each year a group of people who are more willing to sit and understand others and their perspectives is beneficial.*
Jenny: *And that adds more richness to the discourse?*
Malcolm: *Well, yes, and at the same time the faculty is doing a whole lot of development stuff by building research groups, building teaching teams, and so on. So, you've got people in that mix now who may not hold formal leadership roles in any of those particular activities, but they're sitting around the table with others saying, "What do you want to do?" or "Tell me more about the approach that you're taking. What would be the benefits of moving in that direction for you? Or for the school?" All of those open-ended questions. I see it around meetings, in conversations in the workplace. I think that adds richness to how we think about our work as a faculty.*

Moreno saw sociometry "as a means of ameliorating dissension and redistributing power within a group so that all its members shared sociometric wealth"[7]. Malcolm's reflection illustrates this shift, highlighting a move beyond the conserved academic culture of critique toward engaging the spontaneity of open curiosity and enquiry. In this emerging paradigm, social power is more effectively shared between the 'knowers' and the 'curious enquirers', and the work of the faculty is thus enriched. He continues on, reflecting on the general social impacts.

Malcolm: *The companionship is very successful. I see people who've been through the programme, either as a mentee or mentor, post the year of the programme are much more confident in having conversations with people.*

7 John Nolte. *The Philosophy, Theory and Methods of J.L. Moreno*, Routledge, 2015, p.28.

Jenny: *Hmm. They have the relational comfort.*
Malcolm: *Yes. Yes. Not an academic conversation, but a relational conversation.*

Trevor also reflected on the spread of sociometric benefit beyond the immediate boundaries of the programme.

Trevor: *Well, right from the start I said I wanted to create a work environment in which there was more mutual support provided from academic to academic. … But I was aware that it was hard to get through to academics. They were more likely to accept support from other academics than they were from professionals*[8]*. … As we often said, there is benefit for the mentees AND for the mentors. I think that some of the mentees actually started to become quite good at supporting their other academic colleagues, consciously or unconsciously, using some of the approaches and some of the mindset.*
Jenny: *Some of them have actually reported that back to the group, haven't they? And a number of them come back and want to be mentors in later years.*
Trevor: *Yes, exactly. Which is a wonderful thing. And there are those instances where we have had people as both a mentor and a mentee at the same time. Like that associate professor, he'd already been a mentor once and then joined the programme again to be simultaneously mentor and mentee. I thought that was a pretty great thing because it actually showed his willingness to give and receive. And sometimes it's much easier to be a giver than it is to be a receiver.*
Jenny: *There is a reciprocity in it for you.*
Trevor: *Yes, because to be a receiver means to admit vulnerability. You can be seen. So yes.*

The value of vulnerability, as both an individual and collective benefit, emerged repeatedly in our conversations. Warming participants up to a preparedness to step out of their comfort zones and into vulnerability is a key factor in the spontaneity training and role development focus of the workshops.

Trevor: *People are encouraged to feel able to express vulnerability. … They're hearing about the trials and tribulations that they either experience themselves or they see other people experiencing. And I feel that it creates in the room a pretty unique experience with regard to their life in the organisation that is a university. … They see that they are surrounded or accompanied in the room in that time, by other human beings who have pretty much the same fears and anxieties and hopes and aspirations. And they see their working life, which is such a major part of their life, through an emotional lens that they're not used to seeing, not even aware of the existence of such a lens, if you like. So, an awareness of the emotional side of their work life. And I think it sort of softens them in a way.*

8 For example, Human Resources professionals from the university's central service area.

Jenny: *Yes. It softens me hearing you say it.*
Trevor: *I think you see them melt a little bit. You know, they're given a degree of permission to let go of that shiny hard facade that people are expected to wear in their "professional" life.*

Trevor recalls a particularly powerful moment of this playing out in the room during a workshop.

Trevor: *I remember Paul*[9]*, who at the beginning of the induction workshop said he was a highly experienced mentor, doing it for many years. He rated himself an 8 or 9 out of 10. Then at the end of the workshop, when you asked people what were their thoughts reflecting on the morning that we'd spent together, his self-volunteered observation was he now realised he knew nothing about mentoring at all.*
Jenny: *He meant that as a positive comment.*
Trevor: *Oh, absolutely. Incredibly so. He was paying an extremely high compliment and he was opening up, being quite vulnerable in saying that, because he in particular had a traditional professorial demeanour, where it was important to him to always be seen as a source of strength and certainty. And I'd say that was a very big compliment, given that he had to let go of that for that moment. It does go to that whole issue of how transformative it can be to take people into the space, but also how much resistance there can be in the first place. … I'm sure that for other people in the room on that day to hear Paul say that he learnt stuff he never expected to learn would have had a great deal of impact for a number of people. They would have thought, if he can agree that this brought him something new, then so could I.*

Malcolm's reflection on vulnerability draws on his personal experience as a mentor in the programme over many years, highlighting his appetite for spontaneity training and some of the benefit he has derived from it.

Malcolm: *The issue is that you (Jenny) can take it in any direction and the fear factor is 'am I going to end up sitting in a chair having to do something that I have no idea why you want me to do it?'. It's not that I'm uncomfortable in doing what you say. You know, and this is probably true of most of the academics, they are all perfectionists. They're all successful people. They've never failed anything. Everybody in that room, they've probably never failed at anything before. And then to get asked a question where there's a possibility of failure is huge.*
Jenny: *It's a demand in the moment to step into a space where literally you don't know.*
Malcolm: *Correct. And that's the benefit. That's the huge win, that you're able to overcome it. But it still sits there, time after time after time. So, because I know that, whatever happens is going to be a learning moment. That's the benefit of (attending the induction workshop) time after time after time. It is what keeps me coming back.*

9 Name changed to protect confidentiality.

I'm going to learn something new because I will be in a different situation. My improvement, if you like, is being able to recognise and work with people's feelings in a way that I didn't think I could do before the programme. It might be that it was innate in me anyway, but the programme has allowed me to recognise at a conscious level about those kinds of things.
Jenny: *What's been the benefit of that for you?*
Malcolm: *Oh, it makes my conversations, with one person or a group of people, richer because I'm listening for them or with them, not just listening for my next opportunity to talk. That (old habit), I think, is gone or I have an ability to move past that.*

Malcolm also raises the value of the role development that occurs, for both mentors and mentees, through involvement in the programme.

Malcolm: *I think the other aspect of the programme we haven't really talked about is the acceptance of the responsibility of each of the roles, the mentee and the mentor. I think people leave that first meeting with a deeper understanding of the role that they have. You know, 'What is it as a mentee (or mentor) that I have to do'.*

This comment evokes the value proposition of adding the social roles of mentor and mentee to the university's academic environment, above and beyond the underlying role development which occurs at the individual level.

We also discussed potential limitations regarding the value of the programme. Firstly, Trevor and Malcolm were curious as to whether the workshop experience would be similarly novel for academics from non-STEMM disciplines. There have been few such participants in the programme, so we have limited capacity to empirically consider this question. But my gut feeling, having worked with academics from a range of disciplines, is that it would be similarly novel. Secondly, the frequency of involvement was identified as a key value determinant. Both Trevor and Malcolm saw that individual development and sociometric benefit were significantly greater for return participants, particularly mentors. Ongoing training for mentors makes good sense from a role development perspective, as embryonic or less developed roles need ongoing support to strengthen and become well integrated.

Conclusion

The value of embracing a psychodramatic approach to the facilitation of a mentoring programme in an academic context is clear. My reflections as a psychodramatist accord closely with those of Trevor and Malcom from the university world. The experience for the participating academics is novel and impactful, providing them with a springboard to develop and integrate a relational capacity in their rational world, the effect of which is felt and

seen within their mentoring relationships and beyond. My heartfelt appreciation and gratitude go to Trevor and Malcolm for their enthusiasm and generosity of spirit as companions and collaborators in the mentoring programme, and in the exploration, and this sharing of it, with the wider world.

Many practitioners working in organisations – private, public, community, not for profit etc – will find themselves facing the challenge of heavily conserved systems and cultures. The academic mentoring programme discussed in this article illustrates for us that, with a little boldness in application, a psychodramatic mindset can readily spark spontaneity in such contexts.

Professor Trevor Day is Emeritus Professor with the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment at Deakin University. Previously Executive Dean of the faculty, Trevor has a very keen interest in academic staff development and has established mentoring programmes at the University of Newcastle and Deakin University.

Professor Malcolm Campbell is Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Built Environment at Deakin University. Until recently Malcolm was also Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning. In these roles, Malcolm has led the faculty in developing teaching and learning outcomes for students and staff and enhancing the curriculum.

Jenny Postlethwaite is an accredited sociodramatist (AANZPA) and professional certified coach (International Coach Federation). She runs her own organisational coaching and consulting business, Reach Coaching. Since first encountering psychodrama in 2010, she has enthusiastically integrated and applied psychodramatic philosophies and methods into her practice. Jenny can be contacted through her website <www.reachcoaching.com.au> or by email <jenny@reachcoaching.com.au>.

Staging the Therapeutic Experience

Using Moreno's Psychodrama Stage in Parenting Groups for Women

Cushla Clark

Abstract
Moreno proposed the psychodrama stage as the first instrument of psychodrama. He designed it with four levels, the audience, the warm up step, the action space and the balcony, which mirror the stages of a protagonist's warming up process. Providing illustrations focused on the use of the warm up level or step and the balcony in parenting groups for women, Cushla Clark proposes that a psychodramatist who maintains consciousness of the structure of the Morenian stage, including improvising the different levels when physical constraints are present, is able to enhance a protagonist's warm up to spontaneity and produce a full and satisfying dramatic enactment. This article is drawn from Cushla's AANZPA thesis, Liberation via The Stage.

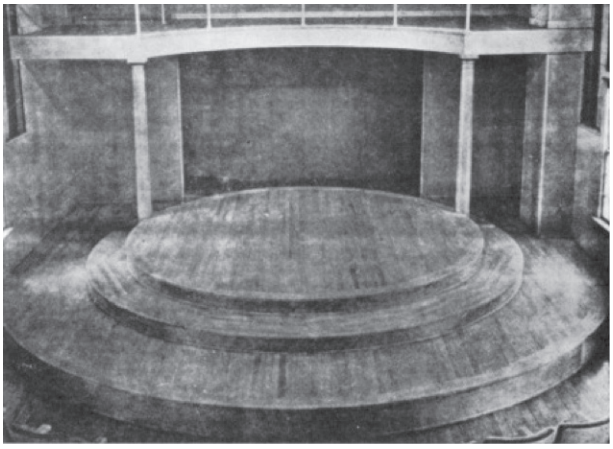
Key Words
action space, audience, balcony, enactment, levels, Moreno, psychodrama, psychodrama stage, spontaneity, warm up, warm up step

The Psychodrama Stage

It is my hypothesis that the physical structure of the psychodrama stage can enhance a protagonist's warm up to spontaneity. In this article, I present examples of my work in parenting groups where I have held in mind Moreno's design of the psychodrama stage, particularly focusing on the use of the second level, the warm up space, and the fourth level, the balcony. Maintaining consciousness of the Morenian stage, including improvising the different levels when physical constraints are present, has certainly assisted me as a director to produce full and satisfying dramatic enactments.

In creating psychodrama, Moreno moved therapy off the couch and away from the dyadic relationship of client and therapist, to treat an individual in a group. He thus expanded the instruments used in therapy. "The psychodramatic method uses mainly five instruments – the stage, the subject or patient, the director, the staff of therapeutic aides or auxiliary egos, and the audience. The first instrument is the stage" (Moreno, 1994:a).

Informed by his experiences in the Theatre of Spontaneity (see Moreno, 1983), Moreno designed the psychodrama stage with four levels: the audience, the warm up step, the action space and the balcony or super-individual level, as shown in the accompanying photograph. These four levels mirror the stages of warm up through which a person passes in becoming the creator of their own life: "The first level as the level of conception, the second the level of growth, the third the level of completion and action, the fourth – the balcony – the level of the messiahs and the heroes" (Moreno, 1994:3).



View of the Beacon psychodrama stage looking towards the balcony, as photographed in 1936 (Moreno, 1994:268).

In Moreno's view, this structure created a space flexible enough to portray all of a person's experience, facilitating the exploration of the four universals of psychodrama. As Fox (1987:3) explains, "The objective of psychodrama was, from its inception, to construct a therapeutic setting which uses life as a model, to integrate into it all the modalities of living, beginning with the universals – time, space, reality, and cosmos – down to all the details and nuances of life". And as Clayton (1991:24) maintains, "This circular stage with three levels and a balcony supported by two pillars enhances the continuous development of a protagonist's warm up as well as the warm up to a range of different roles which allows different perspectives on life to develop".

Using the Morenian Psychodrama Stage in Parenting Groups for Women

I have applied Moreno's concepts of the psychodrama stage in a parenting programme aimed at assisting mothers and care-givers to develop non-violent relationships with their children. These parenting groups took place in various community venues where the space was often an

undifferentiated flat area with little room for action. The following two sections of the paper describe and illustrate the ways in which I improvised to create the different levels of the psychodrama stage under these constraints, in particular the warm up level or step and the balcony, and thus maximise the protagonist's warm up and produce a full and satisfying enactment.

The Warm Up Step

An improvised warm up level or step was an important feature of the psychodramatic work in the parenting groups. Through their participation, the women were immersed in a culture of mutual respect and a space where they could occupy centre stage, often for the first time. Stepping onto the psychodrama stage was 'a big deal' for them and considerable work was required for them to warm up. Moreno (1993:11) maintained that a person often has visions and dreams but struggles to realise them because there are "deficiencies in their warming up process". He therefore designed the second level of the stage as the warm up space or step, relating it to conception and growth. Here the protagonist develops a readiness or warm up for action. Through the process of warming up, the protagonist's spontaneity reaches a point where they are able to step onto the third level of the stage and 'act freely'.

In walking around the warm up step or level, a protagonist remains in proximity to the audience and the director. Through their appreciation of her dilemmas, their involvement and expression, the audience and director can thus assist her to warm up. Typically, there are a number of pre-requisites before the protagonist develops a readiness to step onto the third level of the stage, that of action and completion. Some of these include recognition of feelings and their appropriate expression, recognition of the warming up process and the ability to control its pace so as to avoid becoming over-heated, an appreciation of the possibility of choosing one's warm up, and the development of a tender, loving and supportive attitude towards the self as a counter to harsh self-criticism.

Often, I worked at length on the warm up step, allowing plenty of time for a protagonist to gather resources, experience control and pace her warming up process. Typically, I doubled the protagonist's ability to stay connected to herself and others in the group, and when needed, I would be a loving and supportive companion and coach. For most of these clients, this was a new experience of warming up as a parent. In some cases, however, deficiencies in the protagonist's warm up were so severe that the process of getting to the point where they could step onto the action level of the stage was actually the major work. The following illustration of this process is drawn from work with Sara.

Sara has been attending the parenting group for five weeks. In the first session, she described herself as 'a very bad mother' but in the subsequent weeks she has become less critical of herself as a mother. In this sixth week, she describes an incident in which she is angry with her children and expresses a desire to change.

Director: *You want to do something different with your kids*.
Sara: *Yes, I don't like what I've been doing*.

I make an assessment that Sara would be a suitable protagonist as she is demonstrating that she is willing to be seen while feeling vulnerable. She stays in relationship to me, maintains eye contact with me and the group and answers questions. She is a willing adventurer.

Director: *How about we have a look at this scene?*

Together, Sara and I step onto the warm up step.

Sara: *I don't want to do this anymore. … It's very hard to look at it.*

I notice that Sara is having a physical experience, looking down at the floor and withdrawing into herself. She has warmed up to the role of the ashamed revealer. At this point, I decide that it is necessary to build Sara up, to focus on her progressive functioning, to normalise her experience and to reduce her sense of isolation. I encourage group members to let her know that she is not alone here, that they all share these experiences as mothers and that they do not see her as 'mad or bad'. This is a significant piece of work for Sara and the whole group. With the other women's support, Sara has become more stable. She looks at one of the group members and warms up again to the role of the willing adventurer.

Sara: *I can keep going with this*.

My aim is to establish a place for the protagonist to have a positive experience of herself in relation to visibility in the group, and to develop new functioning as she warms up. My work as a director is done primarily through doubling as, given their own difficulties in warming up, the group members are typically unable to sustain auxiliary roles. Clayton (1992:84) describes the effect of doubling in such situations: "When a protagonist requires building up a double may be able to confirm a protagonist in their adequate functioning just by their physical presence. Confirmation may also occur through the double expressing themselves with the same words, emotions and actions as the protagonist. The protagonist immediately hears their own expression mirrored back to them, is pleased with what they are hearing and with what they themselves have just said, and breaks an old pattern of doubting their expression and trying to undo it. Thus, the double can be a powerful force for good through bringing about in individuals a confident and flowing expressiveness".

Sara proceeds to share her story with the group members. She separated from her husband seven months ago and is now struggling to parent on her own. Her husband has been critical of her parenting and Sara also feels guilty about the effect of the separation on her two daughters, Hannah, aged four, and Georgina, aged seven. Sara experiences Hannah as 'going against her' and Georgina as 'the good girl' who does as she is told. The girls have been in the care of their father for the previous five days and Sara intends to take them on a fun outing 'to compensate'. However, in the car park of the local mall, it is no longer fun as Hannah, her 'evil and defiant child' is refusing to get out of the car. Sara starts shaking and roughly pulling Hannah out of her car seat, at which point the child begins to scream. I ask Sara to set out this scene, choosing auxiliaries to enact the roles of herself and her children. She instructs the auxiliaries regarding what they are to say and do, and I coach them to accurately embody the roles and the role relationships. As the auxiliaries enact the scene, Sara walks around the warm up step and observes the action without taking part in it as yet. I double her, affirming her efforts to stay connected with herself and the group members from the warm up step.

Director as double: *I can keep breathing as I watch this.*
Sara: *Yes, I can.*
Director as double: *I can look at Mary* (a group member) *and she is smiling at me*.
Sara: *I like that*.
Director as double: *I can watch myself in this scene and not be critical of myself.*
Sara: *Yes. I don't seem to feel angry here. I am feeling sad*.

Sara looks down at her feet and takes a big breath. She looks at the auxiliary playing the role of Sara.

Sara: *I wish we were a family and we are not. Their dad and I are separated.*

Tears roll down Sara's cheeks. I continue to double her, and she reveals that she is trying to play happy families and pretend that she does not feel sad about the separation.

Sara: *I feel a failure as a parent. Hannah won't do as she is told. I have carefully planned this outing to be a happy one.*

Sara can more easily warm up to her spontaneity and creativity while on the warm up level of the stage, as it provides distance between herself and any over-whelming action. Standing there on the warm up step, with me as her double, she takes time to appreciate her own warm up. She feels the despair of the lost dream of happy family life and understands the reality of her predicament as a single mother. She realises that she, and not her daughter, is creating the conflict. As a result, she is freed from inner conflict and develops the role of the compassionate self-observer.

Thus far, Sara has been observing the enactment from the warm up step. At this point though, the auxiliary enacting Sara the sole parent becomes angry and pulls Hannah roughly from the car seat. Sara spontaneously steps from the warm up space onto the action level of the stage. As a compassionate companion, she walks over to Sara the sole parent, gently places her hand on her back and talks to her.

Sara: *Take a breath. … Go home. The girls are worn out and need quiet time. Actually, you are feeling very sad about the separation and taking your frustration about this out on Hannah. She is not being evil. Hannah is tired and sad too.*

The compassionate companion Sara is moved to tears, and the auxiliary playing Sara the sole parent is deeply relieved and moved. The auxiliaries playing the roles of her daughters visibly relax in their seats. We close the enactment there. During the sharing, one group member expresses the realisation that in her moments of anger, her children are not 'being naughty'. They are just 'being children' and it is her stress that is causing her to feel angry with them. There are murmurs of acknowledgement from other group members. Another participant shares her hope that, in seeing Sara 'do something different', she might change too. I feel satisfied with the depth of sharing. It is a pivotal moment when a parent can take responsibility for their angry reaction to their child, as it means they no longer blame the child and begin to realise that they can make a change in the situation by changing their own behaviour.

On reflection, my particular purpose had been to address deficits in the protagonist's warming up process and her insights, as she walked around the warm up step, achieved this goal. On the warm up level, removed from the action, she was able to view the system from a different vantage point, which assisted her to isolate particular aspects that were affecting her. The protagonist was able to gather her resources, develop her capacity to observe and choose, notice the cause of her reactivity and distinguish between that and adrenalin driven interaction. With this new perspective, she was able to develop the idea that she had a choice about what she warmed up to, that it was possible for her to be a healthy functioning person and to be lovingly companioned and resourced as she faced into distressing parenting situations. Having developed a readiness for action, the protagonist then stepped spontaneously from the warm up step, the level of conception and growth, onto the action level of the stage which, according to Moreno, relates to action and completion.

The Balcony

The balcony is the fourth level of Moreno's psychodrama stage, the level of messiahs and heroes. Standing on the balcony, above the three other levels,

the protagonist can experience expansion, the universe, life beyond the ordinary, and gain a new perspective. The use of the balcony is illustrated below with Jane, a member of the parenting group.

Jane explains that she wants to become a calmer mother and stop screaming at her five children when they are fighting. Her husband works long hours and her confidence tends to evaporate under the weight of lone parenting. She describes moments when she feels herself becoming ineffective and withdrawn from her children, 'smaller and smaller as a person'. We set out one such scene, in which a conflict is occurring between the children in the kitchen at dinner time. We are working in a small venue and I remark to Jane that the stage area is limited. She comments that this small space is relevant to the situation because her kitchen seems very cramped when she is trying to prepare dinner and her five children are involved in a conflict. In the scene, Jane is coping by concentrating on peeling the potatoes rather than relating directly to her children. I ask her to rate herself on a tension scale, where ten is the highest indicator of anger or distress. She says she is on eight, 'heading towards ten'.

I make an assessment that Jane could benefit from an experience of expansion to increase her effectiveness as a mother. When we take on larger than life roles, Superman or a heavenly creature, we free ourselves up and warm up to a wider range of functioning than we imagine is available to us as mere humans. I therefore direct Jane to stand on a chair, in Morenian terms the balcony level of the psychodrama stage, and take up the role of someone larger than life. I hope that this level of 'super-human being' will assist Jane to gain a new view of her parenting abilities. She steps up onto the balcony and spreads her arms like the wings of an angel.

Director: *You look like an angel*.
Jane: (smiling) *Oh yeah*.

I interview Jane the angel to assist her to warm up to feeling super human and having a 'heavenly view' from the balcony regarding Jane down below in the kitchen. I direct the angel to address the auxiliary enacting that role, and the following interaction develops through role reversal.

Jane as angel: (taking a big breath and looking down) *Jane, hello*.
Jane: Looks up at the angel.
Jane as angel: *Take a breath. You are not alone. I am here. You can do this*.
Jane: (taking a breath) *I feel so alone and hopeless with my children*.
Jane as angel: *I am here. You can do this*.
Jane: *I like you being there. What can I do?*
Jane as angel: *Start with breathing…*

In the sharing, women identify their own feelings of powerlessness when

their children are fighting. Many of them warm up to imagining a super-hero who swoops in at dinner time and encourages them to keep 'being the parent'. Superman is a favourite. In a subsequent group session, Jane reports that she has been experimenting with stepping up onto a chair and looking down 'from the balcony' when her children are fighting. She says that this gives her immediate distance and from that position, she is able to remind herself to breathe. She notices a reduction in tension and reactivity and is able to centre herself, which allows her to take a more objective look at the situation and generate more ideas about a calm intervention. She is having some success with these interventions and feels more satisfied as the mature adult in the family.

The balcony is the level of messiahs and heroes and I am delighted that its use in the enactment produced a 'super-individual', in this case in the form of an angel. Looking down on the scene, the protagonist was elevated from her ordinary life and liberated from feeling small and powerless. In this enactment and subsequently, her super-individual helps her to focus on the whole system and begin to see possibilities, which in turn assists her to become more expanded, engaged and confident. She is able to gain a different view of herself and feel more capable as a person and as a mother. Standing on the balcony, the fourth level of the Morenian stage, a person is able to expand, experience the universe, life beyond the ordinary, and gain a new perspective on their life.

Conclusion

Many psychodrama practitioners and group leaders do not have the luxury of an actual psychodrama stage. However, we can produce an enlivening experience for psychodrama participants by defining the available space as closely as possible to Moreno's original design for the psychodrama stage with its four levels, the audience, the warm-up step, the action space and the balcony, which mirror the stages of a protagonist's warming up process. As I have written this paper, I have become increasingly aware of the usefulness of holding this design in mind. The director is influenced by their understanding of the way in which Moreno used the psychodrama stage to bring to life the many dimensions of a person's life, often not visible or explored in everyday living. Meanwhile, an appreciation of the stage as an instrument of change requires a willingness to be experimental, to improvise resources at hand, to create various levels and dimensions of the stage, and to play with the use of space, height and depth and observe the effect. The stage that we create enhances our spontaneity as directors and warms up the protagonist, auxiliaries and audience to the work. We can make the most of action cues, work with increasing warm up and notice the protagonist's readiness to move from the audience, to the warm up step, to centre stage. With this awareness, a director embraces not only the design of the

psychodrama stage but also the design of psychodrama as a dramatic method that can assist people to become the creators of their own lives.

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Cushla Clark has been passionate about the psychodrama method for 20 years. She is inspired by Moreno's psychodrama stage and the way in which it can enhance the therapeutic experience, which she focused on in her AANZPA thesis, Liberation via The Stage. Cushla is a psychodramatist living a peaceful country life north of Auckland where she loves baking, tending to her many heritage roses, swimming at the beautiful local beaches, and leading psychodrama groups for personal development.

The Thinking Heart, The Loving Mind

The Application of Psychodrama in Therapeutic Reunification Work with Maltreated and Neglected Infants and their Parents

Patricia O'Rourke

Abstract
In this article, Patricia O'Rourke describes the way in which she applies psychodrama in her therapeutic reunification work with parents and babies in the child protection system in Australia. The paper was developed from a keynote address delivered to the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA) Conference in Brisbane in January 2019.

Key Words
babies, child protection, infant, Moreno, parents, psychodrama, therapeutic reunification

Introduction

The thinking heart, the loving mind… I love this image. It emerged as I was reflecting with a colleague on what it is that connects the various areas of my work. The first part, 'the thinking heart', is the title of not one but two books. The first is a book of delightful uncomplicated poems by a South Australian, Jenny Joseph, regarding her everyday life after the second world war, while the second is by child psychotherapist Anne Alvarez, whose work, mainly with autistic children, is exquisite and quietly revolutionary.

This image of a thinking heart and a loving mind shines a light on what I first warmed up to in psychodrama, that has since deepened and grown over time. Psychodrama is essentially an applied method. We all do this – integrate psychodrama into how we work in the various contexts where we work. This paper is about how I apply psychodrama when working in the area of parents and babies, where those babies have been harmed by their parents. And it is a thinking heart and a loving mind that I work to develop both in myself, and in my colleagues, when doing this work.

I began my professional work as a teacher, and then moved into the areas of child psychotherapy, counselling, psychotherapy and psychodrama.

Over this time, I worked out that whoever you are working with therapeutically, however old they are, at heart you are working relationally with the child or baby in them. In Morenian terms, this means relating in some form to their original social and cultural atom. I began to wonder about moving from this imagined baby to intervening early with the actual baby and the mother-baby relationship. For the last 20 years, I have focussed on working with parents and their babies, and with other professionals working in this area. Psychodrama underpins and profoundly informs this work.

The application of psychodrama with a thinking heart and a loving mind requires us to create relationships, nurture them and stay real in them. Relationship is not only what I work with, but also it is what has enabled me to do the work. Psychodrama is an embodied training where we learn to work within the tele of a relationship and with warm up. We do not just learn a method. We experience it in relationship with other real people having real experiences. 'Relationship' – creating relationship, being in relationship, sustaining relationship – is the heart of psychodrama and it is the heart of all my work.

This paper is a relationship – a relationship between me the writer and you the reader. I will write about what I do, and I am counting on this sparking your generous receptivity, your alive imagination as we encounter those elements we have in common – in your work and in my work – and as in any relationship, this will enlarge our experience and I hope create something more. We are certainly living in a world that needs more relationship, more connection. One in ten Australians are prescribed antidepressants. The World Health Organisation has recognised for years that depressed and anxious people are human beings with unmet needs for belonging, purpose, meaning and connection. They are not crazy, or machines with broken parts. This applies to my work with parents and infants in the child protection system.

> *There's no such thing as a baby, only a baby and someone…*
>
> Donald Winnicott (1964)

All children who enter the child protection system need a therapeutic response because they have all suffered harm. While harm is a disaster for any child, this is especially so for infants. Infants are heavily reliant on the relationship with their primary care-giver for the rapid structural development of their brains, which then affects all areas of their ongoing functioning and development (Zeanah & Zeanah, 2009). We wanted to create a service that could intervene early to make timely, long-term decisions for vulnerable babies who had already been harmed and were often

'bouncing' in and out of care[1]. At this critical developmental period, babies need sensitive responsive consistent care because it is through repeated interactions that they learn to 'be in relationship'. In 2011, we received funding to set up the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service, which is a partnership between state child protection and health services.

Working in the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service

I co-ordinate the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service (ITRS). We work with babies who have been removed from their parents because they have been maltreated, neglected or are at high risk of this occurring. We assess suitability for reunification with biological parents based on assessment of their parenting capacity. Where reunification may be possible within the infant's developmental timeframe, we provide intensive weekly therapy with parent and baby. Where timely reunification is not possible, we support long term planning and decision-making for the infant and sometimes provide therapeutic intervention with kinship and foster carers to help them understand and parent these disturbed babies. The ITRS also works intensively at a systems level to support child protection and other services to provide a wrap-around service for these at-risk families.

> *The greatest protection for a baby is to be held in the mind and heart of a sensitively attuned other…*
>
> John Bowlby (1988)

This is not easy work. Just being with these parents and their babies is hard. These are parents who have harmed their infants or allowed them to be harmed. They do not want to be there. They do not want to face up to what they have done or even think about it. They do not want to go anywhere near the psychic pain that it will throw up if they do think, let alone feel, about what has happened.

We know that intense emotional states in attachment relationships, whether they are related to passion, love or feeling threatened, can deactivate people's abilities to mentalise, that is, to understand their own and other peoples' mental states and so understand why other people behave in certain ways (Fonagy et al., 1991). Because of their own history, maltreating parents often struggle to recognise their own feelings, to read another person's intentions and/or make emotional sense of what is happening. They have usually developed maladaptive ways of thinking and feeling, especially when stressed. They find it stressful to be in relationship – with a

1 Infant vulnerability arises from infants' physical fragility, dependence on others for survival, under developed verbal communication and their social invisibility. The first 1,000 days (conception to two years old) is a critical period in a child's development. Due to the critical nature of this development phase and the importance of interactions, experiences of abuse and neglect can have significant impacts upon the child's physical growth and psychological development (Moore et al., 2017)

partner, a baby or a therapist. Perhaps the most difficult factor is that although they crave relationship, they also fear it to the point of rejecting it whenever they sense it on the horizon. And they reject relationship in any number of ways, most of which are out of their awareness or control. They will lie, pretend, flatter, have a 'spit' and leave, rage, sneer, anything to try and 'throw the therapist off'.

And then there is also a baby in the room. The desperately loved baby who 'falls out' of the parent's mind when that parent has to think about something stressful or feels vaguely under threat of connection in a real relationship, of being seen or receiving empathy from the therapist. At these times, the infant feels the disturbance in the room, from the parent or the therapist or both, but cannot make sense of it and becomes agitated. The baby squirms, spits up, shrieks or cries to be picked up, only to wriggle to be put down. Having just seen their parent for the first time in days, some infants arrive only to fall immediately asleep. And they may simply sleep, session after session. Here are one therapist's brief descriptions of her first meeting with three babies arriving for therapy.

> *This baby does not look up. He stares at the floor, at the toy his mother has shoved towards him. He looks defeated.*
>
> *At first it seemed that the pram was empty, but no, there was a small lump under the blanket attached to an even smaller scrunched up face dwarfed by a hot pink headband with a lacy flower on it.*
>
> *This one has thin blondish hair, almost shoulder length, thin little arms like hollow tubes. Baggy little pants, always pink or purple, hanging off bony little hips. Hollow children, always small, pale, like fish you can see through, starved on every level.*

As you can see, it is sometimes hard to even look at the infant. However, in our service we have learnt to keep our focus firmly on that infant. Sometimes we talk to the baby but more often we talk 'for the baby'. In psychodrama terms we double the baby, which shines a light on what is happening for them and provides them with the embodied experience of being seen, of 'being held in mind'. 'Good enough' (Winnicott, 1965) parents do this naturally. The parents in our service have never had 'good enough' parenting themselves. Sometimes they have been brought up in out-of-home-care and this, often coupled with the trifecta of homelessness, family violence and substance abuse, means that they are seriously compromised and at risk. Our job is to provide this parent, over and over again, with the experience they have not had: a loving mind and a thinking heart willing to be with them, to feel and think with them, to try and see the world as they see it, to

'hang in' and help them make sense of their own and other people's emotional states and behaviour. The aim is that they eventually provide this same experience for their infant, for at least enough of the time.

> *Attachment and intersubjectivity make up the double helix of psychological birth, it's how the baby grows a mind within the affective bond that develops between them and their primary care-giver…*
>
> Dan Hughes (2004)

We use the parent and infant relationship as the portal of entry to think about and provide social and cultural atom repair. We work to develop the beginnings of reflective function, to help our clients think and feel about their baby while at the same time experiencing their own thoughts and feelings. It is about the development of a new warm up, a new role system. These theories are helpful, but we also need to hold different perspectives, to look through multiple lenses. We are dealing with complexity and chaos, and not all parent infant reunification is successful.

We are in there with the baby, seeing them, talking for them, helping their parent see them and be with them in brief moments. This means that the baby will have a different parenting experience to the hopelessly inadequate experience of their parents. We give the parent a new experience to set up a new template for relationship. We warm up to being fully present with the parent and the baby in the moment, to provide a steady heartbeat that they can feel and respond to over time. Sometimes a parent will slowly, very slowly, begin to trust us, trust our intentions and maybe for the first time since they themselves were infants feel themselves again in their bodies, with their feelings and mind responding to us, momentarily, in relationship. At the heart of the work is relationship, creating relationship, nurturing relationship and staying real in relationship. It takes a long time and it is complex and difficult, as you will see in the following illustration with Sally and Jak.

Sally and Jak

Jak is three months old when his mother Sally first presents him at the hospital with an inflicted injury. His parents' lives are characterised by substance abuse and extreme domestic violence, and the denial, lying and terror that these encompass. Sally, now drug free for three years and separated from Jak's father, has her younger children living with her in her own home, with everyday contact with her older child. All of the children 'have had it rough' and for Sally, there is 'always a difficulty'.

During the last few months of therapy, Sally has focused on her relationship with Jak. He has been in multiple out-of-home-care placements for over a year and she is worried about his aggression and inability to share

her with the other children. She is afraid 'he's like his dad' and wants me to 'fix him'. I do not want to reinforce the idea to Jak that he is irreparably damaged. He is doing well at the childcare centre, where he is very protective of his little sister whom he bites viciously at home. The problem appears to be not so much in Jak, as in his relationship with his mother. I decide to meet with Sally on her own to focus on their relationship. Over a few sessions, we set out her social and cultural atom, and through concretisation, doubling and a little mirroring, Sally realises that, "Jak is just like me. He's going to have my life! Or his father's!"

Through previous doubling and mirroring and our reflecting together, Sally is aware that when she begins to feel intensely she yawns and becomes 'lost', in other words, she loses her capacity to mentalise. In this session, she remains present, warms up to her social and cultural atom and finally allows herself to feel intensely, not for long, but for long enough. We are both delighted. But the following week Sally phones to say that she is sick, and the next week she fails to keep her appointment. When I do not hear from her, small doubts creep in. Has she 'fallen off the wagon'? Is she 'back on the meth'? Has she taken up sex work again? I wait, then phone and leave a message for her. Still I hear nothing.

Then Sally phones the following week to tell me that she is, "getting ready for Christmas, doing the house" and cannot attend her appointment. Although I feel like shouting at her, "I can't keep seeing you forever! Jak can't wait!", I know that this would recreate her childhood experience of shame and blame. So, I say nothing. Sally says, "I saw my corrections officer for the last time last week. Four years I've been checking in. She told me that I'm one of her most successful clients in 15 years! Off the dope. Out of the DV. No more charges. All my kids (living with me)". I register Sally's pride. And then she says in a small voice, "You're not going to say you're not going to see me anymore?" The pain of it, because I had been thinking exactly that. I hear the despairing resignation in her voice. We make another appointment.

I saw Sally again weeks later. Over the Christmas break I had thought about her, role reversed with her and realised her sense of aloneness in a world that often does not make sense to her. It occurred to me that she may be presenting 'the problem of Jak' because she does not want to lose our relationship. I think of the spirit of psychodrama, its authenticity and abundance and generosity. I remember watching Max Clayton dive down into himself again, in a long drama with a protagonist who was just 'not getting it', searching within himself for a new response. I witnessed Max doing this over and over again, never giving up on himself or another. Although I feel cautious regarding the need for boundaries in therapeutic work, I decide to tell Sally that I am here for her, anytime. She is in my life now and has been since I accompanied her to court because she had no one else to be with her. If the court had sent her to prison, who would tell her

children why she had not returned home?

Sally arrives, not in her usual bouncy state but very distressed. All the hurt about her family of origin pours out, then the stories of 'getting drunk', becoming angry with her children and finally feeling terrible because she has enacted those old familiar roles learnt in her family of origin. However, she goes on to say, "At least Maggie was there for them and I went back the next day and I apologised to the kids. I said it was my fault. I was hurting and that's why I said those (angry) things". She explains that she had felt again the desperate abandonment that emerges every year at Christmas when, despite the huge changes she has made in her life, her family make no effort to see her or the children. Indeed, her mother cannot even remember where she lives. She cries and says, "It hurts so much". Later, Sally reflects that this is the third Christmas that her family has not acknowledged her and now, drug-free, she cannot 'medicate the pain away'. Finally, she laughs and says, "You know what? It was better when I didn't feel".

Sally had met Maggie in a pilot group that we ran at ITRS and they are now strong supports for each other. That group was one crazy ride – nine clients, eight women and one man – a naïve young man who learnt a lot in that group about women and life. All but one of those parents was successfully reunified with their baby, when we had not been very hopeful about most of them. In the group, they were able to share their experiences, including having their children removed from their care. They were able to have this experience normalised, to practise 'being in relationship' and to receive small doses of doubling and mirroring. However, there are times when reunification is not possible, as the following story of Alisha and Tarni illustrates. These situations, too, need a thinking heart and a loving mind.

Alisha and Tarni

Alisha presents with Tarni. Alisha is 17 and this is her second baby – both to the same father. Alisha has 8 half siblings – no full siblings. She has no relationship with either of her parents and cared for her mother's younger children from the time she could walk until she left home at 14 to live with her boyfriend and his family, although they too were troubled by domestic violence. Tarni was taken into care when she was born. She lives with a big-hearted foster-mother who also has Alisha's older baby. The foster-mother manages a boundaried, positive relationship with Alisha which is no small feat. Tarni is a bonny little four-month-old.

Alisha presents like the young teenager she is, with her black eyes and green hair. She fronted up to our first therapy session with a real black eye and bruised face. "I got jumped by two girls in the city", she tells me smiling. "It was sort of my fault." I am reeling. It is her brave cheerfulness that is so brittle that I feel if I breathe out too heavily she might shatter. Alisha teases Tarni gently and she responds smiling. Alisha allows herself to be besotted. I

remember thinking hopefully that at least we have a healthy baby going for us here.

It is not enough as it turns out. Over the next few months we can not manage Alisha's ambivalence – which is, tragically in this case, actually a small sign of health. I wonder if she always at some level knew she could not do it. This ambivalence meant that at critical moments, she reverted back to binge drinking and living dangerously on the street, finally waking up next to her drug-using friend, dead beside her. He had died overnight from an accidental overdose. From then on – the work was to keep Alisha alive.

Tarni could not wait any longer for a safe home, a secure base, the continuity of care provided by a long-term, good-enough, growing-up home that will allow her 'to go on being', growing into herself as she is doubled and mirrored and learns eventually to role reverse – a thing her birth mother, Alisha, never had.

Ongoing Challenges

Working in the reunification space is fraught with unknowns and complexities. We strive to keep a thinking heart and a loving mind. However, the level of vulnerability in us and in our clients is often intolerable. This is how one of our therapists describes it:

> *It's the feelings that arise, the thinking that is lost. It's the wide-eyed silence of unheld babies that invades the room. You have to be there, tolerate it. You can't run, though you want to. You need to know what it is, in you, and in them, that has you running. The unbearable presents itself over and over, asking to be held.*

We use the encounter in the therapeutic relationship, the tele in the 'here and now', to help parents learn to be with their babies and the babies to be able to take them in. And our clients accept nothing less than a **real encounter.** If they get any sense that we are not being real and authentic with them they will walk out, and they won't come back. You cannot be anyone but yourself when you are with them.

> *The encounter is a telic phenomenon. The fundamental process of tele is reciprocity – reciprocity of attraction, reciprocity of rejection, reciprocity of excitation, reciprocity of inhibition, reciprocity of indifference, reciprocity of distortion… A meeting of two: eye to eye, face to face…*
>
> Jacob Moreno (1969)

The corner stone of our work at the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service is a willingness to return and hold oneself in the encounter, those 'moments

of meeting' (Boston Change Process Study Group, 2010). 'Being with', providing the experience of relationship, being one's self in relationship, and developing the capacity to think and feel in relationship – this is what we work to create in ourselves and our clients. It is a thinking heart and a loving mind that helps us bear the 'unbearable' and make sense, in the moment, of our experience – the babies, the parents, and us.

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Patricia O'Rourke, PhD, is a psychodramatist, educator and child psychotherapist. She has a special interest in preventative work with infants and their families, child protection, reflective supervision and group work. She coordinates the Infant Therapeutic Reunification Service in the Women's and Children's Hospital in South Australia, is a Senior Lecturer in the Paediatric Mental Health Training Unit at Adelaide University, and provides supervision and training in private practice. Patricia can be contacted at <patriciaor@pxorourke.com>.

The Horse as Auxiliary for Life

Natural Horsemanship, Psychodrama and Leadership Development

Kate Tapley

Abstract
Natural horsewoman and psychodrama trainee Kate Tapley draws our attention to the horse as an auxiliary for life. Through her work training riders in natural horsemanship from a psychodramatic perspective, she has noticed that horses, unerring sentients that they are, act as auxiliaries for human beings, mirroring their inner often unconscious experience with immediacy and authenticity, and following only those riders who prove themselves willing to enter their here and now world of being-ness and presence, as 'true leaders'. This article presents the application of this approach during a natural horsemanship workshop and the positive outcomes in terms of leadership development, healing and wholeness.

Key Words
auxiliary, healing, horse, human development, leadership, Moreno, natural horsemanship, psychodrama

Introduction

I am Kate Tapley, a natural horsewoman with a lifetime of dedication to the healing arts, especially psychodrama. Working with the partnerships between people and horses from a psychodramatic perspective in my natural horsemanship business, I have long pondered the therapeutic qualities of the horse. These qualities become more apparent the more we enter the horse's world and communicate with it using its own visceral language. In particular, I have observed at close range the horse's effectiveness for leadership development, indeed for healing and holistic human development. This is because the horse, fully embodied and living in the moment, mirrors our inner emotions, our truth, with immediacy and authenticity, even when we are unaware of that truth ourselves. Its language is thus threatening to humans in a similar way that unconditional love is, or trusting in the unknown. Using Morenian language, we could say that horses act as extraordinary auxiliaries for human beings, assisting them to connect to their unconscious experience, their 'true selves'. In many years of

teaching natural horsemanship using psychodramatic principles and practices, I have noticed that, as riders are immersed in the immediacy of their 'horse auxiliary' and become proficient in its language, they develop roles such as the courageous leader, the intrepid adventurer and the open learner. This development permeates lives, leading the person towards leadership, healing and wholeness.

In 2016, I accepted an invitation to lead a natural horsemanship workshop, known as a clinic in the horse world, for a small riding group in Hanmer Springs, Aotearoa New Zealand. Five women riders attended and we worked together one day each week for three weeks. In this article, I describe the ways in which I combined the philosophy of natural horsemanship and a psychodramatic perspective to assist the riders to embrace the horses' auxiliary functioning. The aim of the workshop was to develop a positive relationship between them and their horses, and thus promote progressive role development and leadership capacity. The contents of the article mirror for me the vision and values that are often invisible but which I hold dear when I do this work, specifically the values of cooperation, connection, courage and communication.

The Group Warm Up

I began the workshop with a director-directed warm up. I invited the women, four aged over 50 and the fifth in her mid-20s, to express their hopes for themselves and their horses, and as they did so I quickly noticed the emergence of several themes. The four older riders were concerned to provide themselves with more safety, to develop greater confidence and to rediscover the freedom that they had experienced with their horses in earlier times. However, the younger rider was motivated to increase her expectations of her horse. I was aware of the two subgroups forming, identified by differences in age, developmental stage and purpose, and wondered if this might be particularly significant or disturbing for the younger rider. I was reminded of the notion that the group will adopt the norms of relating that are modelled by the leader. I trusted this to be the case and became mindful of my style, consciously modelling safety and liveliness so that such norms might be adopted by the participants. I also listened respectfully, responded enthusiastically and was mindful to capture and rejoice in the small brave items that the group members brought forward, again with an eye to the emergence of progressive group norms.

I then moved on to deepen the warm up of the group members. I invited them to share their 'horse journeys', how it was that they found themselves at this workshop. Although the participants revealed diverse paths and varied experiences with horses, their motivations were similar. These riders were united by a lifelong love of the horse. This unity of purpose assisted the group members to warm up to one another, a warm up that increased as

I invited each woman to indicate who of the other participants was already known to her and to appreciate that these old links would be refreshed in this new situation. This sociometric way of working assisted the riders to 'arrive', in other words to warm up and bring their presence more fully into the group. I also shared my horse story, which helped me to 'arrive'. I indicated that I would endeavour to be fully present and involved with these riders and their horses, with a view to fulfilling their hopes for the clinic.

The Horses' Warm Up

Having assisted the participants to enter their experience more fully, I invited them to consider the horse's warm up in relationship to the rider. Horses present human beings with a paradox, their frightening strength and unpredictability juxtaposed uneasily alongside their fragility and ability to surrender to us in each moment. The species of horse is thought to be 60 million years old, and the long fight for survival as a prey animal has honed sensitivities, enabling the horse to discern the energy of a predator from far away. Horses are thus unerring sentients, embodied, highly sensitive to energy and presence, living in the moment, impeccably true to themselves and unable to lie. My colleague, Jo Gaul, and I named this language of body and being the visceral language, all immediacy, energy, rhythm, presence, focus, feel, strength and stillness. This horse language, or equus, is counter intuitive to human beings and often experienced by them as 'unnatural'.

The cornerstone of natural horsemanship is that a rider comes to terms with this sense of unnaturalness and learns to communicate with her horse using the horse's language, thus presenting herself to her horse as an effective authentic leader who can be trusted. I normalised the tussle that immediately begins between the rider's brain and body as she learns this new visceral language. The brain, concerned to keep the person safe by tightening up, becoming defensive, holding on and maintaining control, will not at first trust the horse's language. When a rider reverts to these familiar defensive styles of behaviour, the horse becomes worried and responds defensively or ceases to be interested and seeks out a more reliable 'herd leader' elsewhere. In this sense, the horse acts as an authentic auxiliary for its rider. The action phase of the workshop, described next, assisted the riders to experience their horse's visceral language and embrace its auxiliary functioning without defensiveness, and as a result develop their leadership capacities.

The Action

The action was designed to immerse the riders in the immediacy of the horse and become proficient in its visceral language, with the broader goal of progressive leadership development, healing and wholeness. The first

phase of the action involved the psychodramatic technique of role reversal when the threat of a real horse was removed. I invited the group members to pair up, one designated as the 'horse' and the other as the 'rider', with the pairs exchanging roles at halftime. Those playing riders held reins tied to a three foot stick, which the horse auxiliaries held with two fingers to emulate the sensitivity a horse is likely to feel on the face when wearing a natural halter. I directed the riders to use rhythm, focus, feel and smoothness in their instructions to the horses. Meanwhile, I encouraged the horses to be open willing learners and to note the effects of the riders' actions on them, what worked and what did not work. I also instructed them to provide the riders with a role test by becoming somewhat 'stroppy', and coached the riders to hold their rhythm and focus, to resist the invitation to become impatient and to note their tendencies in the face of this challenge. At the close of this role reversal activity, the group members processed their discoveries. In terms of the horses' experience, they identified the offensiveness of being pulled by the reins, the way in which a very small feel of the reins is adequate, and the significant way in which contact with the reins provides confidence while loose reins produces directionless. The group members also reflected on the resistance the horse had to a rider's energy when that energy became uncommunicative, serving the rider's defences rather than communicating with the horse. This happened when a horse did not listen at first or went unexpectedly fast, and the rider's fear and need for control took over rather than the maintenance of rhythm and feel. The riders' reflections focused on the significant intimacy of the relationship between horse and rider, and the way in which the fun of the activity 'assisted with everything'.

The second phase of the action, again aimed at assisting the participants to embrace the horse's auxiliary functioning and become proficient in its visceral language, saw the riders immersed in the immediacy of real horses. We began with some manoeuvres on the ground, or games as they are called in the natural horsemanship world, and immediately the riders' bodily defensiveness manifested itself. Here was the beginning of the deeper work of leadership development. I normalised this habitual defensiveness, explaining that body language is unconscious until it is observed and mirrored: "We can't help it. The brain will automatically want to fight the horse, control the horse, manipulate the horse, force the horse. But horses are forgiving animals, responding or not to the clumsy first steps of their riders". In one manoeuvre, I demonstrated the use of focus, feel and rhythmic movement to move the horse out of its rider's personal space. I explained that this hierarchical claiming of personal space demonstrates leadership in the horse world. When one horse subtly pushed his shoulder into me as I claimed my personal space from him, I described this as a small but shrewd test of my leadership. I demonstrated

ways in which to resist this challenge, to persist at all costs in asking the horse to move off my space and then reward him by standing beside him with my energy at a low level. I framed the work as leadership development, as the riders experienced the challenge of trusting that focus, feel and rhythmic movement alone would achieve this goal. Horses act as auxiliaries, seeking to know the reliability of our leadership by testing it out. We thus become as strong and effective as we need to be without hurting the horse. Indeed, when we work with a horse who is not respecting our leadership, we are putting ourselves at risk.

The action portion of the workshop continued on the theme of leadership development. I taught the group ways in which to read their horses' responses, each horse expressing itself differently. I introduced new games for the riders, aimed once more at asking the horses to give up their defences and become emotionally, mentally and physically more pliable and orientated towards human leadership. The activities included asking the horses to bend their bodies while standing still, to move their hind quarters around, to move their forequarters, to walk in a circle, to walk sideways. These endeavours also constituted 'pre-flight checks' by assessing the horse's mood in terms of the safety of mounting. Thus the riders entered into a parallel process with their horses, trying out new ways of being as they required those new ways of being from their horses. They developed confidence, created new habits and celebrated struggles and achievements. It was important to continually normalise the ways in which the horse acts as an auxiliary by mirroring our fears and showing us up in our leadership difficulties. In this regard the horses were wonderfully expressive, expertly manifesting the riders' inner conflicts and defensive styles, but also their developing confidence, moment by moment. The riders learnt to understand the horse's visceral language, its immediacy, in a way that enabled the horses to join them in these developments. Truly, 'the horse was growing their human' and 'the human was growing their horse'.

I also entered into a parallel process with the group as I encouraged myself to lead, celebrate and learn from the newness of the experience. I observed, doubled and mirrored difficulties and developments as they emerged. Individual questions became teaching moments for everyone, whereby I demonstrated adequate leadership with horses. I modelled and encouraged the group norm that 'the more we get stuck, the more we all learn', 'with nowhere to hide in the group, we are all in this together'. The more we embrace that empty space and drop our ego, the more effective leaders and human beings we become. There were many significant moments in the work of this group. One moment, involving Jess and her horse Jego, was pivotal.

A Pivotal Moment in the Group: Jess and Jego

Jego is a young, willing, open and sensitive horse, bred in the wild, and Jess is his rider. Jess is puzzled by Jego's refusal to allow her to move around to his side for a sideways walking game. It becomes apparent that Jess is not trusting her horse to 'get it'. Instead of using focus, feel and rhythm she is pushing him, much as a parent yells at a child to go to bed when they are not resistant to going to bed at all, but no doubt soon will be. As with many riders, including me, Jess has been taught the mainstream style of horse management, which requires the rider to be the boss, to force the horse to follow instructions and do what it is told. I suspect that Jego is functioning as an 'expert auxiliary' for Jess, and invite her to look into his eye and say what she sees there.

Jess: *He looks worried.*
Kate: (persevering) *Yes. Worried about what, do you think?*
Jess: *Me.*
Kate: *Right. Why would he be worried about you?*
Jess: *I am not sure.*
Kate: *Ok. Let's start over. First we will quell the worry in your horse. Go into his side and rub him with your jaw soft and your abdomen soft. Let it be soothing for you too. Make it a dance.*

Jess follows the direction.

Kate: *What is Jego's eye telling us now?*
Jess: *He is blinking and his head is lower and he is standing with me.*
Kate: (as double) *Yes. You have made yourself more trustworthy and not so worrisome to him now. He can hear you from here. This is a good place to ask him to move sideways.*

Jess's body immediately becomes tight and she uses force towards Jego again.

Kate: *I say stay with the dance. I'll show you.*

I enact the dance of soft focus, feel and rhythmical movement without bodily tension, and Jego moves.

Jess: *Ah! I am too much.*
Kate: *You are screaming at him and he is a horse who can hear a whisper. Try again.*

Jess approaches awkwardly, slows down and consciously uses her hand in a rhythmical fashion. Jego responds with a small movement. This is a pivotal moment. We are witnessing the emergence of a new role.

Kate: *Excellent. See the difference?*
Jess: *I've always been taught to 'make a horse' do something. I am way too much for Jego. He is so willing and gentle and sensitive.*

Tears well up in Jess at this moment of insight. She becomes humble and asks Jego's forgiveness. In a moment of sharing, I reassure Jess that the same was true for me.

Kate: *I have also wronged many a good horse for the same reasons.*

I encourage Jess to put her tears and vulnerability into her hand and ask Jego again to move sideways. The result is even better and we celebrate.

Kate: *There you go. You are with a horse who can heal your heart, the exact right horse for you.*

This drama was a critical moment in the workshop. As a sentient being, Jego mirrored Jess' inner experience of worry, performance anxiety, the need to 'get it right', even before Jess was aware of that experience herself. Through this mirroring, Jego 'taught' Jess to include vulnerability in her leadership, which enabled Jess to 'let go', to enter the present moment with her horse and in life. We can understand this dynamic interplay in terms of a role system. Jess began as a bossy boots in relation to Jego's anxious prey animal self-protector, her fearful avoider of failure to his fearful avoider of harm, a defended child to a worried compassionate lover. Gradually, Jess developed the role of the sensitive guide, the powerful vulnerable leader and in response, Jego became a willing follower, a more confident prey animal, the reassured horse in the light of an enlightened trustworthy human being. All the group members were visibly moved by the drama and I directed sharing and processing at the end of the session. The riders, including Jess, shared their experiences and insights and I employed the psychodramtaic techniques of doubling and mirroring to enhance their self-acceptance, self-awareness and leadership capacities.

Closure

As the three days progressed, the group members increasingly embraced the horse as auxiliary and developed their communication using its visceral language. They gradually became independent and self-motivated, managing their messy learning stages, developing their leadership and taking responsibility for their safety and self-corrections. I saw the development of roles such as the courageous leader, the sensitive coach, the intrepid adventurer, the free flyer, the trusting companion, the open learner and many more. There was laughter and rhythm all about me and I experienced a moment of completion, of success. Arrival! I looked around and saw confidence and communication, courageous riders using feel, focus and rhythm to lead their horses and happy willing horses following, their heads down and their bodies easy. With gratitude, I realised that we had exceeded our expectations. I was realising my leadership gifts as the riders were realising theirs, and I was filled up.

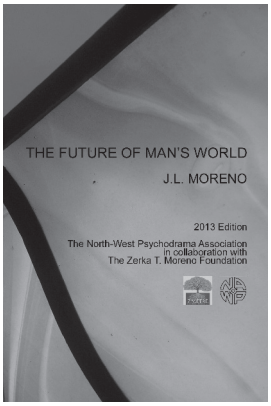
Conclusion

What are the implications of this work for psychodrama practice? Psychodrama encompasses the concept of the 'here and now', the present moment. Through the auxiliary function, and techniques such as doubling, mirroring and role reversal, a protagonist is assisted to 'live in the moment', warm up to spontaneity, arrive at a moment of insight or resolution and develop a progressive response. Horses can also be understood as auxiliaries, unerring in their ability to mirror human beings' inner, often unconscious, experience with immediacy and authenticity and follow only those who prove themselves willing to enter their world of the here and now. This viewpoint speaks to what I think of as an ancient visceral energy in all of us and reinforces the visceral intelligence of the psychodrama method.

In teaching natural horsemanship from a psychodramatic perspective, I have noticed that as riders embrace the horse as a natural auxiliary and become proficient in its ancient language, they are confronted with their deeper selves in the here and now moment. When they are mirrored and doubled in these moments, progressive leadership emerges. We saw this when Jego acted as an auxiliary for Jess, teaching her that vulnerability is an essential part of leadership, that she could let anxiety drop away and bring her presence and being-ness into the relationship as a 'true leader'. Many times in my work with riders I have witnessed the extraordinary healing that occurs as a result of such development, for them individually and in their relationships with partners, family members and friends. It is an experience that permeates throughout their lives, with its invitation to 'become whole'.

Kate Tapley is a registered nurse, psychodrama trainee and natural horsewoman. She has journeyed with horses for as long as she can remember, and for 15 years managed Kate Tapley Horse Treks in three venues around Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand. Kate has applied the principles of natural horsemanship and of psychodrama to embrace the horse's natural ability as an auxiliary, with the aim of enhancing the connection between horse and rider. Through this work over many years, Kate and the horses have been forever changed by the deepening contact they have had with one another. Kate can be contacted at <kate@katetapley.co.nz>.

Book Reviews



The Future of Man's World (2013 Edition)
By J.L. Moreno
Published by The North-West Psychodrama Association, UK, in collaboration with the Zerka T. Moreno Foundation, USA

Reviewed by Rollo Browne

This short book, first published as *Psychodrama Monograph No 21* in 1947 by Beacon House, contains only 26 pages of Moreno's writing. Structured into three unnumbered chapters, International Sociatry and the United Nations Organisation, The Future of Man's Self and The Future of Man's World, it is packed with pithy and, at times, prescient statements that invite reflection. Being short, it also invites the reader to pick it up more than once to gain a deeper feel for Moreno's unique perspective. While some of the concepts appear in other writings, Moreno pulls them together here into an argument about the need for a creative revolution, the challenges that arise, his solutions and the human predicament. Essentially the book is about sociatry, a term Moreno coined as the social equivalent of psychiatry to describe the treatment of society, and it is underpinned by observations from his deep philosophy of spontaneity as the core of human existence. The reader can expect to find such gems as:

- The sociatric code.
- The bitter lesson of 20 years of sociometry.
- The 'idee fixe' that guided Moreno throughout his life.
- The main reason why Moreno shifted from a 'theatre of spontaneity' to a 'theatre of catharsis'.
- Spontaneity as the oldest phylogenetic factor, preceding memory, intelligence and sexuality.
- The location of the self.
- The hypothesis of the expanding self, which includes the gap between Man as the destroyer of the universe and Man as the creator.
- Sociometry as an answer to the "aggression coming from man relating to man".
- Creative revolution as an answer to the aggression coming from certain peculiar products of man's mind (artefacts such as weapons and books that Moreno calls robots).
- Counter-spontaneity and why that matters.

- The link between dolls in infancy and auxiliary egos in psychodrama.
- The fate of humankind as that of the dinosaur in reverse and why there may need to be more destruction before a true creative revolution can begin.

I would like to discuss but two of these, namely, the location of the self and the fate of humankind.

The Location of the Self

Moreno states that the locus (place or location) of the self is spontaneity (p.20). This is interesting because he never gives spontaneity itself a location. He defines spontaneity as both the matrix of creativity and as deviation from the laws of nature. By this, I understand him to mean that spontaneity is unpredictable and leads to unexpected outcomes. Of course, spontaneity is part of human nature. However, it does not follow predictable laws. In Moreno's writings, it is clear that the self is an expression of the dynamic interaction between spontaneity and the process of socialisation, which includes "the mighty social and cultural stereotypes which dominate the human environment" (Moreno, 1994:79-80).

Why then does Moreno think it important to define the locus of the self at all? This is not discussed in role theory. His fundamental thesis is that the self emerges from the roles, and that each role is developed in relationship with others in the social atom where role clusters become organised, where the individual identifies with certain of those role clusters, and where roles and role systems become conserved. Changes occur as old roles drop away and new roles develop, all with the assistance of spontaneity. In this process, different roles and role clusters can emerge as the self evolves.

Perhaps Moreno's statement on the locus of the self is in response to contemporary interest in the psychology of the self. The field of psychology of the self has developed considerably since his time. For example, object-relations theory suggests that the sense of self is based on a cohesive self-image, which is a product of the earliest experiences and relationships. These images of the self, or self-representations, are gradually internalised and identified with and over time, form an enduring structure within the mind and, in this way, pattern the self. Here the locus of that self is the mind of the entity who absorbs these experiences, creates self-representations, organises them and identifies with that organisation.

Moreno's location of the self in spontaneity suggests that the self is not directly located in the individual's mind. It is outside the mind. This is a direct challenge to psychological theory. His concept of spontaneity presented considerable difficulty for psychology. Moreno (1955:105) went so far as to say that the exclusion of spontaneity from most psychological

thinking was "*the* problem of psychology". Part of the problem for theoretical psychology is that spontaneity is not easy to define, let alone measure. It is un-conservable and unpredictable. It cannot be called up at will nor controlled by will power. It does not exist by itself but only in the moment, as it infuses a role. Yet Moreno claimed that spontaneity was innate to every one of us, that it could only be experienced and that it was able to be trained.

Moreno was convinced of the centrality of spontaneity-creativity in understanding human behaviour, indeed in understanding the behaviour of the universe itself (Bischof, 1970:237). This conviction underlies his 'idee fixe', that spontaneity-creativity is the root of existence. From this come his formulations on understanding human behaviour and what it is that enhances human life. One example is his design for a stage to allow a maximum of freedom, where "the self of the actor and its spontaneous creativity had the first call" (p.16), not the playwright.

Moreno's own writings and biographers recount his early struggles with existence, with God, with freedom, with identity. It seems apparent to this reviewer that his profound insight into the nature of existence came as revealed knowledge. By revealed knowledge, I mean a knowing that arises in a way that does not correspond with the rules of logic or the laws of cause and effect. And yet the perspectives, concepts and practices that flow from this central insight are imbued with precise delineation. Consider the practices of doubling, mirroring and role reversal, and how refined they are when they are at their most effective.

Yet, spontaneity remains a mystery. There is no answer to the questions, what is it, where is it from and why does it exist. It just is. By knowing it in our own lives, we also know the value of seeing and supporting spontaneity in others. That is adequate evidence of its existence for most of us. But Moreno goes a lot further. By placing the locus of the self as spontaneity, he is suggesting that the self is fundamentally a mystery and he invites us to join his mystic view of existence.

Not content with placing the self outside of the mind, Moreno introduces us to the idea of an expanding self. He argues that when spontaneity is at zero, the self is at zero; when spontaneity expands, the self expands; when spontaneity diminishes, the self diminishes. If the spontaneity potential is unlimited, then the self is unlimited. This is most likely Moreno's experience, but it is way ahead of where most practitioners can follow him. It sounds logical, it may be possible, but what does it really involve?

The concept of an expanding self links the progression of the self to the I-Self-God, who identifies with the entire universe. Here Moreno is "not concerned with the godlikeness of a single individual but … with the godlikeness of the total universe, its self-integration" (p.24). This progression may well be an accurate reflection of the stages of self-realisation and self-expansion but viewed from our conventional self-absorbed (narcissistic)

world view, we cannot see beyond the egocentric grandiose aspects of it.

The development of the I-Self-God is the underlying creative revolution that Moreno is seeking. It involves so much more than simply individuals developing their spontaneously creative selves. He knew that the idea of a spontaneous and creative self was deeply discredited and was determined to "bring the self back to the consciousness of mankind" (p.16). In his view, humans had been brought up to rely on conserves and not to trust their own spontaneity and that, "the only spontaneity they had learned to appreciate was that coming from an "animated" conserve" (p.19). Hence his call for a creative revolution to change the attitude of the public towards the spontaneous creative self.

Placing the self outside the mind alerts us to the implication that the mind is where most cultural conserves are located, and Moreno is awakening us to the capacity of the self located in spontaneity to create and go beyond these conserves. In addition, he is pointing to the self located in spontaneity as a way of connecting to and identifying with the creativity of the universe, with all existence.

The Fate of Mankind

In the epilogue to *The Future of Man's World*, Moreno writes, "Could we imagine a congress appropriating two billion dollars for "social atom" research? Maybe it is not appropriated and will not be because what matters is not money. Mankind may need still more serious setbacks before it comes to its "creative revolution". Perhaps it is unavoidable that the present human civilization be destroyed, that mankind be reduced to a handful of individuals and human society to a few scattered social atoms before a new rooting can begin" (pp.36-37). This is a surprise to those of us who have always been inspired by the Morenian injunction to warm up, to rise up and step into the world as creative beings, that each of us is enough for this moment.

Is Moreno despairing of his efforts? Is he really saying that only destruction can wake us up to our true identity as creators? We might remember that Moreno saw that spontaneity-creativity would rise from the ashes of the First World War and that humanity had the chance to create anew. Unfortunately, history shows that we keep repeating the cycle of aggression and make incremental social change. It seems self-evident that social change is more driven by technological change than moral values.

Moreno's argument is that a society-wide creative revolution fails because of the fear of spontaneity. Instead, man seeks safety in conserves that are predictable and controllable and these, tellingly, are oriented to power not creativity. This means that, as a species, we are in an early stage of spontaneity development. We fail to focus our considerable energies on the difficult arts of sociatry and sociometry to address the inherent aggression

within human communities. Instead, humankind has turned to seeking solutions through creating artefacts or mechanical conserves that project human capacity into the world, especially weapons, books, computers and other useful devices. And what they all have in common is a lack of spontaneity. With this projection of power, comes all of our human pathology. We all recognise the rise of algorithms, apps, companion robots, driverless cars, robo-treatment for health, social media, automated targeted advertising through Google searches, genetic editing, the internet of things, and so on. It is mind boggling and proceeding at breakneck speed.

Moreno's dream is clear. "If a fraction of one-thousandth of the energy which mankind has exerted in the conception and development of mechanical devices were to be used for the improvement of our cultural capacity during the moment of creation itself, mankind would enter into a new age of culture, a type of culture which would not have to dread any possible increase of machinery nor robot races of the future" (p.35).

From the idea of spontaneity-creativity alive in every individual in his or her socius, Moreno expanded his vision to society and to civilization at large. But we, the inheritors of this vision, have not been able to bring to life a society based on sociometric and sociatric principles. Despite making numerous sociometric experiments and writing extensively, it is revealing how Moreno describes the bitter lesson of 20 years of sociometry. "It is fruitless to plunge ahead of the dynamics of small groups to which we belong to the next larger group" (p.13). Thus, we are left with the challenge of our individual creative revolutions and the ongoing challenges of life in the small groups to which we belong. We are still there.

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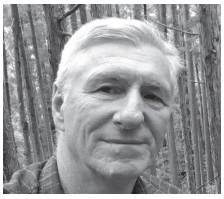
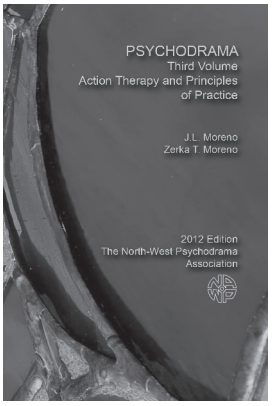
The Future of Man's World is available in print and e-book versions.
Print: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/jacob-l-moreno/the-future-of-mans-world/paperback/product-21454011.html>
E-book: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/jacob-l-moreno/the-future-of-mans-world/ebook/product-20665928.html>



Rollo Browne is a sociodramatist and TEP on the staff of Psychodrama Australia's Sydney Campus. He works with organisations to develop their capacity for relational leadership and spontaneity. Rollo can be contacted at <rollobrowne1952@gmail.com>.



Psychodrama Third Volume: Action Therapy and Principles of Practice (2012 Edition)
By J.L Moreno and Zerka T. Moreno
Published by The North West Psychodrama Association, UK

Reviewed by Elizabeth Synnot

Psychodrama Third Volume: Action Therapy and Principles of Practice was originally published by Beacon House in 1969, with a second edition offered in 1975. This third edition, known as the 2012 edition and edited by Zoli Figusch, is one in a series of new editions of J.L. Moreno's and Zerka T. Moreno's work published by the North West Psychodrama Association and available through Lulu Press <www.lulu.com>.

This is a book about the application of the psychodrama method. Reading the volume from cover to cover, I am struck by the versatility of psychodrama methodology. The psychodrama enactments presented in the volume are tailored to the immediate participants and their purposes in their particular contexts. I delight in Moreno's seminal contributions of joy and laughter, movement and action, the nonverbal route to the psyche and his orientation to enable a creative revolution. On a practical note, the rules and adjunctive methods outlined towards the end of the book provide a useful and reassuring overview of critical principles for applications of psychodrama across contexts. That said, I find some sections to be a challenging read, particularly the long verbatim records of specific psychodrama enactments. Although critical to enabling the reader to formulate their own views before reading Moreno's analysis, the long unfolding of the spoken words in sessions was taxing for me as a reader. What follows is a brief outline of, and reflections on, each chapter.

Chapter One describes the therapeutic use of the psychodrama stage and presents four key universal concepts: time, space, reality and the cosmos. The step onto the stage and the creation of a new living moment,

here and now as time and space are transcended, are extraordinary phenomena. I have not found elsewhere any concept of surplus reality akin to Moreno's. He emphasises encounter with the real self through the production of surplus reality on the psychodrama stage.

Chapter Two presents psychodramas of childhood and adolescence. Moreno describes and analyses a group in a Well-Baby clinic, applying the method in-situ without the use of a stage. As the mothers sit in a circle with their babies on their laps, he doubles both groups to great effect. Those practitioners whose field of practice is similarly in-situ will readily relate to this example. The drama with an adolescent begins with an interview where the protagonist paints a picture of his life, his vision, his values, his sociometry and his dilemmas. Three enactments are presented, in a court of law, with the parents and waking up from a dream, with each description followed by analysis, commentary and fulsome discussions. Moreno thus shows the life of this troubled protagonist within the social institutions that he is required to face.

Chapter Three relates to pre-marital and marital psychodramas, weaving together descriptions of the dramas with discussions and education of the audience, as well as Moreno's own analysis. The description of a psychodrama of a marriage follows. The benefit of reading this long dialogue is to be able to enter Moreno's discussion and analysis as it relates to this situation. In a closing comment, Moreno offers his view regarding the ethics of an ideal drama, where the actual names of people and places are provided. Such identification of individuals is ethically contentious today, even in professional supervision.

In Chapter Four, Psychodrama of Psychiatric Disorders, Moreno opines that people are divided from early childhood on by the dimensions of reality and fantasy (p.165). One key requirement of spontaneity is to readily move between fantasy and reality. In my work as a family therapist, I have found this to be a difficulty for many who have a psychiatric diagnosis. Moreno introduces the concept of psychosis through the case of Mary, who suffers paranoia. He identifies four psychodramatic procedures that can be used in such cases, always keeping the protagonist in mind: treating a single individual, having the protagonist as a spectator in the audience, multiple protagonists in the audience treated at the same time, and multiple protagonists seeing a filmed psychodrama. He describes Mary as having "always lived along two tracks of experience, but the world of imagination prevailed and pushed the world of actual events into the background. … But these imagined persons did not respond to her, they had no spontaneity like real people. … One of the genuine functions of an auxiliary ego (is) to free a subject from that extreme form of isolation – hallucination" (pp.170-172). Moreno conceives his treatment of Mary in three phases: realisation, replacement and clarification. Presenting rich pictures of the phases as they

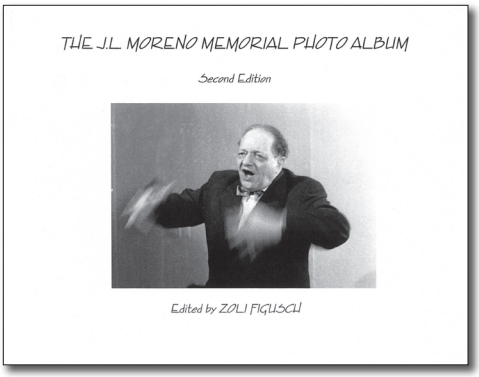
unfold and the psychodrama techniques as they apply, he concludes that in psychodrama the therapeutic aim is to have the protagonist 'create the delusions at will'. He relates primarily to Mary's private world of fantasy and, eschewing psychological laws, he relies on the production of Mary's spontaneity. He highlights the way in which psychodramatic procedures are not restricted to the verbal. Psychodrama is in action. Finally, a motion picture is presented as an exit test from hospital, revealing the patient's readiness to return to the community, the family, work and public spaces. This is televised on a close circuit system in the hospital for other patients, staff and visitors to experience.

Chapter Five consists of an overview of psychodrama rules, techniques and adjunctive methods. I find it reassuring to consider each item from the perspective of my own practice and, in doing so, have my practice validated. The chapter also includes Zerka Moreno's outline of the influence of J.L. Moreno's seminal contributions on the generations that came after him. He 'stuck to his guns' in the face of opposition and misunderstanding regarding the use of auxiliaries and non-verbal movement in the treatment of patients. Indeed, Moreno specifically highlights the importance of the non-verbal and bodily contact through his presentation of the treatment of Richard, a mute catatonic male at the Beacon hospital. The auxiliary assigned to Richard was an athletic male and after a time, twice weekly wrestling and boxing bouts were scheduled in the psychodrama theatre. The stage became a ring, and patients, students and staff attended as the audience. The auxiliary countered every one of Richard's blows and matched his strength. After six months of this non-verbal body contact approach, Richard joined the psychodrama group with other patients. He was discharged into the community after fourteen months and achieved a fair recovery as a taciturn member of society. Moreno also maintains that work with early sexual trauma may require somatic enactments where there is close physical contact between the protagonist and the auxiliary. This physical contact approach is controversial in many quarters today.

Moreno's cardinal guide in treatment is seminal, the replacement of negativism and depression with gaiety and joy. He is known as the man who bought joy and laughter into psychiatry. His methodology and vision remain hauntingly relevant in today's world, as we confront global, social and existential challenges. In Chapter Six, The Future of Man's World, he concludes: "Mankind may need still more serious setbacks before it comes to its "creative revolution." Perhaps it is unavoidable that the present human civilization be destroyed, that mankind be reduced to a handful of individuals and human society to a few scattered social atoms before a new rooting can begin. … The future of man depends upon counter weapons developed by sociometry and sociatry" (p.243). *Psychodrama Third Volume* concludes with a glossary and bibliography of original publication dates.

Psychodrama Third Volume is available in print and e-book versions.
Print: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/jacob-l-moreno-and-zerka-t-moreno/psychodrama-third-volume/paperback/product-20677170.html>
E-book: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/jacob-l-moreno/psychodrama-third-volume/ebook/product-20836354.html>

Elizabeth Synnot, Trainer Educator Practitioner (TEP) and Sociodramatist, is the executive director of Psychodrama Australia (PA), Director of Training at the PA Brisbane Campus and the immediate past president of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA). She runs a practice as a family therapist and leadership team role trainer. Elizabeth can be contacted at <diz@eis.net.au>.



The J.L. Moreno Memorial Photo Album (2014)
Edited by Zoli Figusch
Published by the North West Psychodrama Association, UK

Reviewed by Penny Beran

The front cover image of *The J.L. Moreno Memorial Photo Album* is dynamic. There is JL, hands in a blur, eye gaze steady, mouth open as if using the voice of command as an assured producer. Published in 2014 in the 125th year since J.L. Moreno's birth, this book complements other biographical publications of JL and psychodrama. The author, Zoli Figusch, provides a succinct summary of his raison d'etre on the back cover, noting that the album is the result of his passion for psychodrama and his more recently found interest in book and photo editing. He aims to capture some of the key moments of Moreno's life, work and legacy through a pictorial narrative interspersed with reminiscences and testimonies. What he has produced is a 50-page landscape format photo narrative with captions, in a loosely chronological sequence beginning with JL's parents. The photos are interspersed with written contributions, ranging in length from 300 to 1,500 words, drawn from JL's

own writings and those of his offspring, spouses, lovers, and companions in psychodrama and the group therapy networks.

As I look at the photos in the book and search the faces of JL, his parents and his offspring, I am drawn to similarities in their eyes. I see them being together doing everyday activities: leisurely sharing a meal, travelling, enjoying a visit to a park, cuddling their children, playing with kids in the garden. Yes, there are studio shots of JL as well, static and posed, yet his vibrant energy, though contained, is still evident. These shots contrast vividly with images of JL mounting the stage and directing with ease from a semi-recumbent position, images that are almost sculptural in their solidity.

I am particularly pleased to see included in this volume an image of Regina Moreno and read her own words, as well as those of her mother, Florence Moreno (nee Bridge, later Guncher). JL and Florence were married from 1938 to 1949, with their daughter Regina born in 1939. Florence was a collaborator with JL in the development of the spontaneity theory of child development, participating in discussions with him and incorporating her observations of Regina's development. I was therefore somewhat surprised by her 1994 testimonial, which is included in this book. It clearly shows the esteem in which Florence held JL and her regard for him as a genius: "I would not ever measure up to his greatness and was in no position to influence or change any of his theories".

Jonathan Moreno's 2014 contribution to the book reveals his experience of embarrassment and delight when in public with his father during their European travels. His other written entries range from the always appreciative, to the conflicted, to the down-to-earth reality of JL as a difficult man in his later years. In understanding JL, Dalmiro Bustos considers narcissism and geniality, concluding that "Narcissus drowned in a lake. Moreno expanded the lake and created a sea where all of us could fish". I am deeply moved by this way of relating to JL.

The memorial photo album also contains Anne Ancelin Schützenberger's testimony to the International Psychodrama Congress in London in 2014, when she was 95 years old. In it, she expresses her respect and affection for JL with a smorgasbord of anecdotes and reflections, both personal and professional. Anne died in 2018 a few days short of her 99th birthday, having maintained a fine continuity with JL since their 1951 meeting.

One of the book's strengths is that it follows the practice of psychodrama and role theory by presenting the person emerging from many roles[1], sharing experiences, being in encounter with others. We could possibly view these images and written contributions as mirrors of JL's social and

1 p.II in Moreno, J.L. (1994). *Psychodrama First Volume: Psychodrama & Group Psychotherapy* (Fourth Edition with New Introduction). American Society of Group Psychotherapy & Psychodrama, McLean, VA.

cultural atom, from family, to psychodrama congress, and beyond. Unfortunately, page numbers are not included, which makes it difficult to reference a photo or quote as a resource or when communicating with a friend or colleague about the album's content.

The J.L. Moreno Memorial Photo Album might at first glance present as something to flip through voyeuristically. Allow it to sink in with longer gazing and reflection on the selection of images and writings by the various contributors. Here is JL in all his complexity: man, human being, father, husband, colleague, teacher, learner, producer, theatre-maker, therapeutic intervener…

The J.L. Moreno Memorial Photo Album is available in a print version.
<http://www.lulu.com/shop/zoli-figusch/the-jl-moreno-memorial-photo-album/paperback/product-22848367.html>

Penny Beran is an Affiliate Associate member of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA), joining the psychodrama community in 2002 via the Sydney AANZPA Conference and subsequent training programme. She stays connected through attendance at open nights, conferences, practice sessions, occasional journal contributions and has been active in the New South Wales region. She aims to bring psychodramatic awareness to her involvements with local community groups, and sustaining and growing relationships with family, friends and psychodrama buddies. Penny can be contacted at <penny.beran@unswalumni.com>.

AANZPA Conference 2020

Beauty and Truth
Ugliness and Ignorance

The 2020 Conference of the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association (AANZPA) will be held at College House, Ōtautahi Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand, from 22 to 26 January 2020.

The conference will begin with an opening at 5pm on Wednesday 22 January, followed by dinner and Manaakitanga , a session focused on nurturing and building relationships. On Thursday morning, Giovanni Fusetti will treat us to a keynote address titled The Tao of Laughter: Comic Archetypes and the Healing Power of Humour. A rich array of workshop sessions will be on offer during Thursday, Friday and Sunday morning, with Friday evening reserved for On the Spot: Anything Can Happen. The AANZPA AGM will take place on Saturday 25 January, followed by a dinner dance. The conference will end at 3pm on Sunday 26 January with a closure and handover to the 2021 Melbourne Conference group.

Pre-Conference Workshops

- The Tao of Clown: A Poetic Journey of Awareness through Laughter with Giovanni Fusetti, 20 – 21 January
- How do Different Cultures Meet? with Hiromi Nakagomi, 22 January

Post-Conference Workshop

- It's What We Do Now That Matters: Spontaneity After a Breach in the Working Alliance with Charmaine McVea, 27 – 28 January

Extra Activities

- Christchurch Then and Now with Simon Gurnsey, 22 January (the day the conference begins), 10am to 12noon, meet corner Armagh and New Regent Streets
- The Horse as Auxiliary for Life with Kate Tapley, 27 January (the day after the conference closes), 10am to 4pm, Mt Lyford Village (two hours north of Christchurch)

For further information about the AANZPA conference, including registration, the College House venue, accommodation, the programme and workshop descriptions, visit: <https://aanzpa.org/conference/confer20>.